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Ecocomposition As Writing Curriculum: An Ecological Approach For Writing Program Administrators And Composition Instructors

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ECOCOMPOSITION AS WRITING CURRICULUM: AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR
WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND COMPOSITION INSTRUCTORS

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 2010
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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

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for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota

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2016

This dissertation, submitted by Erin Renee Lord Kunz in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.
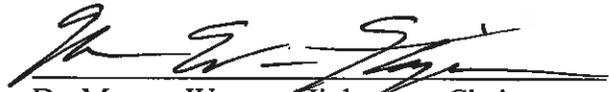
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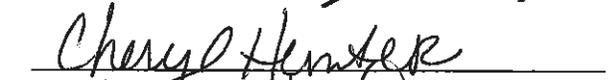
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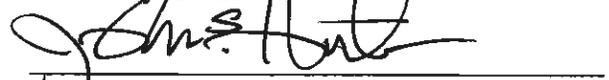
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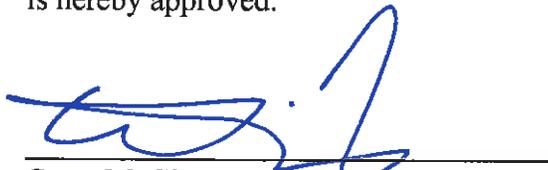   Program Administrators and Composition Instructors

Department   Educational Foundations and Research

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Erin Renee Lord Kunz

November 11, 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

while I worked and made me feel a little less lonely. Finally, thank you to my ever-constant husband, Carter, who brought me hundreds of cups of tea while being married to the back of my head, as I sat in front of my computer, for so many years. I promise to finally clean up the office and put my books away. I hope our little one can come in to a future that is better because of the work I did in this dissertation, and have a Mama who is present and ready to love the world.

To my future little one and all the future little ones.

May we leave you with a place

to know, love, and protect.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation forwards an argument for an ecologically-based composition and rhetoric curriculum that also emphasizes the best practices established by the Council of Writing Program Administration, particularly the writing process. I concentrate on how a writing program administrator can utilize ecological literacy to navigate her own experience in a new place and also how themes of ecological literacy can be applied to the writing program itself. Based on personal experiences as well as literature that establishes the need for best practices in composition and rhetoric curriculum, I argue that ecological composition, or ecocomposition, can assist in implementing an ecological writing program. This implementation of ecocomposition recognizes the needs of 21st century higher education institutions to educate students to be ecologically literate across the disciplinary spectrum, an education that may help to mitigate the environmental crisis. This dissertation outlines the theoretical reasoning from both composition and rhetoric theory as well as ecological theory for an ecocomposition program, along with an articulation of the ecological writing process and potential curriculum content.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When I decided to go to graduate school to study English Language and Literature, I was not—to my family's disapproval—thinking about job prospects. I was not career planning or trying to build my CV. I simply wanted to study my subject more. I had the opportunity to be awarded a graduate teaching assistantship with a tuition waiver, which made my scholarly pursuits possible. Like many other students trying to get through college, I was paying my way, fighting through high interest loans and scraping by with meager scholarships and off-campus jobs. Therefore, I saw my teaching assistantship as a means to an end, that end being able to continue to study English.

I saw myself performing the job duties of my graduate teaching assistantship as was required, but my focus was my own study. I had experience in the writing center, and I would be teaching one or two first-year composition courses each semester—what I saw as temporary employment, my way of ensuring financial security in graduate school. Helping students write essays was certainly not the worst job, but it was not the part of graduate school I was looking forward to. I was more interested in my own individual discoveries, the books listed in my professors' syllabi, and the papers in which I would argue for my literary interpretation.

It came as a big surprise, then, when I found out how much I enjoyed helping students write essays. I had not planned to become completely swept up in teaching composition and working at my university's writing center. Studying was my main focus, not teaching. But the further I moved along through graduate school, the more I saw the balance tip toward teaching, and the more mental space I gave my tutoring and composition classes. Being able to share the

affinity I had for my subject—the textual analyses, the intellectual discoveries, and the individual as well as social growth—was far more exciting than I could have anticipated.

When I started identifying more with my teaching and diving into composition pedagogy and theory the way I had previously dived into Neo-Victorian Literature (my thesis topic), I eventually arrived at the all-too-common existential crisis about what I was going to do once I was done studying—I had not really thought that far ahead. On a whim, I applied for a job at a regional university in a town 45 minutes away that I had never been to. The position was in student services, and I would be the academic support and writing center coordinator. Somehow, due to timing and a good interview and other variables I cannot pin down, I got the job at 23-years old, one year away from completing my Master's Degree in English. For the first time in my scholarly career, I was thinking occupationally and not just academically.

Even though I was not aware of it at the time, the experiences I had in my new student services position would eventually lead me down an academic path I had not expected, a path that would even light the fire for an eventual dissertation topic. At the start of graduate school, I was thinking only in academic/scholarly terms—my own scholarship, to be specific—and I was not thinking about how my work could possibly affect my students, my coworkers, or my community.

My change in perspective did not come easily; it was an extremely difficult transition to lead with a scholarly mindset in a university that had a community mindset. While scholarship and community relationships are not necessarily dichotomous, my expectations were to continue to focus on scholarship, not necessarily the town I was working in. Unaware that this mental shift would occur, I was excited for my first job, excited to apply what I had learned throughout graduate school, and therefore quite disappointed when I found out that the people in my office

were not really interested in talking about Freire's (1970) conscientização, or that everyone was not hanging onto every word of actively publishing literary and cultural theorists. It would be easy to dismiss this experience as the necessary reality check of an idealistic English major, but for the entirety of my academic career, students and faculty at my research institution were discussing these concepts, and students and faculty were constantly exploring, arguing, and challenging one another on literary analyses and pedagogical responsibilities—theoretical debate was common practice for me. When I moved into my job at a regional university, I expected to continue to converse about pedagogical and academic issues; I did not expect the focus to be so different from my own. The departments in which I completed my graduate work privileged academic scholarship, whereas the mission of the campus where I worked focused on personal relationships and job training.

I was learning about my work's university ecology while trying to apply the experience I had in a very different university ecology. After much planning, and stressing, and pouring through the literature, finally the semester started, and my first student came in for tutoring at the new writing center I had been hired to develop and coordinate. I thought about all the preparation and training I had put in to create this writing center. I began playing through all the composition theories I had learned about, from expressivism to the cognitive theorists to process-centered pedagogies. I was consistently focused on rhetorical awareness and identified my own educational philosophy with David Bartholomae's (1985) "Inventing the University," which discussed the constructed nature of academia, teaching and initiating students into this value-laden construction. On my most idealistic days, I felt like my composition classes held the keys to academic culture, and with my social-justice perspective, I was going to use my position in the

university to help students from all backgrounds and means access education, and, ultimately, Freire's socially-minded, critical concept of conscientização.

Imagine my surprise when my first composition student came to the writing center, not working through theoretical texts like in *Ways of Reading*, which contain selections from literary and cultural theorists and was my undergraduate composition experience, but with a sentence to diagram. You read that right: the first assignment in the class was to diagram a set of sentences correctly and to turn it in—no reading, no writing. The student was extremely nervous because he had failed his first diagramming test, red pen marking every corner of the assignment. I was at a loss for words. I asked to see the student's assignment and syllabus, looking for clues and some sort of explanation for what I was looking at, only to see an entire "composition" syllabus full of grammatical exercises and very little reading and writing. At the end of the semester these "composition" students would graduate to constructing a few grammatically-aware sentences, focused on incorporating the appropriate medial and adverbial clauses (vocabulary new to me), by utilizing a "textbook" the instructor had written himself.

My academic background, my expertise, and even my practical job training had little value in this situation. I did my best to help the student make plans for tackling the assignment and visiting the instructor's office hours, but I could not help with the actual assignment. Freshly out of a graduate experience that focused on and critiqued current composition scholarship, coming upon sentence diagramming in a college classroom felt like I had come across the comp-rhet equivalent of seeing a 21st century medical student ask for help in the particulars of bloodletting. I marched into my very understanding supervisor's (the vice president of student affairs) office, asking him if he knew what was being taught in the composition classes. He sighed, asked me to close the door, and told me he did know and that students really struggled

with the composition courses on their campus, creating retention issues. I continued to wax poetic about the need for academic rigor and assignments focused on the rhetorical situation, but my supervisor, and trusted colleagues, were more concerned about the perceived "difficulty" of the class and the fail rates. This is when I realized that I was trying to having one conversation which kept morphing into another. I wanted an updated composition curriculum, based in best practices with awareness of pedagogical theories, when others wanted to discuss retention and their dislike for senior faculty who refused to adapt to the changing demographic of students.

I now realize that these conversations—academic rigor and retention; scholarship and community—are not dichotomous, but I still struggle to find a way into the conversation when my values seemed so different from the university I was working at. The employees at my college favored local relationships and community building over research experience or scholarly activities. Finding employment at my college usually had more to do with who you knew (at church, through the athletic program) than what your CV looked like, a value that was very much connected with the mission of personal relationships and the ability to find local students local employment upon graduation; it was somewhat uncommon that I secured a position with no former ties to the university. This different focus was not necessarily malicious; the preference related to small-town relationships and a different set of values. The most venerated faculty were the ones who were most involved in student organizations and the town, often leading Bible studies or local church groups. For someone who was completely devoted to my area of study and scholarship—and the individualistic development of intellect—this new focus on local relationships, events, and people over the academic content was utterly baffling.

My set of problems changed in this new job. No longer was I helping students work through difficult texts in order to coach them through their unique responses to theoretical texts;

I was instead trying on a day-to-day basis help them pass their class on a micro level, while

fighting for a more appropriate curriculum on a macro level. My perception was that the

"difficulty" students were encountering was not because of the rigor of the course but because of

the lack of context of the material, the students' inability to transfer skills of sentence

diagramming and grammatical vocabulary to other kinds of writing situations—perhaps *any* kind

of situation. Year after year I pleaded with faculty, my department head, and even the vice

president of academic affairs to move on the composition curriculum, to make necessary

changes. Finally, due to pressure after we hired an outside reviewer who also suggested an

overhaul, our department head asked us to provide ample proof that our (the composition

faculty's) pedagogical methods were backed by research from the past five years. This proved to

be more difficult than I imagined, because I was working from a position that in many ways

began with Murray's 1972 article "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," which was dated by

over forty years but still provided a foundation for what I was trying to argue. On the other hand,

it was fairly easy for faculty to find a current article—somewhere, anywhere—that at least

partially backed up their methods, given that composition pedagogy is a robust field of

scholarship with many competing viewpoints. Therefore, in a liberal arts department that had

only one person with a composition background (me), I struggled to provide what *Cross-Talk in*

Comp Theory (2011), the anthology that provided the basis for my study of composition

pedagogy during graduate school, articulated as "The Givens In Our Conversations."

This chasm between current composition research and the problems I am facing in my

department endures. As I continue with graduate school and my doctoral work, I find that even

though I have the privilege of studying precisely what I do—educational foundations and

composition and rhetoric—many of the research questions and problems addressed in the field

are unfortunately not my questions and are not my problems. Process pedagogy and problem-posing learning may seem like old hat in current composition scholarship, but they are methods I still argue for, because they are not "Givens In Our Conversations" where I work. As the sole composition scholar at my college, I am often arguing for the importance of writing in general and am given the responsibility to coordinate anything to do with writing—writing center services, composition, plagiarism policies, pre-service training, "remedial" courses, ELL workshops, etc. I no longer have the convenience of studying one particular brand of composition and rhetoric that best fits my philosophy and interests; I have to represent all kinds of methodologies and sub-fields, because I have to represent all kinds of writing, in general, across the academic spectrum. While there are certainly benefits to this kind of work and the holistic perspective it provides, it also means that the focused demands of doctoral work and the nuanced conversations of current composition pedagogy start becoming less applicable to the work that I do, work that is similar for many other composition and rhetoric professionals at universities different from where they graduated. Discussing the differences between techne and multi-modality would not make sense in my rhetorical situation, when students approach me asking for tutoring in sentence diagramming (Pender, 2011; Palmeri, 2012). In the meantime I try to update the curriculum incrementally, in ways that do not damage the close-knit relationships of faculty and the homeostasis regional colleges depend on. My rhetorical situation demands a different perspective.

As I continued working (eventually becoming a writing program administrator at my regional college) and moving through my doctoral studies, I took a course on the educational foundations of ecological literacy. I began understanding ecoliteracy, in its environmental and systems thinking approach, as a perspective to understand and critique today's schooling

practices. In many ways, the lens of ecological literacy was a radical departure from both the traditionalist modes of teaching I was seeing at work and the postmodern-influenced theories that permeated most of my doctoral studies. Major ecological theorists rejected the economic exploitation that many universities implicitly endorsed through capitalistic job training (Garrard, 2007; Gruenewald, 2003; Orr, 2004). While these critiques are not new ideas to enter the bloodstream of the university, ecological literacy went on to advocate for environmental awareness as the foundation of all schooling, the grounding that all other educational values— social justice, critical thinking, sustainability, individual growth, and responsibility to community—depended on. Ecoliteracy argues that while we on one hand must move into modern pedagogies that best serve students and recognize the lessons of postmodernism— particularly the cultural critiques—we must also recognize the ways modern schooling has abandoned our ecological roots, the traditions that made humans sustainable for thousands of years before "learned" people wreaked havoc on our shared environments (Orr, 2004).

Ecological literacy advocates seeing academia within the dynamic and interconnected nature of a place, not as separate from people or community, but as "threads of a whole cloth" (Orr, 2004, p. 2). This revelatory perspective seemed to address the problems and questions I regularly saw at work; I needed to become literate in the ecology I was working in. I applied my interest in ecological literacy to my study of composition and rhetoric, which brought me to the subfield of ecocomposition: the understanding of the intersection between discourse and environment (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). It was not simply that ecocomposition seemed like an interesting subfield and a theme that could sustain a semester's worth of composition readings; ecocomposition brought together needed academic critiques in my work and graduate school experiences, as well as the contextual awareness of place. It merged the study of discourse with

the study of environment, providing a holistic framework from which I could understand my occupational *and* academic experiences (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a).

After previously describing the poor fit nuanced, modern theories of composition and rhetoric were for my college, it might seem, then, that ecocomposition—my focus in this dissertation—would be a too specific object of study, a thematic subfield that also cannot apply to what it is that I, and many writing program administrators who do not work at flagship, progressive research institutions, actually do. Isn't advocating environmental awareness and ecological writing in composition courses too topical and current for general education courses at a school like the one I described? If I am still fighting sentence diagramming, isn't ecocomposition too far of a leap for most faculty? I think that it is important to note that even though my university may not have a large faculty presence with extensive composition and rhetoric backgrounds, that does not mean I am trying to describe it as provincial or failing. Instead, I am trying to ask the right question for the right problem: how can we provide a holistic, rigorous curriculum that is adaptable to individual colleges and universities, one that prepares students for today's writing demands, a curriculum that acknowledges faculty limitations while giving them the guidance and freedom to teach from their set of skills and experiences?

Because so many of our staff and faculty are local, and because they have identities and roles outside of academia—coach, peer mentor, club advisor, choral director, Bible study leader, etc.—they often have extensive knowledge of place and the local environment. These university employees are usually not transplants; their families are from the area and they have generational ecological knowledge as well as knowledge in their academic content area. They understand and are committed to holism, seeing in their towns how "anything that affects one strand of the web

vibrates throughout the whole" (Cooper, 1986, p. 370). They are invested in their disciplines, but also the students, the university, and the community as a whole.

I am moving toward being literate in the ecology I work in and creating impactful writing curricula that engages the community. By reflecting on my role as a writing program administrator (WPA) and composition instructor within my local ecology, I am seeking ways to reopen conversations about composition scholarship that recognizes the place in which composition curricula will be implemented. My goal in this dissertation is to bridge a divide between the dynamic of the aforementioned campus and current ecocomposition practices, in order to articulate a theoretical grounding for an ecologically-focused writing curriculum. Such a writing curriculum acknowledges the reality that the Council of Writing Program Administrators outcomes are not outcomes at every campus, and therefore writing programs must work to establish a grounding in composition's pedagogical best practices while reaching toward ecocomposition.

In Chapter Two, I focus on outlining a brief composition and rhetoric history from the perspective of my own graduate experience as a way of establishing the literature of the field while also explaining my own confusion as a WPA when encountering composition practices so different from what I had been educated to know. This conversation leads to my discovery of ecological literacy, which provides a mechanism to reexamine composition and rhetoric from the perspective of ecocomposition, the main focus of Chapter Three. In Chapter Four I apply the theoretical perspectives established in Chapters Two and Three to the writing program administration outcome of writing process, as an example to articulate how ecocomposition can establish best practices within an ecology that struggles to find theoretical grounding for its curriculum. In Chapter Five I look more specifically at course materials and activities in an

ecocomposition curriculum, applying ecological concepts such as local stories, folklore, sense of place, place-based learning, interdisciplinary writing, holistic education, and social-ecological exigence to composition and rhetoric. In Chapter Six I offer a model ecological composition and rhetoric curriculum that is flexible and adaptable to many different contexts, a model that uses ecological theory to examine the place in which a writing curriculum is implemented. My goal in articulating such a program is to provide writing program stakeholders—WPAs, composition instructors, students, general education committees, and even administrators—a model for reacting productively to dated modes of composition instruction so they can build programs that honor the contexts in which they are derived. These specific curricular choices continually reinforce the argument that posits the need for an ecologically literate curriculum—a literacy that simultaneously helps WPAs navigate their localities and provides writing programs with the tools to create ecologically literate students. Chapter Seven closes out this argument by emphasizing the need for ecological consciousness in 21st century higher education.

Universities can benefit from ecocomposition programs because of their place-based focus and flexibility. By looking at my own occupational experiences through an ecological lens, I can see ways I can address issues that seem to be non-starters, ways to engage resistant faculty into conversations about shared places. Because of the dynamic between local culture and generational employees at the university in which I work, my locality becomes a prime location to investigate the benefits of an ecocomposition perspective, while offering a way for WPAs to navigate their role in the university. Ecocomposition can provide academic rigor that is fitting for particular localities while magnifying what those universities are already good at, what they already know. By incorporating ecoliteracy's lessons on holism into a composition and rhetoric program, it is possible to reestablish the structures that guide best practices while remaining

mindful of local contexts. Such ecological lessons are not only a strategic way forward for

WPAs in difficult occupational situations, but a necessary mindset as we educate students to be

"threads of a whole cloth," citizens that will make environmental choices that will affect them

and generations to come (Orr, 2004, p. 2).

CHAPTER II

COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC HISTORY: MOVING TOWARD ECOCOMPOSITION

As I continued to delve farther into ecological literacy, the more prominently its goals seemed to coincide with composition and rhetoric. An ecological perspective—one that takes into account place and the human and natural relationships happening within that place—seemed to provide a level of understanding for my work situation that recognized the realities of my local university environment and also forwarded best practices, academic rigor, and current scholarship. This chapter investigates some of those "Givens in Our Conversation" (Villanueva & Arola, 2011), providing the background for the type of composition pedagogy I had hoped— and expected—to see at my job when I first started. I then discuss which pedagogical pieces seemed missing and problematic in my experiences, and how ecological literacy provides a framework for understanding places such as the one I work and the type of issues I encountered. In the third chapter, I apply the lessons of ecological literacy to composition and discuss core concepts of ecocomposition, which will set the stage for their application to a model college writing curriculum later in the dissertation.

The history of composition and rhetoric I acknowledge from my graduate school education in this chapter leads to an ecological exploration of theoretical frameworks and eventually methodologies that writing program administrators can apply to their local contexts in order to navigate departments with competing perspectives. First it is important to establish a definitional frame for where this review of the literature will lead—an exploration of ecocomposition—the pedagogy I argue for being useful to productively engage an unfamiliar

campus environment. Ecocomposition, or ecological composition, is defined by Dobrin and Weisser (2002a) as

> the study of the relationships between environments (and by that we mean natural, constructed, and even imagined places) and discourse (speaking, writing, and thinking). Ecocomposition draws from disciplines that study discourse (primarily composition, but also including literary studies, communication, cultural studies, linguistics, and philosophy) and merges their perspectives with work in disciplines that examine environment (these include ecology, environmental studies, sociobiology, and other "hard" sciences). As a result, ecocomposition attempts to provide a holistic, encompassing framework for studies of the relationship between discourse and environment. (p. 572)

This dissertation applies ecocomposition's marriage of environment and discourse to a local context, the writing program where I am currently employed—a regional Midwestern university writing program (RMUWP)[1]. Dobrin and Weisser's definition illustrates that because of the breadth of ecocomposition, I must draw from a number of resources and disciplines in order to create an ecological writing program appropriate for this specific context; interdisciplinary work is a cornerstone of ecocomposition. Ecocomposition "draws upon many perspectives, methodologies, and investigations from disciplines across the academic spectrum" (p. 571). These relatively "loose borders" in the field facilitate ecocompositionists who are able to work within the discipline from numerous vantage points (p. 575). Because most faculty and staff at RMUWP do not have specialized research interests, these "loose borders" help create

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[1] Name has been changed to preserve anonymity.

connections among professionals with varying sets of skills and experiences, but all with the same dedication to a particular place.

I could not write a dissertation about the usefulness of ecocomposition without being mindful of what interdisciplinarity means in a local context; after all, one of ecocomposition's main goals is to remain cognizant of the ecology that discourse is situated in. Given this, I find it useful to organize this literature review not necessarily linearly, from the earliest publications on ecocomposition to the most recent, or to organize it by attempting to place different authors and texts within specific subdisciplines of ecocomposition. Instead, I plan to organize the literature review by mapping out the intellectual and pedagogical trajectory I took to see ecocomposition as a valuable framing opportunity for a RMUWP, in order to demonstrate the importance of productive response when programmatic issues arise within their contextual ecologies.

With this goal in mind, I will first discuss the composition theory and history needed to make sense of my local ecology, which is the scholarly background I had when arriving at my place of employment. Then, I will examine prominent discussions in composition theory that I assumed were "Givens in the Conversation" where I worked, which I later discovered were not quite so "given." These discussions will illuminate the scholarly path I took and how my background, and subsequent employment, can benefit from the understandings ecocomposition provides. This framing of the literature will forward an argument that the place-based perspective of ecocomposition is a necessary and flexible pedagogy that can enhance university writing programs in a localized way, particularly in situations in which programs need updating but lack the scholarly background and tools to do so.

Becoming a Composition and Rhetoric Scholar

As I begin to review the literature, the question is the same for me as it is for many writers—where to begin. It is possible to think about the field of composition pedagogy historically, such as with the Morrill Act of 1862 that created land grant colleges, which ushered into the university a new populace of middle class students needing to learn to write for their professions (Connors, 1997; Crowley, 1998). It is also possible to think about composition theoretically, from Grecian rhetoric to postmodernism (Berlin, 1984; Faigley, 1992). It is even possible to begin by questioning what we mean exactly when we talk about composition pedagogy—the existential questions of who we are and what we are trying to accomplish (Ede, 2004). While all of these types of literature reviews are important, and though I will address pieces of composition pedagogy's historical, theoretical, and etymological/professional origins, my literature review stays focused on establishing the groundwork for ecological composition, following my own intellectual journey that brought me to my current research questions. More specifically, this literature review focuses on *the need to establish the best practices of writing program administration—specifically writing process—via ecocomposition.* This perspective comes from my own occupational desire to update curriculum that reflects today's needs in higher education for ecological literacy, while recognizing the composition and rhetoric history that brings today's work to ecocomposition. Furthermore, because dated models of composition instruction still permeate public perception of the field, and therefore often non-specialists' and administrators' perceptions, the need to establish best practices within writing programs is an ongoing issue in composition (Zwagerman, 2015).

To make ecocomposition work at regional campuses that lack a strong composition and rhetoric tradition, it is necessary to establish ecocomposition as a means of also articulating composition and rhetoric outcomes, such as rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and

composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014). In order to illustrate what this can look like in later chapters of this dissertation, I begin by establishing how my own composition pedagogy has developed in relation to my current work as a writing program administrator (WPA) attempting to create a more rigorous and updated RMUWP.

James Berlin's History of the Field

When I first began my position as a Writing Center/Academic Support Coordinator in 2011 at a Midwestern regional university, I was still pursuing my M.A. in English, with one year's experience as a composition graduate teaching assistant (GTA). My program offered GTAs classroom support by providing a teaching lab in the first semester and a composition pedagogy course in the second semester. The theory and practice I was exposed to came out of social construction, Bartholomae's (2011/1985) "Inventing the University," in which he argues that we are teaching students to understand the university's written discourse, the "set of conventional rituals and gestures" (p.525). In other words, I naively began my career believing that all writing/composition programs were working out of this general understanding.

It was a disorienting experience to arrive at a new campus and see, in a relatively small department, many competing ideologies and pedagogies. The program did not work from a general understanding of social constructedness, as I had assumed, but from bits and pieces of the field, stretching back to the known origins of composition and rhetoric. What resulted was my inability to make sense out of colleagues' teaching methods, assignments, and overarching educational goals. Students were similarly confused, because they were often leaving one composition course to enter another with a completely different purpose and focus. Because of

these competing ideologies and pedagogies within my department, I was forced to recalibrate my thinking about composition pedagogy and widen my understanding and scope of the field.

Given the context I was working in, I began thinking about my discipline's history, beyond and before its 20th century professionalization. The discipline of composition and rhetoric can be traced back to the beginning of modern schooling, but like many disciplines, has evolved alongside cultural, political, and economic changes in society. Rhetoric, however, has roots as far back as ancient Greece. Rhetoric, or the rhetorical situation, simply put consists of reality, writer or speaker, audience, and language (Berlin, 1984), a concept that guides the work done in composition classrooms today. Purpose for writing, or exigence, also forms our understanding of the rhetorical situation. In other words, the rhetorical situation is the context in which communication takes place. The discipline today typically recognizes the rhetorical nature of written composition, and therefore rhetoric and composition are not considered mutually exclusive but instead interdependent. Composition is usually thought of as the act of writing, or recording through symbols. Composition is always rhetorical, because writing demands are always contingent on the context in which they happen. The concept of rhetoric expands beyond composition, because every human interaction is rhetorical: how we write, how we talk, and how we nonverbally communicate.

The historical trajectory of the field of rhetoric has been shaped by many forces: economic, political, and cultural. Berlin's (1984) history of composition names three major schools of thought concerning rhetorical systems: classical, psychological, and romantic. These schools of thought did not consider the rhetorical situation as we do now, with classical focusing on Aristotelian deduction, psychological focusing on individual experience, and romantic only beginning to touch on the interaction between observer and observed, or what we understand

today as the rhetorical situation. Current-traditional rhetoric, a sub-category of deductive rhetoric, in particular focuses on correctness in writing and divorces composition from invention, process, or context (Berlin, 1984). According to Berlin, current-traditional rhetoric, of all the 19th century rhetorics, has had the most staying power and is still seen in composition programs today. Part of the reasoning for this is because the focus on correctness is linked to meritocracy and the desire for career-minded students to be familiar with middle-class discourse (Berlin, 1987).

Current-traditionalism was the central functioning pedagogy when I arrived at my place of employment, which created an ideological tension. There were divides across teaching methodologies and across traditions; the younger, fresh-out-of-graduate school (or still in graduate school) instructors taught from a rhetorical, process-centered approach, while more senior faculty focused on grammar-based teaching. This created a difficult power struggle, because senior faculty had experience and felt their methodologies were being threatened; younger faculty had updated methodologies, more in line with Berlin, but little pull in the department. The resulting atmosphere became one in which student expectation varied drastically within the RMUWP. In these types of situations, I found it useful to try to understand all methodologies in context, which demanded an ecological perspective. As will be explored later, ecocomposition does not emerge out of a current-traditional approach to composition and rhetoric but begins with a constructivist understanding of rhetoric and discourse.

Berlin (1987) describes most theoretical understandings of rhetoric today as "epistemic, regarding rhetoric as principally a method of discovering and even creating knowledge, frequently within socially defined discourse communities" (p. 183). This constructivist definition acknowledges that rhetoric is not only comprised of separate parts but is actually the acting agent

in understanding how knowledge is created and contingent on various discourse communities. The understanding of rhetoric, and therefore composition, on being socially constructed is a major paradigm shift from the earliest rhetorical theories Berlin describes, which are based on objective reality and deductive logic. Berlin's explanation of these two views can be teased out, critiqued, and broken down even further, but for my purposes in explaining the different viewpoints of my department, these historical categories help explain my nascent constructivist approach in teaching composition versus colleagues' more traditional, objective approach.

Composition scholars, in their various ways of teaching and researching, generally encourage a constructivist understanding of discourse on behalf of the betterment of their students and the discipline; an underlying commitment to social justice is a common trait of 21st century composition pedagogy and was also a cornerstone of my own understanding of composition pedagogy during my graduate work. The teaching lab and composition pedagogy course worked from a common agreement that writing skills are linked to social issues, and I fell in line (and still do) with that perspective.

Composition and rhetoric's commitment to social justice goes beyond the completion of coursework, beyond simply helping students write essays. According to Berlin (1984), "In teaching students about the way they ought to use language we are teaching them something about how to conduct their lives" (p. x). In this way, my differing pedagogical approach at my school could not be reduced to a difference in teaching styles within the department; our handful of professors had a fundamentally different way of understanding the world and communicating that understanding to students. I maintain that composition teaches students how to interact with information productively and how to make sense of the world around them, and when perspectives differ on how to approach this foundational educational goal, confusion can arise

for students trying to work through their composition courses. For example, many students taught with the current-traditionalist approach became excellent at grammatical exercises and spotting errors, but struggled to create arguments and understand motivations behind different written pieces when they entered their upper-level courses, as reported by their respective instructors. When students were inevitably asked, in other courses and other areas in their lives, to posit thesis statements or critically assess their work and the context of that work, they struggled to make critiques other than if anything was mechanically wrong with the sentence.

The main tension to surface in the competing ideologies was the idea of value-free, objective written discourse versus constructed, subjective, and epistemic written discourse. The historical shift to understanding rhetoric as epistemic illustrates how composition pedagogy is influenced by what Berlin (1984) describes as noetic fields—what can be known. Berlin (1987) advocates for a poststructuralist paradigm that considers reality to be constructed according to various discourse communities and power dynamics, a theory indebted to Michel Foucault. Therefore, the noetic field Berlin is working within considers knowledge to be transactional, a set of values produced between observer and observed within the context of a rhetorical situation. This move away from an objective understanding of discourse to a constructivist understanding of discourse affects how composition is conceptualized and taught. Historical, political, economic, and cultural events have created the context for different epistemologies, ideologies, and, finally, pedagogies to emerge.

The different epistemological and ideological perspectives provide context for various composition pedagogies. According to Berlin (1996), three main pedagogical conceptions of literacy emerged in the last few centuries: meritocratic-scientific, liberal-cultural, and social democratic. Meritocratic-scientific composition pedagogy trained students to become part of the

"new scientifically trained professional middle class" (p. 30). Liberal-cultural pedagogy was resistant to meritocratic-scientific values and believed that elite literature and study of the canon was the best way to teach students writing (p. 33). Finally, social-democratic pedagogy reacted against both of these ideals and sought to understand language in context, using the rhetorical situation as a way of acknowledging how discourse is shaped by economic and political interests (p. 36). In this way, social-democratic pedagogy is most interested in examining multiple epistemologies, or ways of seeing and knowing.

Elaborating on this framework of social-democratic pedagogy, Berlin (1996) is able to self-consciously put forward his own "social-epistemic rhetoric," a pedagogical understanding rooted in the teachings of Paulo Freire (1970), namely conscientização (which I was disappointed to find was not being rigorously discussed at my school). Berlin states that this pedagogy is influenced by social construction and pragmatism, the writing process over the written product, and the disruption of the poetic/rhetoric binary (and binaries in general). Berlin is forthright in saying that this pedagogy, and his own conception of it, is also essentially an ideology, just as meritocratic-scientific and liberal-cultural are, but it is a pedagogy/ideology that is self-aware of its own constructedness and thus critiques itself, as well as the surrounding culture. In this way, Berlin is able to respond to pedagogies from previous centuries that were also ideologically situated but unaware of their situadedness. Berlin is knowingly responding to the lessons of postmodernism that disrupt the belief in objective, foundational knowledge, instead constructing a pedagogy from a modern perspective. As will be discussed later, the emergence of ecocomposition comes from Berlin's social-epistemic understanding of the discipline.

It should be noted, however, that while I argue against current-traditional approaches to composition pedagogy and embrace Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric as a starting point for ecocomposition, that binary is not without critique. In *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*, Robert J. Connors (1997) writes a history of composition that considers the evolving discipline through the 19th and early 20th century. In accomplishing this project, Connors problematizes the term "current-traditional rhetoric" and the way it has been used by many compositionists as a catch-all term for "outdated methods." Connors argues that the term was first used by Daniel Fogarty and then picked up in a different time and context by Richard Young, eventually becoming the term to indicate "both the outmoded nature and the continuing power of older textbook-based writing pedagogies" (p. 4). According to Knoblauch (as cited in Connors, 1997, p. 5), this usage is problematic because current-traditional rhetoric was never a pedagogy attributed to any textbook or theorist, but has simply been used as a scapegoat for any composition pedagogy that is no longer desirable from a modern perspective.

Part of Connors's goal in reframing (and renaming) current-traditional rhetoric is to show that composition pedagogy before 1960 was not static but responsive to social changes at the turn of the century. One benefit of this approach is that Connors is able to illuminate some important changes in composition-rhetoric that deserve investigation, such as how the entry of women into higher education changed the argumentative preoccupation of the field and how the heavy workload of composition instructors forced them to change their methods. Another example of how composition-rhetoric changed was in response to new literacy exams instituted by universities; abstract theories did not improve grammar and mechanics, so instructors responded by using product-oriented pedagogies (Connors, 1997, p. 129).

Connors (1997) makes the important argument that instructors were not necessarily self-consciously embodying a problematic, hierarchical pedagogy; they were responding to the immediate context they were working in. This is also true of faculty at my institution, who in many ways simply want to ensure students are able to write error-free standard written English upon graduation; they are not teaching with bad intentions, even if the methodologies are considered problematic from a contemporary perspective. These investigations are also important because they illuminate the bifurcation we see between composition and literature instruction in the university; because instructors were so overworked with large classrooms of students, many of them preferred to move on to teaching literature (p. 194). Connors proves that by terming all of the diversity and complexity of pre-1960s composition pedagogy "current-traditional," we make a generalization that is unable to account for developments in the field that are still relevant today. Therefore, when I use Berlin's term "social-epistemic rhetoric," I am using it to suggest the need to complicate how writing gets done in the university and to acknowledge its social constructedness; I am not using it to scapegoat the teaching of all mechanics. My experiences of seeing current-traditionalism in my department illuminate the need for a more critical approach to teaching writing, not just grammar-based pedagogies.

Part of the reason it is important to not generalize all dated composition and rhetoric theories as no longer useful—an argument I will also make about process pedagogy in upcoming sections—is because writing instructors were not villains creating their pedagogies in a vacuum; they were active agents responding to major shifts in the university populace. Sharon Crowley (1998), in many respects, summarizes the early trajectory of the field by linking these philosophical shifts to practical, historical changes in the university. For example, Crowley cites the Morrill Act—which provided funding to land grant colleges specializing in ventures of

middle-class employment—as central to changing the "Matthew Arnold," or bourgeois, inflected university to a research university (p. 54). This change is what Berlin (1996) might term as a shift from liberal-cultural pedagogy to meritocratic-scientific pedagogy. Crowley (1998) continues the explanation of composition history, citing the beginning of the college freshman English requirement as coinciding with the Harvard entrance examination (p. 65). Quoting a portion of the entrance examination for readers, Crowley notes class bias in the questioning, which leads to a necessary discussion of "writing errors" being contingent on time, place, and class (p. 71-72). In other words, composition scholars began to acknowledge that objectively "good" writing did not exist; all writing is contingent on social context. These types of observations have historically led to Berlin's (1996) socially conscious pedagogy social-epistemic rhetoric, and eventually my focus on the need for context in a place-based curriculum, one that takes into account environment's effects on written discourse.

It is important that I acknowledge the historical and philosophical origins of composition and rhetoric I was educated to understand so I am able to posit the argument that writing program administrators can utilize ecocomposition to navigate the potential disjuncture from what they know as useful pedagogy to what they see in new working environments. Ecocomposition stresses the importance of context, locality, and holistic understanding, which I am attempting to apply to the RMUWP to refrain from outright rejection of pedagogies that have fallen out of favor in the larger composition community. Instead, I will examine why some pedagogies may have made sense during one particular time and space but now only make sense in modification or not at all. I will also be addressing the importance of process writing pedagogies when establishing writing program administration standards, advocating for the some of the pragmatic elements of process from the vantage point of ecocomposition.

Process Pedagogy

Like other composition pedagogies, *process pedagogy* emerged as a reaction to a need within a particular context in time and space, particularly in response to the meritocratic English curricula that sprung up after the Morrill Act. Composition scholars saw the need to move away from this meritocratic, current-traditionalist focus on writing products to a focus on the process of writing itself. Donald Murray—a foundational compositionist for process pedagogy—would describe this shift from a preoccupation with product-oriented teaching approaches to an understanding of holistic, process-oriented teaching approaches. In other words, process pedagogy argues that instructors should focus less on what the final written product looks like and more on the learning process that accompanies the act of writing.

Murray's 1972 article "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product" is the first in the anthology *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory* (the anthology that formed the basis of my graduate composition and rhetoric education), under the heading mentioned in the last section, "The Givens in Our Conversations: The Writing Process." Not only does this location in the anthology hint that Murray's understanding of process pedagogy is foundational in understanding modern composition instruction, it became a rhetorical move for me in my department when arguing for an updated curriculum, because I used the anthology to show how the current pedagogies in the RMUWP do not even appear in modern composition and rhetoric graduate teaching assistantship training; current-traditionalism, even as the reigning pedagogy of my department, is that outdated.

Along with other scholars such as Janet Emig (1977) and Sondra Perl (1979), Murray advocates for a paradigm shift in which composition instructors no longer only focus on marking up final papers—many times on the sentence level—but engaging in the understanding of

writing holistically, from invention to editing. This viewpoint is a substantially different way of thinking about writing education that shifted the focus from product to student. Murray (1972) argues that this shift is about more than just best practices in a methodological sense; he contends that "attack[ing]" students' final products only "confirm[s] their lack of self-respect for their work and for themselves" (p. 3). In this way, Murray begins with an ethical appeal, advocating for both better teaching and more thoughtful relationship building between instructor and student. Murray (1972) suggests that the authority of the didactic lecture is misplaced, because students do not learn writing "by talking about it, but by doing it" (p. 5). The writing process is much more than the final end product: "It is the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world" (Murray, 1972, p. 4). This nascent focus on the constructedness and contingency of language, as well as the more ethical relationship between instructor and student, sets the stage for Berlin's (1996) social-epistemic pedagogy.

While this pedagogy is in many ways "the givens in our conversation," and a starting place for conversations about updating curriculum in RMUWP, it also necessitates critique, particularly for the way it overgeneralizes the writing process. Murray (1972) divides the writing process into three distinct stages, *"prewriting, writing*, and *rewriting*" (p. 4), which at the time was a necessary shift from thinking about writing mainly as a product-to-be-edited to a learning process. However, *process pedagogy* is often considered an oversimplification of writing. Flower and Hayes (2011/1981) use cognitive research to further nuance stages of writing, and today writing is instead regarded as a recursive, non-linear process. Nevertheless, Murray's approach to writing instruction was in many ways revolutionary and remains a cornerstone of composition pedagogy.

An important critique of process pedagogy comes from Susan Miller's (1991) *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition*. Miller (1991) looks at the history of composition from a feminist and Marxist lens, arguing that most composition histories avoid discussing the distribution of literacy and how technologies shape teaching more so than ideologies (p. 45). Before process pedagogy, the focus on mechanical correctness was a way to allow the masses a chance at meritocracy, but to also simultaneously convince them they were "dirty" and in need of polishing to enter the bourgeoisie (Miller, 1991, p. 57). Medical and sanitation-inflected metaphors still used today like "writing lab" or "cleaning up grammar" carry the connotation that uneducated populations are "sick" or "dirty" until they learn how to write in a civilized fashion.

Miller critiques this classist form of composition instruction and argues that process pedagogy is the same approach dressed in in different clothes. Miller (1991) contends that process pedagogy has legitimized the field of composition in the eyes of the institution, but it has not "yet provided an accurate or even a very historically different theory of contemporary writing, even if we grant it partial paradigmatic status" (p. 108). From this perspective, process pedagogy was more of a way to develop an academic discipline than to truly revolutionize the teaching of writing. The consequence for this lack of paradigmatic shift is enormous, according to Miller (1991), because composition, and writing in general, often becomes the institutional boundary for students to be seen as legitimate, to be considered either human (cultured; educated) or inhuman (uncultured; uneducated) (p. 86).

Part of Miller's reservation toward process-oriented pedagogies seems to be what she considers their avoidance of the political nature of discourse. Miller argues that the discipline of composition has failed to show students the ways some writing processes privilege some writers over others, and process pedagogy has not taught students how to analyze these privileging

mechanisms (p. 118-119). Even if students are seen from a more holistic, process-oriented perspective, that perspective is still Western in thought and practice. According to Miller, process writing, then, is a mask for the same ideologies that have perpetuated the last couple centuries, and with Murray's (1972) approach we are seeing superficial adjustments that only slightly change pedagogy—say, more drafting and peer workshops, but no real engagement on a critical level. I posit that this issue can be amended by taking an ecological focus to writing—particularly writing process—a focus that takes into account the political nature of a particular place.

Similarly to Miller, Faigley (1992) critiques process pedagogy for its inability to provide students with an understanding of constructed reality. Faigley argues that even though process-oriented instructors leave behind a current-traditional approach, process pedagogy still assumes that there is a type of "good writing" that will be acknowledged through peer reviews and drafting (p. 113). Often times, these assumptions of how a revised essay is better than a draft are left unproblematized, which only protects the status quo. Like Miller, Faigley posits that process pedagogy does not seriously revolutionize former composition practices.

The relatively short timeframe in which process pedagogy emerged and reenergized the field, to its almost immediate postmodern critique, left the discipline in disagreement over process pedagogy's contribution to the field. Richard Fulkerson (2005) argues that composition scholars at the beginning of the 21st century generally had consensus that writing that is aware of its constructedness and rhetorical context constituted "good" writing, but they still disagreed, following the process debates of the 1980s, about which pedagogy would help students achieve their writing goals (p. 655).

Fulkerson makes an important analysis of the process/post-process discussion, in which he contends that many arguments against process pedagogy are straw men or logical fallacies. For example, not all process pedagogy reduces writing into formulaic steps to be followed arbitrarily, nor does all process pedagogy consider the individual writer the sole maker of meaning (p. 670). Furthermore, it is possible to utilize the important lessons of drafting and learning process while being socially, politically, and ecologically aware. What we now consider "post-process"—the acknowledgement of writing as a social activity—is not necessarily at odds with process to begin with (p. 670). Moreover, Fulkerson argues programs should avoid promoting one understanding or stance of writing pedagogy at any point, because oftentimes scholars will have to adjust their personal philosophies when they enter new colleges or contexts (p. 680). The realization that not every pedagogy before the 21st century is universally dismissed by all composition scholars certainly would have been a useful lesson for me upon entering my first English department full of competing philosophies. My argument to use ecocomposition to establish best practices helps implement process pedagogy with the understanding of the post-process critiques just described. An ecological lens can help to negotiate among the competing philosophies I've outlined and seen in my own practice—current-traditionalism, process pedagogy, and ecocomposition.

On the level of practice, process pedagogy inarguably changed the writing classroom. Instead of instructors standing in front of the classroom lecturing about grammar construction or reading from a piece of canonical literature the students were supposed to model, we saw students having time, space, and freedom to draft and work in groups; the composition classroom literally looked different, moving from the expert speaking at the students to a more Freirian model of egalitarian pods and power-sharing discussion. Instead of having pieces of writing

marked up with red pen for their grammatical and mechanical failures, students were given time—and credit, even—for the thinking and drafting process, and the generation of ideas was considered more important than correct grammar. These are crucial changes I am looking to implement at RMUWP, changes that must be established along with an ecological mindset.

This picture of the process classroom is, of course, an oversimplification, as critiques of process pedagogy will eagerly point out, but it is also true that the remnants of process pedagogy are still everywhere in our classrooms (Ede, 2004). Nevertheless, the important lessons of Miller and Faigley and many other composition scholars remind us that writing cannot be reduced to either grammatical exercises or a set of procedural steps to master. Writing is a social, political, and rhetorical activity that is now also adapting to the multimodality of the 21st century (Palmeri, 2012). Writing is fundamentally ecological and always part of a dynamic system. In the next section, I will discuss where the field of composition is now situated in context of the process/post-process debates and how this position in time and space has allowed for the emerging pedagogy of ecocomposition. I will also argue that even though the field has largely moved on to new debates, in many places (such as RMUWP), writing program outcomes— particularly process pedagogy—have yet to be established.

Post-Process: Writing as Ecological

Many of the post-process pedagogies I discuss are not "post" as if they are against process; they function on the premise that process pedagogy is a "given in our conversations," and assume the lessons of process pedagogy have been realized at most universities. In order to argue for the need for an ecological perspective in composition and rhetoric, I will discuss three of these reactions to process pedagogy: the apocalyptic end of composition, new thematic and/or methodological approaches, and, eventually, ecocomposition. It is important to note that these

ideas are not necessarily happening linearly, one after the other, but are simply common perspectives in 21st century composition studies.

Various arguments concerning composition's inability to nail down the exact way writing functions as a process has led to some critiques of the field itself. After thousands of years of Grecian rhetoric, hundreds of years of belles-lettres, decades of meritocratic current-traditionalism, and a relatively short turnaround from process to post-process, I argue that the reaction to dismiss all (or most) of composition instruction as unworkable is very much an overreaction. One example of such an overreaction is David Smit's (2007) aptly named *The End of Composition Studies*, which argues that the current state of composition in the university needs to enter a new paradigm shift, and former pedagogies of composition should be radically reconceptualized if not altogether abandoned. Smit (2007) states that all assumptions about writing are now being questioned (p. 3), from what writing even is, to how students should learn how to write, to how well students can or cannot transfer information from writing classes to other contexts. Smit presents compelling evidence for problematizing all of these facets of composition studies, though the critiques Smit presents are already inherent critiques that are being grappled with in the discipline.

An example of Smit (2007) offering a critique of composition pedagogy is in his discussion of "writing as social practice" (p. 77). He argues that theories of writing as social practice, or discourse, are opaque because they do not account for how people learn from environmental influences (p. 81), the theories ultimately becoming tautologies because they do not describe actual learning (p. 85). Because the only example we have of writing being social is the actual writing itself, according to Smit, theories of writing as social practice are unhelpful.

This is one of many times Smit overstates his case and for multiple reasons. While I agree we need to be aware of how writers learn from environmental influences, I argue toward the inclusion of ecocomposition to address this issue rather than abandonment of process and socially-minded pedagogies. Furthermore, to be able to pinpoint the exact moment a social transaction takes place as well as every process happening when a writer enters social discourse is unreasonable. We know writing is a social practice because writing is taught and learned in social environments, and even if humans are not personally interacting, a writer and/or reader is interacting with a text that was created within a particular discourse community, being read and/or written by a person from a particular discourse community. Rather than reacting with frustration because we cannot reduce all of writing into discrete units (a critique ironically leveled at process pedagogy as well), we should embrace the ecological nature of writing.

Though I do not disagree with Smit's points about needing to understand environmental influences better, I do disagree with his solution to address this phenomenon—to insist that writing courses across the disciplines become more similar to one another (p. 193)—so we can improve teaching transfer (p. 158), or how "various kinds of knowledge and skill [are] transferred from one situation to another, or learned in one context and applied in another" (p. 119). Homogenizing the curriculum in order to control for diversity actually decreases students' attention to rhetorical context and the ecology in which writing is happening, which also decreases students' ability to respond to place-based, diverse writing demands (Lucksinger, 2014). Though Smit makes useful critiques, moving toward the direction of understanding particular environmental influences is more useful than dismantling composition programs altogether.

This abandonment of socially-minded pedagogy is also seen in the later work of Sidney Dobrin, who earlier in his career actually advocates for ecocomposition. In the introduction to *Postcomposition*, Dobrin (2011) explains that the title of his work is not suggesting an apocalyptic end to composition studies, but that "composition studies' end will merely mean its mutation into something more adaptable to the time of its end, its new hybrid formation, a formation dependent upon cultural demands and manifestations of what the field is and should be" (p. 2). One of Dobrin's (2011) central critiques of composition scholarship is that teaching and writing program administration should not be the center of composition studies—writing as a subject should be the main object of study. He argues that composition has too long focused on students and the practice of writing over the theory of writing (p.7). Dobrin maintains the importance of theory in composition and rhetoric scholarship and posits that the study of writing is not dependent upon the study of students (p. 15). I argue that theoretical work is indeed important but that ecological theory is not mutually exclusive from teaching or student concerns. Instead, writing should be seen from a holistic, ecological perspective that includes the student as well, as an active agent in the discourse.

An area I more fervently depart from Dobrin's arguments is in his discussion of place and space. Dobrin (2011) focuses on the concept of space and why composition theory needs to focus less on its temporal history and more on how it occupies space. Dobrin also explains the difference between place and space, which often get conflated. Dobrin cites Yi-Fu Tuan, who argues that place offers security and space offers freedom (p. 36). This is an important distinction according to Dobrin, as cultivating a sense of place facilitates affinity for an area whereas space offers the room to move and grow. Dobrin argues against the so-called conservatism of place in composition—a stance that I refute when place is understood from an ecological, dynamic

standpoint. Place is necessary in order to cultivate relationships among locations and people. Rather than moving away from composition's ethical concern of the student and rhetorical focus on place, as Dobrin argues, or completely dismantling the history of composition pedagogies entirely, as Smit argues, I advocate for a rhetorically aware, contextual, environmentally and student-focused pedagogy that recovers aspects of process pedagogy in a pragmatic yet socially aware way. By looking at writing with a systems-level ecological approach, compositionists can build on student-focused and constructivist ideas that are also socially aware.

A different way composition scholars have responded to post-process scholarship is by offering new, thematic and/or methodological forms of composition pedagogy. All of the following examples, I argue, exhibit a disciplinary tendency to articulate a composition pedagogy that makes sense in today's context. This discussion is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the new compositions but a grappling with the context in which ecocomposition could emerge as a useful perspective.

One perspective of composition pedagogy is offered through the lens of vitalism, or the expressive practice of invention (Hawk, 2007). Hawk (2007) discusses three forms of vitalism: oppositional, investigative, and complex. He argues that vitalism is assumed to be opposed to rhetoric (p. 3), but can actually be useful in the creation of texts because vitalism posits that composition is complex and generative (p. 5). Vitalism would help composition theorists move away from the examination of things and toward the relations of things (p. 104), a position that is helpful in teaching composition across a variety of mediums, and that bears resemblance to ecocomposition. In some ways, vitalism is not useful so much as a pedagogical tool to be deployed in the classroom but instead as an understanding on the part of the instructor and student. If the "vital impulse" is productive creativity that the intellectual mind cannot

completely access (p. 147-149), then we understand some limits to how we teach writing. This perception of rhetoric is at odds with Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric, which treats the process of writing as more social than vital impulse. I argue against this theory from a pedagogical standpoint, as it leaves little room for teaching a socially responsible composition pedagogy. In my own department, ideas like vitalism even permeate current-traditionalism, in that colleagues treat writing as a "vital impulse" and grammatical correctness as the only writing skill that can really be taught.

Like Hawk, Kelly Pender (2011) also investigates a way of understanding 21st century composition from a theoretical position. Pender's discussion of techne—the skill, craft, and process of making—as central in the teaching of composition work is an important contribution to composition and rhetoric that shapes the inclusion of ecocomposition. Techne expands composition and rhetoric's role beyond the boundaries of written communication and into other meaning-making acts, such as the creation of multi-media, for example. Techne is defined as "a non-instrumental mode of bringing forth" (p. 16). This is a unique way of understanding techne, because typically the process of making has been perceived as a guidebook or means of producing resources (p. 16). Pender's definition allows the process of making to be meaningful outside of economic gain. According to Pender, the study of "techne creates opportunities for cultural critique by making tacit social practices explicit" (p. 30). This is a useful perspective because techne suggests that writing can be both teachable and critical if instructors focus on how writers use discourse to respond within particular ecologies. Similar to techne, ecocomposition seeks to make "tacit social practices explicit" and further the betterment of all citizens, rather than producing resources for the elite few.

Techne's focus on making provides composition instructors a way to navigate many different forms of composition, including technological forms. Many discussions of modern composition pedagogy focus on technology, from the postmodernist perspective of Faigley (1992) to the 21st century multi-modal focus of Palmeri (2012). These discussions have had some of the most visible impacts in today's composition classrooms as today's techne inevitably includes a variety of modes (Faigley; 1992; Pender, 2011; Palmeri; 2012).

Faigley (1992) discusses "the networked classroom" and the use of hypertext, positing that this type of classroom might be the first time the "student-centered classroom" actually comes to realization (p. 167), because computers act as equalizers for students who would normally be ostracized because of their race, gender, and/or class. Furthermore, students and instructors can talk simultaneously with the same platform, which allows everyone equal access in the discussion. These traits are postmodern, according to Faigley (1992), because the technologies "have destabilized traditional hierarchies between teacher and students and among students themselves, and they have dislocated traditional subjectivities of classroom writers, inviting them to take on multiple identities" (p. 200). In other words, classroom technology provides the conditions to subvert the traditional hierarchies of modernism.

Building off of the idea of the networked classroom (Faigley, 1992), Jason Palmeri's (2012) *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy* is a refreshing look at the history of composition and a unique contribution to the current field. Students should have the option of using various modalities, many of them already familiar, in order to compose texts (Palmeri, 2012). Instead of breaking away from the history of the field while advocating for multimodal writing pedagogy, Palmeri shows how writing pedagogy has always been multimodal to some extent and how compositionists might recover these lessons. Palmeri's focus

on recovery rather than abandonment is a useful model for compositionists, because it offers an ecological critique, an attempt to understand various modes of composition in context. Palmeri self-consciously narrates a story of composition that incorporates ideas from many scholars and recovers useful contributions that are often forgotten when new methods come on the scene. Palmeri does not create an unnecessary splitting from previous methodologies; he shows continuance among methodologies, which is also a useful aspect of ecocomposition when working in new environments. Multimodality is a necessary topic in 21st century composition education, but there is still much to glean from older methods of teaching. The structure of his argument, and his effort to realistically acknowledge the pedagogies working in composition classrooms today, is similar to the one I employ to argue for ecocomposition as a way to implement WPA best practices.

One benefit Palmeri (2012) sees for multimodal writing pedagogy is an issue that David Smit (2007) elucidates—the difficulty of transfer. Palmeri (2012) states, "By organizing our courses around concerns of rhetoric and process that can potentially apply across modalities, we may be able to help students develop transferable composing skills" (p. 49). If a student can be rhetorically effective in textual, audio, and visual compositions, he or she is more likely to transfer those skills of rhetorical effectiveness to other areas of academic research, social activism, and employment opportunities.

I have examined a few of the various pedagogies that have emerged in recent composition history in order to illuminate ways the field is grappling with articulating best practices after the wake of process pedagogy. Lisa Ede (2004) acknowledges this state of confusion, returning the conversation to original, clarifying queries, by posing questions about the field of composition that attempt to situate it, such as "What are we talking about when we

talk about composition?" (p. 3). Ede focuses on the "politics of composition's location in the academy," arguing that the process movement is not really over, even if we have moved on to new discussions in the literature (p. 6). A historical perspective attempts to piece together what the process movement was reacting to and whether it is even accurate to refer to it as a movement (Ede, 2004). Like current-traditionalism, process pedagogy has been lumped together as a singular perspective even though many different composition scholars had nuanced versions of what is now known as process pedagogy—not the unified vision scholars today depict it to be (Ede, 2004; Fulkerson 2005).

Ede (2004) goes on to argue that even though much of current composition scholarship claims to be post-process, process teaching is still everywhere, and newer composition pedagogies have only minimally changed what composition teaching actually looks like. Ede appears to be making a don't-throw-the-baby-out-with-the-bathwater argument, stating that she considers the "rhetorical tradition" and the "writing process movement" as central components of her pedagogy (p. 70)—outcomes that are still listed by the writing program administration as central for first-year composition. Her focus on maintaining these best practices within current research provides a framework in which to implement ecocomposition as a way to navigate environments that do not acknowledge these practices.

Ede sees Berlin's work as foundational to the field in that it "[continues] our emphasis on the rhetorical tradition" (p. 17). In other words, it is necessary to utilize the work of the past in order to move forward and create pedagogies of best practices for the 21st century (Ede 2004; Palmeri 2012). Though Dobrin (2011) claims that *Postcomposition* is not an outright rejection of the discipline, it does advocate for a departure from how most work in composition pedagogy is done. I contend that we do not need an end to a student-centered scholarship to find theoretical

clarity (Dobrin, 2011); instead we need to realistically assess the strengths and weaknesses of past methodologies and understand the rhetorical situation for the discipline in the 21st century, particularly at colleges that do not have the privilege of working from, and thus critiquing, a process-centered approach.

Many composition programs, such as the one I work in, still need to establish and articulate social-epistemic rhetoric and what that means for the teaching of writing; I argue that a social-epistemic rhetoric appropriate for the 21st century is ecocompositionist, focused on relationships and environmental concerns. Establishing a revised vision of process pedagogy along with the writing program administration standards of rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; and knowledge of conventions can assist in establishing groundwork for a composition program that is cognizant of its history and context. To establish these standards is a necessary step for programs like RMUWP in order to articulate best practices within an ecocomposition program. In the next chapter, I will work from the understanding of composition history I've outlined, particularly the tension between current-traditionalism and process, between objective theories of writing and social epistemic-rhetoric. I will examine the way ecological literacy can provide a perspective that finds contextual awareness in these tensions. By looking toward the lessons of ecological literacy, composition pedagogy can be enhanced in a localized and productive way.

CHAPTER III

THE LENS OF ECOLOGICAL LITERACY IN COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

In the previous chapter, I traced overlapping and competing theories of composition studies applicable to work done in writing program administration, work that could be more efficiently navigated with an ecological mindset. Through this discussion about writing programs with ecologies such as my work experience, there emerges a need for theoretical grounding that can lead to tangible outcomes and practices that can be articulated to those working in these respective writing programs. Ecoliteracy, as theoretical grounding, articulates many themes writing program administrators can apply to composition instruction—a holistic understanding of systems, ethical relationships within systems, critique of power and social issues within systems, and so on. Ecoliteracy enhances the features of composition that already have a historical commitment to students and social justice (Berlin, 1996; Harris, 2012).

As I grappled with what my own ideals regarding my composition pedagogy meant within a department that often saw writing in the university a very different way, I discovered a new way of approaching educational philosophy: ecological literacy. I was attempting to work through tensions in my department while simultaneously studying the ecological foundations of education in my graduate coursework, and this perspective began to illuminate some of the rifts in my department in a more productive way. The term "ecological" took on two definitions that helped make better sense of a program like RMUWP (regional Midwestern university writing program): the dynamic relationships that exist within whole systems, and also a more focused environmental perspective. A RMUWP both needed to be understood in terms of who worked

within it and what experiences and educations these faculty had; this dynamic must be understood before attempting to overhaul a program. I also argue by thinking environmentally, the ecological focus of these faculty relationships is further established in ways that promote collaborative, ecological relationships that are necessary in 21st century educations. In many ways, ecological literacy seemed to be a way to mend rifts between competing composition pedagogies in my department and provided a perspective that closed some of the theoretical gaps. Instead of me jumping from one pedagogy to another while I attempted to work with students in all of our composition classrooms (the methodology I had developed out of desperation), ecological literacy established a framework that helped me make sense of competing pedagogies in our department in context, illuminating the pedagogical pieces that work and the ones that do not. In other words, by trying to understand the individuals working in my department—their educations, histories, and experiences—I could see why in some instances they might choose sentence diagramming, even though I found the practice theoretically unsustainable in a writing program. Ecoliteracy provided a way forward for me to rethink what our department could be.

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss some of the foundational literature in ecological literacy that can provide a better framework for understanding composition pedagogy, a framework that articulates a holistic examination of the field while offering tangible themes and vocabulary that can enhance a writing program. First I will discuss the inherently interdisciplinary nature of ecological theory, which can help facilitate people of diverse educational backgrounds and experiences within a program to work together from different vantage points. I articulate *ecological design intelligence* as well as *ecofeminism and traditional ecological knowledge* as ways of considering the interdisciplinary nature of ecological literary. I

then move to understand ways ecological theory focuses on action-based pedagogies, specifically *place-based education* and *out-of-classroom* education. These themes that ground the theory of ecological literacy will help set the stage for a discussion about the emergence of ecocomposition and how it can function as a writing program.

An Interdisciplinary, Ecological Perspective

Many ecologically-minded writers argue for environmental action and responsibility in a way that maintains an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, Aldo Leopold (1966) writes about how humans have cut off our understating of nature by reducing it to parts, rather than trying to understand the whole. According to Leopold (1966), "There is as yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. Land […] is still property. The land-relation is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations" (p. 238). Leopold argues much of the human population have categorically termed land to be for economic means and discontinued thinking about it from an ethical sense. Leopold (1966) writes that we need to extend our understanding of ethics to the land:

> All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. […] The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. (p. 239)

In other words, just as society has constructed regulations about how people should ethically treat each other, we must develop regulations about how we should ethically treat the land. I interpret this articulation of a land ethic as a way to understand how people can live harmoniously; we cannot confine our thinking to one perspective or discipline but instead must

think interdisciplinarily, in all the ways people have opportunities (or not) to live well, whether that be in terms of the humanities, social sciences, or hard sciences.

This interdisciplinarity is a cornerstone of ecological thinking. In the context of my department, this interdisciplinary thinking acknowledges the different experiences many faculty and staff had. For example, older faculty were educated in a current-traditionalist approach and continue to pass that on to their students. Faculty just coming from their graduate school experience undoubtedly came in with a more constructivist understanding of writing. Rather than isolating these views and trying to find philosophical uniformity, an ecological approach acknowledges different personal histories within a department and looks for a way to make the relationships among diverse staff and faculty sustainable. For example, those with a more grammar-based background can move to teaching the required grammar course for secondary education teachers, while those trained primarily in literary analysis or composition pedagogy can find a more appropriate fit within the ecology of the department. Options such as these are more sustainable than expecting all stakeholders within a writing program to shift to one theoretical position; ecoliteracy attempts to acknowledge competing positions within an ecology.

Ecological design intelligence.

The ability to understand (or not understand) the ecology of an area is related to our ability to understand interconnectedness, to analyze environment. Part of my difficulty in understanding my department was my tendency to dichotomize people and institutions, rather than seeing connections and overlapping goals. David Orr (2004) discusses this tendency to not see interconnectedness as a failure of today's education. In the first part of *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*, he outlines what education is for, the dangers

of education, the problem of education, and the business of education. Orr (2004) connects the lack of interconnected education to the poor state of our environment:

> These things are threads of a whole cloth. The fact that we see them as disconnected events or fail to see them at all is, I believe, evidence of a considerable failure that we have yet to acknowledge as an educational failure. It is a failure to educate people to think broadly, to perceive systems and patterns, and to live as whole persons. (p. 2)

Orr (2004) argues that we must educate students for more than just being successful in the global economy, because this economic perspective in education is causing harm rather than good. Much of the damage the world has endured is because of educated people, not ignorant people. which further suggests that a complete undoing of education is necessary (Orr, 2004, p. 7-8). Instead of global economy, we should focus educative efforts toward "ecological design intelligence," which describes "the capacity to understand the ecological context in which humans live, to recognize limits, and to get the scale of things right" (Orr, 2004, p. 2). "Ecological design intelligence" is a much different approach compared to how students are educated today, because "it requires the good sense and moral energy to say no to things otherwise possible and, for some, profitable" (Orr, 2004, p. 3). By thinking holistically, we begin to understand how our actions affect others beyond self-serving economic gain.

Ecological design intelligence is a potential way to challenge writing program administrators (WPAs) to see their departments anew, to have the moral energy to think of how relationships within the program might be sustainable, rather than writing off seemingly unattractive teaching practices simply because it is easy to do so. This position forces educators to recalibrate the boundaries of their disciplines and to notice the interdependence of different components of academia. One practical example for WPAs would be to avoid academic research

that only affects their own careers more than educational practices or students (Orr, 2004, p. 10).

Orr calls this problem the "general worthlessness of academic research" which student writers in particular seem to intuit when doing ostensibly meaningless composition assignments—a possible reason they struggle to transfer writing instruction from one discipline to another (Smit, 2007; Orr, 2004, p. 10). This problem drives one of the reasons this dissertation commits to focusing on an audience that may have a range of ecological and composition and rhetoric backgrounds, an audience that may include multiple stakeholders of writing programs, such as WPAs; part-time, adjunct, and tenure-track faculty; instructors and staff; and students. I am attempting to show how ecocomposition can benefit RMUWP while at the same time discussing best practices of composition such as process pedagogy that can bolster an ecocomposition program, particularly in environments where process pedagogy is not being acknowledged.

I am self-consciously making a political decision to also write across scholarship—composition and rhetoric and ecological literacy—and for different audiences—compositionists, ecologists, WPAs—rather than one nuanced part of composition scholarship, only understandable to those already immersed in the field. By neglecting to show how disciplines and methodologies are connected, we fail both the environment and students trying to think critically about that environment:

> [S]tudents graduate without knowing how to think in whole systems, how to find connections, how to ask big questions, and how to separate the trivial from the important. Now more than ever, we need people who think broadly and who understand systems, connections, patterns, and root causes. (Orr, 2004, p. 23)

The ability to think broadly is different than "cleverness"—the ability to only think in fragments and in the short run (Orr, 2004, p. 30). Orr (2004) advocates for Karl Polanyi's term, "personal

knowledge," which is a "wider range of human perceptions, feelings, intellectual powers than those deemed to be narrowly 'objective'" (p. 31). By avoiding the emotional aspects of intelligence and organizing education as a business mode—instead of in terms of citizenship and justice—educators have negatively impacted student ability to see holistically, in connection to one another and the environment (Orr, 2004).

Orr advocates for a radically different organization of education, one that considers how people relate to one another, in particular contexts, alongside an ethical relationship to the environment. Orr acknowledges that this disrupts much work that currently gets accomplished in the university, which is focused on disciplinary isolation and objectivity. In this current state of academia, it is often difficult for academics to talk about love and affinity in relation to their work (p. 45). Love and affinity are usually not seen as important components of scientific work in particular, which is why the linking of science and the humanities, and in this dissertation— ecology and composition—is so important. Orr posits that historically environment is so closely connected to human creativity and emotional expression that environment is linked to the original biological need for words:

> We also have good reason to believe that the sense of awe toward the creation had a great
> deal to do with the origin of language and why protohumans *wanted* to talk, sing, and
> write poetry in the first place. Elemental things like flowing water, wind, trees, clouds,
> rain, mist, mountains, landscape, animal behavior, changing seasons, the night sky, and
> the mysteries of the life cycle gave birth to thought and language. (p. 51-52)

Composition studies is an excellent location to help recover these elemental processes that affect language acquisition. In order to educate people "to live as whole persons," we must reestablish

the interdisciplinary connection between society, environment, and humanities, which requires ecological thinking (Orr, 2004).

Ecofeminism and traditional ecological knowledge.

Ecological design intelligence provides a holistic way of thinking about interdisciplinary education. Another aspect of interdisciplinary thinking is its focus on cross-cultural and marginalized perspectives, which help programs examine their contexts at the local level, among faculty in a program and also students within the program. Diverse perspectives are important in creating a full portrait for educating for ecological literacy. Part of my own inability to understand my department was a failure to acknowledge which ways local knowledges and diverse perspectives were at play: between old and young, tenured and untenured, local and foreign, and so on. Contributions to ecological literacy from the fields of ecological feminism and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK (Warren & Cheney, 1991; Snively & Corsiglia, 2001) help to analyze these power dynamics within writing programs. Both of these fields criticize the overwhelmingly masculine, Western orientation in the sciences and seek to illuminate these concerns, as well as find alternative routes to research practices.

Ecological feminism "is a feminism which attempts to unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement in order to bring about a world and worldview that are not based on socioeconomic and conceptual structures of domination" (Warren & Cheney, 1991, p. 179). In terms of composition and rhetoric programs, ecological feminism is useful in critiquing how power sharing (or not) is happening. In my department, many of my struggles to advance what I saw as a more ethical, rigorous curriculum were couched in gendered terms by the administration—I was being too emotional, too ambitious, too relational with students. My gender identity became a liability in these discussions, a marginalized component

within the ecology of the writing program. An ecological feminist approach to understanding RMUWP helps to provide some context for why I struggled to communicate within a patriarchal environment. At the very least, ecofeminism provides language to articulate why my concerns were being couched in gendered terms.

Ecological feminism is also a useful lens for writing classes to make critiques about systems of domination they see around them. Some of the goals of ecological feminism are to bring awareness to "local and global forms of environmental abuse" that affect disadvantaged populations, provide relief to environmental issues, and acknowledge ideologies that celebrate feminist and indigenous ways of knowing (Warren & Cheney, 1991, p. 181). Likewise, TEK looks to recover alternative ways of understanding ecology, in a tradition that is not linked to environmental disaster in the same way as Western Modern Science (Snively & Corsiglia, 2001). TEK also offers an opportunity for collaboration with other scholars in writing programs, particularly when composition instructors are not experts in diverse understandings of ecology.

The interdisciplinary focus within ecological literacy, from work in ecological design intelligence to ecofeminism and TEK, can help WPAs to avoid implementing curricula that prevent students from seeing the "threads of the whole cloth" (Orr, 2004). Ecological literacy's incorporation of interdisciplinary thinking provides methods for WPAs to implement holistic and diverse curricula. An ecological approach to writing programs should also be action-based, because its interdisciplinary nature self-consciously seeks out many different knowledges and methodologies to solve problems. By consequence, ecological literacy is not a passive theoretical understanding—it provides practical, action-based methodologies that can move writing programs toward social betterment.

Action-Based Education

Many action-based knowledges, or ways of thinking that lead to praxis, are based in a commitment to interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinary research can often offer points of practical collaboration for scholars and writers, particularly for those who may come from varied disciplines. My articulation of action-based education will lead to specific practices that WPAs can use to enhance writing programs, practices that consider the diverse individuals who make up a writing program. By drawing from many different ecological thinkers who promote action-based themes in education, WPAs are able to argue for composition and rhetoric best practices from a perspective that honors the ecology in which they are working.

Place-based education.

Place-based education acknowledges that the location in which education is happening is critical in deciding the curriculum and the academic work that needs to be accomplished. Gruenwald (2003) provides a theoretical rationale for place-based education, drawing from the following interdisciplinary approach: perceptual, sociological, ideological, political, and ecological. Gruenewald (2003) asserts "places are profoundly pedagogical" and that educators have a responsibility to understand the perceptual, sociological, ideological, political, and ecological dimensions of place or risk the danger of becoming complicit in dangerous political exploitation of them (p.621). Places in which students are educated always have these dimensions embedded in them, which make those who live there socially responsible for the knowledges that get taught and transmitted within a place. In this way, much work in ecological literacy can be connected to Berlin's (1996) social-epistemic rhetoric.

I posit that place-based education can provide a useful grounding for writing programs that motivates students who are part of these programs and who live in our places. Like Orr (2004), Gruenewald (2006) maintains that academic work needs to have purpose outside of CV

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growth. There is a need for self-conscious resistance to the discourse about business-model-education to avoid careerism over substantive intellectualism (Gruenewald 2006). To frame his argument, Gruenewald (2006) uses Walt Whitman's poem "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer," in which Whitman explains being in an astronomy lecture and eventually walking out in order to view the stars for himself instead of hearing about them second hand. This literary reference establishes the need for action in places, rather than just contemplation. Gruenewald (2006) goes on to mourn the loss of potential academic work that cannot get published because it does not fit the "ruling regime of scientific effectiveness" (p. 2). In order to resist static and regimented academic work, a central component of ecological education seeks to bring people into natural spaces and to have them experience the spaces in a primary way instead of learning solely theoretically or via secondary texts.

Out-of-classroom education.

Not only is it important to understand place-based education across the curriculum, but also throughout the entire educative timeline, from childhood and beyond. Many of the educational failures Orr (2004) critiques begin in early experiences. Sobel (1997) explains how the classroom removes children from natural spaces, how it removes primary educative experiences, instead instilling fear of environment from secondary texts. "Ecophobia," or the fear of nature, is often caused by well-meaning educators bombarding children with too much information about the destruction of the environment, too early in their emotional and intellectual development (Sobel, 1997, p. 33). Sobel (1997) argues, "we need to lead with…emotional connectedness before we start to impose issues on children" (p. 33). In order for students to resist, in Gruenewald's (2006) terms, this removal of affinity and indoctrination of fear, children should be able to be active, spending time outside, experiencing nature and forming connections

in the outdoor world. I maintain that Sobel's (1997) argument about ecophobia can be extended into later stages of intellectual development, such as at college. As I explore in later chapters, I argue that overcoming ecophobia can help students embrace an active process of invention in writing.

Significant and necessary education happens outside of the classroom setting, a value that most faculty and staff in my department could agree upon. Nabhan (1994) discusses the informal environmental education he witnesses among children playing on a Mexican ranch. The children learn about the nature around them through games, exploration, storytelling, and oral tradition. Through these descriptions of learning, Nabhan (1994) argues that formal education can stifle ecological education, which exasperates the problem of stifling organic cultural education as well. These examples of natural learning also provide WPAs with methods to apply curricula that resist tired, standard approaches to writing education. In order for students to develop both ecological and cultural knowledge, they have to have natural experiences outside of formal education settings. Even though the faculty in my department often had competing ideas of what composition education looked like, all shared an affinity for the place in which we lived and had an interest in teaching students about local history and environment. This translated into most faculty requiring students to perform out-of-class research, whether that was through visits to the local library and museum or through community walking tours. This common belief in local education became a shared location in which to articulate composition outcomes that faculty and staff could agree upon.

The ability to be literally outside the classroom provides WPAs ways to create curricula in an ecocomposition program within the context of best practices, such as service learning writing projects. In "Ecocritcism and Education for Sustainability," Garrard (2007) finds that

these natural experiences have a direct effect on students' later civic engagements. Garrard (2007) examines a questionnaire used to assess how students utilize their ecological educations in their out-of-classroom and civic lives. The study found that students saw "direct personal experience" in ecological education as being most important and useful to them (p. 372). This study shows how the incorporation of student experience within ecological education can create writing lessons that students see as more useful and transferable (Smit, 2007). According to Kiefer and Kemple, people "are far more likely to embrace fundamental change in their work habits when they can be part of the change process themselves and make it fit with that they are already doing" (as cited in Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 31). By including place-based learning in writing programs that move students into natural settings, students see the education as more useful and applicable and are able to, in return, more consistently incorporate sustainability into their lives.

By utilizing an ecological perspective, interdisciplinary, action-based education can be integrated into writing programs in a way that is understandable for students. One such example of ecological writing is Duncan's (2001) "Spirit-Fried No-Name River Brown Trout: A Recipe," in which Duncan combines ecology, geography, social activism, and of course artistry in this literary piece about eating (or not eating) brown trout. Duncan describes going out into nature and his affinity for landscapes and fishing, eventually deciding during one fishing trip that he will no longer eat his catch in an effort to be more politically conscious and environmentally sustainable. After giving sensory details of how delicious trout is, such as "the flesh is…delectable" (Duncan, 2001, p. 273), Duncan makes the hard decision of letting the fish go, but not before describing how important food—good, sustainable food—is to both individual people and whole cultures:

I realized that, in consuming this fish, I'd be consuming part of everything that made him.

I realized that everything that made him was precisely what, or who, he was making love

to. I realized that this same everything is who we, too, are made of; who we, too, are

submerged in; who we, too, daily eat; who we, too, seek to love and honor. The trout in

my hands let me feel this. He was, through no intention of his own, a spiritual touchstone.

And one takes such stones not to stomach, but to heart. (Duncan, 2001, p.282)

Evident in this quotation is Duncan's (2001) interdisciplinary knowledge of natural ecology,

along with his evocative, descriptive writing style. Duncan (2001) exemplifies how writing

pedagogy can be ecological, interdisciplinary, action-based, and rhetorically effective. To be able

to write in this way is to engage in a rigorous writing process that examines issues from a holistic

perspective.

At the beginning of this chapter I noted that as I struggled to update curriculum in my

department, I began studying ecological literacy in my graduate work. Though I did not initially

see these academic projects as connected, throughout the semester ecological literacy helped me

to better examine why some of my efforts were failing. I was not seeing the "threads in the

whole cloth" (Orr, 2004); I was not acknowledging all the pieces that interact and create

resistance when trying to update curriculum in a place one is unfamiliar with. Rather than

overhauling the methodologies faculty had used for years and relied on, I shifted my focus to

seeing how these methodologies—current-traditionalism, process, and ecocomposition—

functioned within the ecology of the department, and how best practices could be incorporated

via an ecocomposition program.

Ecocomposition—An Emerging Pedagogy

The components of ecoliteracy outlined in the last section—interdisciplinary perspectives, such as ecological design intelligence, ecofeminism, and TEK, as well as action-based educations, including place-based and out-of-classroom—offer foundations in which to base an ecological composition program, or an ecocomposition program. The theoretical disjuncture in my department from what I saw versus what was I was educated to know made it difficult for me, as a WPA, to implement a curriculum of best practices, because faculty practices derived from different theoretical perspectives. By seeing with an ecological framework, I began to better understand the way my department was functioning within these competing theories and practices. By applying an ecological framework, a WPA can articulate ways a department may begin to implement best practices from a position of shared concern for the place in which all faculty and staff are situated. In this section I discuss several theoretical foundations of ecocomposition such as its origins in the literature, as well as more specific concepts such as including stories and folklore, sense of place in writing, ecological writing process, and ethics in ecocomposition. I then move on to examine how ecocomposition can function as a writing program.

Ecocomposition is a way to navigate the composition and rhetoric pedagogies I examined in Chapter Two. Donald Murray (1972) called for an action-based composition pedagogy that focused on the process of writing, as well as meaningful, ethical relationships with students. James Berlin (1996) called for a social-epistemic rhetoric, a pedagogy that was aware of its own constructedness and sought to teach writing in a way that was socially aware. While these pedagogies have been critiqued, the remnants of both are everywhere and still foundational in many composition classrooms today (Ede, 2004). Ecocomposition, what Dobrin and Weisser (2002) define as the study of environments and discourse, is able to reassemble these different

pieces of social-epistemic and process pedagogy in what some, such as Miller (1991) and Fulkerson (2005), now considered a post-process era (Berlin, 1996; Murray 1972). By expanding the boundaries of composition pedagogy and reframing the rhetorical situation to include environment, writing program administration standards, such as process pedagogy, can be established without the problematic compartmentalization of the writing process; environment is a key component in understanding the ecological, recursive nature of writing. By understanding how discourse functions in local contexts, we can increase students' sense of place and embrace diverse discourses rather than see them as problematic (Smit, 2007). This section will look closely at the emerging field of ecocomposition and discuss its advantages in the context of the RMUWP and other potential composition programs looking to update curricula.

Theoretical Foundations

Marilyn Cooper's (1986) article, "The Ecology of Writing," is a foundational essay that helps jump-start the current state of ecocomposition. Cooper acknowledges the paradigm shift that was process pedagogy but then critiques it for being too mechanized. She argues for "an ecological model of writing, whose fundamental tenet is that writing is an activity through which a person is continuously engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems" (p. 367). According to Cooper, compositionists need to think beyond *process* of writing to *ecology* of writing, focusing not just on immediate context but the "dynamic interlocking systems which structure the social activity of writing" (p. 368). These systems are not simply generalizations, but concrete political entities "that can be investigated, described, [and] altered" (p. 369). Cooper (1986) utilizes the writing metaphor of a web which better acknowledges the ecological nature of writing: "anything that affects one strand of the web vibrates throughout the whole" (p. 370). By understanding how writing is constituted within an ecological system, writers are better able to

understand moving components of discourse and how to contribute to that discourse. Cooper (1986) states, "Writing is one of the activities by which we locate ourselves in the enmeshed systems that make up the social world. It is not simply a way of thinking but more fundamentally a way of acting" (p. 373). This focus on concrete action redefines process in a way that is more accessible to students learning to write.

The "ecology of writing" looks at writing from a different vantage point from process pedagogy, one that acknowledges how discourse is situated. Writing is not just linear, and it does not get produced from the intellectual input of just one person; writing is recursive, situated, and inherently social. Richard Coe (1975) examines how writing functions by looking at whole systems, what he calls eco-logic. For example, after explaining the inefficient logic of Western writing modes/models, Coe (1975) defines *eco-logic* by explaining its opposite:

These [Western] modes [classification, division, comparison/contrast, etc.] are highly appropriate to a particular type of subject: phenomena in which the whole is roughly equivalent to the sum of its parts. They are, however, inadequate for discussing the more complex phenomena which are increasingly relevant to contemporary realities. Our traditional rhetoric reflects the logic which dominated Western science and culture from the early-seventeenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. That logic was precisely the opposite of an eco-logic: far from being designed for understanding wholeness, it was a set of methods for reducing wholes into component parts, which could then be arranged in order and analyzed individually. Most of our thinking—from common sense to intrinsic literary criticism—is still based on this logic; many contemporary problems, especially our ecological difficulties, result in part from our using this logic inappropriately. (p. 232)

In other words, wholes systems eco-logic is juxtaposed against Western systems of logic that break phenomena into parts and make assumptions about those parts. Instead, eco-logic examines phenomena inductively and considers the whole system. An example Coe (1975) gives is the limited Western view of Indian poverty, and the frustration that Westerners have that many Indians suffering from malnutrition will not eat cows because of their sacred status. Coe (1975) explains that this frustration is the flaw of Western logic, because we do not consider the whole system: that cows, cow feed, and cow manure are a central part of Indian agriculture and ecology, and by eating the cow in the short-term, there will be more starvation in the long-term. As this example illustrates, eco-logic is important for understanding whole systems in the long-term rather than partial systems in the short-term. Eco-logic illuminates the writing process in that the skills students learn and develop in composition programs are not situated only for the point of short-term assignments, but are more importantly social, environmental, and humanist skills for long-term use.

Cooper's (1986) ecology of writing and Coe's (1975) eco-logic are metaphors—the web and whole system, respectively—for composition studies that can amend process pedagogies which reduced writing into linear steps and did not necessarily acknowledge the ecology in which writing was happening. These theories focus on context and how important it is to acknowledge the place in which writing is situated. To be able to sense places is to have the rhetorical awareness to write well in a specific ecology. Welty (2002) argues that while place is often a marginal concern for most writers, it is still of great importance. A writer's feelings are bound up in place (Welty, 2002, p. 41). Humans, or characters, often cause the antagonism or strife in life, and the places heal that pain (Welty, 2002, pp. 57-58). Welty (2002) gives the following definition for place in fiction:

Place in fiction is the named, identified, concrete, exact and exacting, and therefore

credible, gathering spot of all that has been felt, is about to be experienced, in the novel's

progress. Location pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place; place in

history partakes of feeling, as feeling about history partakes of place (pp. 46-47)

Place is central in understanding how race, gender, politics, and, of course—discourse—

functions in particular areas. In order to make tangible change, writers must know where they are

from (Welty, 2002). Welty (2002) writes, "It is by knowing where you stand that you grow able

to judge where you are" (p. 54). In other words, only by understanding a sense of place can a

writer usefully critique that place.

Understanding place in writing offers a way for students to see how writing works in

certain areas, and what makes it work "well." Faigley (1992) critiques process for not honestly

articulating what makes "good writing;" therefore, what academics really value in writing—

which is often a Western format—is still present in writing classrooms, but simply as an

undercurrent that leaves students guessing as to what academic values really look like. By

identifying place, we can begin to earnestly engage in the value systems that are important in

different locations (Welty, 2002): academia, politics, business, and so on. By understanding

writing as an ecological system that can be articulated, what good writing really is "can be

investigated, described, [and] altered" (Faigley, 1992; Cooper, 1986, p. 369).

As Cooper (1986) posits, ecological writing is not a vague way to understand that there is

a lot that goes into writing; it is a focused theory that begets specific, process-centered

composition pedagogies, an idea I maintain can be applied to local composition programs. When

WPAs apply ecocomposition practices to local programs, students begin to understand those

places better and learn to write within a place-based context. One example of how

ecocomposition can be applied to particular environments is in Ryden's concept of an "environmental image." Ryden studies how place and environment can be used to think about writing in new, specific ways. An "environmental image" is Kevin Lynch's term for a "generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world" that is "used to interpret information and to guide action" (as cited in Ryden, 1993, p. 54). Students can learn how to write detailed environmental images in order to sharpen their observational skills and expand ecological vocabulary. Roger M. Downs and David Stea advocate the use of "cognitive maps," or the writing of environmental images in an organized way so the information can be stored and accessed (as cited in Ryden, 1993, p. 54).

Stories and folklore.

Ecological concepts can provide students with critical thinking skills that enable them to be detail-oriented in their writing process. Specific ecological concepts such as environmental images and cognitive maps can help students make meaning out of sense perceptions: "people inevitably act as mental cartographers of their immediate milieu, producing representations of the local geography that they could transcribe onto paper if they were asked to" (Ryden, 1993, p. 54). These sense perceptions of environment are eventually translated into different forms of discourse, such as stories and folklore that can be examined within the composition classroom. Meaning-making, and education in general, occurs when we successfully link our sense perceptions to clearly articulated communication. Ryden argues that environment and narratives are directly linked: "Stories—and folklore in general—are inextricably linked with landscapes, overlying them snugly, bound to them and coloring them like paint on a barn wall. They are a central means by which people organize their physical surroundings" (p. 56). Texts, stories, and folklore are rich and full of meaning:

Items of folklore are artifacts of human intelligence first and foremost; they are created

and repeated for a reason, because they encode and carry important personal and cultural

messages; they are deciphered the same way. The messages behind the patterns finally

matter more than the patterns themselves. (p. 57)

Like Cooper (1986), Ryden (1993) posits that place encodes meanings that can be articulated and

if deciphered, eventually altered. Cultural value systems are embedded within narratives and

folklore, which make them useful reading material in composition classes that rely on critical

reading and response. It is important to study folklore and sense of place, because our own "self-

identity in inextricably bound up with knowledge of the spatial environment" (p. 56). The study

of folklore is an inherently interdisciplinary perspective. I argue that sense of place can only

make sense holistically, not from one vantage point like English or Geography or Ecology—

multiple and interdisciplinary ways of knowing are crucial (Ryden, 1993).

By thinking about writing in terms of place and ecology, students must flex intellectual

skills acquired across the curriculum. More specifically to writing, students can use place-based

storytelling to learn how writing creation occurs. Ryden argues that there are four main ways

folklore adds meaning, and interprets, physical places:

[Folklore] reveals the depth and intricacy of local knowledge of the nature and physical

properties and limitations of the geographical milieu; […] encapsulates and transmits the

intimate and otherwise unrecorded history of a place; […] provides a strong sense of

personal and group identity; […] indicates the emotions which local residents attach to

their place […]. (pp. 62-66)

All of these components exemplify the importance in including ecological literacy in a

composition curriculum from both the student and university perspective. Folklore provides

students with multiple and diverse knowledges in which to read, write, and analyze discourse. In order to write well in a specific location, a student must know and understand that location. Mary T. Hufford terms this understanding environmental literacy, which contributes to student literacy in general (as cited in Ryden, 1993, p.72). According to Ryden, there is a clear relationship between environmental literacy and written literacy:

> If environmental literacy enables one to read one's surroundings as if they were a text, that text must be made up of intelligible words, sentences, and paragraphs. The folk sense of place provides these units of meaning. As with any language, this sort of literacy is best gained through incessant practice and exposure. (p. 72)

In other words, students must be immersed in the process of environmental literacy in the same way they would be immersed in written literacy—reading, drafting, editing, etc. By studying immediate environments, students become more aware of the ecology in which their writing goals are situated.

The study of the intersection between discourse and environment helps students to better understand both (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). According to Ryden, "place necessarily has a physical geographical existence, [but] sense of place is primarily a narrative construction" (p. 77). A good example of this phenomenon is the importance of naming a place, and the cultural meaning attached to place-names (p. 78). Ryden argues that folklore and sense of place emerge out of concrete places and experience but simultaneously shape those experiences in a recursive process. We value this process, because "stories remain even when places change radically or vanish; the sense of place can outlast place itself" (Ryden, 1993, p. 95). By analyzing and even contributing our own stories, we participate in the meaning making that helps us make sense out of places.

Sense of place in writing.

It is generally recognized that race, gender, and social class affects student writing, and ecocomposition posits that the same level of importance attributed to these pieces of identity should also be attributed to place. In many ways, place determines how we move socially, politically, and environmentally just as much as race, gender, and social class. Nedra Reynolds (2004) explains how important place is to understanding how students write. She argues that only when students are moved are they able to see from a different perspective (p.2). Reynolds posits that composition studies must engage with "places and spaces" on a theoretical, political, and pedagogical level in order to understand where "writers write, learners learn, and workers work" (p. 3). This work is especially necessary in a postmodern teaching environment, when literal places are becoming replaced with online and internet communication (Faigley, 1993). Place is the one position that all people can share an understanding, despite racial, age, gender, socioeconomic, or power differences. On the other hand, the different ways people experience a place based on their own personal identities can further illuminate what differences look like, promoting a more tangible understanding of diversity within higher education.

Place—and space—are important concepts for WPAs to understand their writing programs, in order to better analyze the moving pieces within the system in which they are located. When we don't consider how space affects us,

> the ideology of transparent space takes over—the idea that space doesn't matter. Spatial practices, therefore, evolve from movements or placements that we take for granted, or boundaries that seem clear or uncontested, and they develop into the habitual ways we move through the world. (Reynolds, 2004, p. 14)

In this way, we see how space is connected to the need for writing programs to be aware of their own political realities (Cooper, 1986; Miller, 1991; Reynolds, 2004). Reynolds (2004) posits that space is essential to how we think about identity and discourse and deserves its own place of study in composition rhetoric. As previously mentioned, place is often the one identity marker that everyone in a classroom can share, and therefore it is a mutual starting point to understand other points of diversity:

> While race, class, and gender have long been viewed as the most significant markers of identity, geographic identity is often ignored or taken for granted. However, identities take root from particular sociogeographical intersections, reflecting where a person comes from and, to some extent, directing where she is allowed to go. Geographical locations influence our habits, speech patterns, style, and values—all of which make it a rhetorical concept or important to rhetoric. For writers, location is an act of inhabiting one's words; location is a struggle as well as a place, an act of coming into being and taking responsibility. (p. 11)

In order to write well and to write responsibly, students have to understand these "sociogeographical intersections." One current issue students have a need to examine in our current technologically-soaked classroom and workplace is the concept of Marx's time-space compression, which removes physical space from work and therefore forces workers to be able to work at any time, anywhere (as cited in Reynolds, 2004, p. 18). These types of investigations also help students focus on interdisciplinarity, drawing from both political theory and cultural geography in order to understand how ecocomposition is relevant to them in their daily lives (p. 43).

By moving between environment and discourse, students better understand writing ecologies. Reynolds (2004) argues for literally moving between environment and discourse, discussing different ways of moving, confronting, and dwelling in both material and metaphoric spaces, bridging these two binary concepts. One figure she uses to illustrate movement is the "flaneur," the "urban rambler, or street prowler" (Reynolds, 2004, p. 69), who walks and wanders through the city, writing about images he or she experiences (p. 70). This concept is useful in thinking about how composition students can learn descriptive techniques and understand writing as action-based movement, a concept I argue is important in articulating the process of writing to students, which I discuss more in Chapter Four.

If all stakeholders of a writing program can agree that place and space are useful investigations in which to root their composition pedagogy, they can utilize many writing practices provided by ecocompositionists to structure their classrooms. Other interdisciplinary means Reynolds uses to bridge metaphor and materiality, or discourse and environment, are mapping technologies, streetwork, and participant-observation. With mapping, students can utilize GIS to see how environments are subjectively divided by people and what these artificially-drawn borders communicate about certain places. Reynolds (2004) discusses the rhetoric of mapping and how critique is needed to show how static facts and places, and how the rhetoric used to describe a place, make assumptions about people inhabiting those places (p. 79). Streetwork and participant-observation, like the flaneur, asks students to actually get into spaces they are writing about and absorb their surroundings, to write about these surroundings. When doing streetwork or literacy projects outside of the university, there needs to be a focus on methodology and activism versus simple volunteerism in order for the work to create a social-epistemic consciousness (Reynolds, 2004, p. 133; Berlin, 1996). Reynolds also argues that

students can use campus spaces to see "geographies of exclusion, the politics of space, or the construction of sociospatial differences" (p. 133). This action-based assignment is part of the ecocomposition program I take up in more detail in Chapter Six.

The reading and writing process is similar to dwelling in a place, because living in a place is similar to writing about a place: "texts, like dwellings, need to be planned, built, and then occupied, filled with meaning, significance, or history" (Reynolds, 2004, p. 140). By studying both environment and discourse, students gain tools for dwelling in places and writing about their surroundings more thoughtfully. Dwelling reminds us of the discourses and geographies we're placed in every day:

> Geographies of rhetoric and writing begin with the assertion that the way we map the world is a direct but complex result of gender, race, class, and abilities; images and feelings get imprinted in our heads and on our bodies, affecting how we walk through a neighborhood, choose an apartment, find our way across campus, or navigate texts or acts of literacy. (Reynolds, 2004, p. 140)

How we move through a place is also similar to how a student moves through difficult reading, in that we dwell in discourse (and places) we are comfortable with and we look for "signs that are familiar" in order to understand a new genre (or place) (p. 163). If composition instructors utilize Reynolds's concept of "dwelling" when teaching reading and writing, they can teach students how to read cues and write themselves into new discourses. Because these concepts focus on place as the central metaphor and materiality in which to work from, a writing program with stakeholders who have similar affinity for a local place can find a theoretical foundation from which to work together.

Ecological writing process.

The work of Ryden (1993) and Reynolds (2004) helps WPAs to move past composition pedagogies that lack a social-epistemic framework (Berlin, 1996). While process pedagogy began a conversation about more social, ethically-minded pedagogies with Murray's (1972) understanding of writing as more than just a product, it stops short of the ecological perspective scholars such as Coe (1972) advocate. Cooper (2001) argues that what is most important in composition studies is systems thinking, or the understanding of relationships, over analysis of discrete units (p. xi-xii). In other words, the process of writing can be expanded to be thought of as the ecological process of writing, so relationships in a system are also considered rather than just the supposed linear steps that move toward a final product. Cooper advocates moving beyond what Thomas Kent calls the pseudo-process movement, in which current-traditionalism is still taught via process and that composition "still clings to a mechanistic rather than systems view of writing" (as cited in Cooper, 2001, xiii). Writing projects are not just similar to ecological systems but actually are ecological systems in and of themselves and act as places (xiv). This is of course also true of writing programs—they are ecological systems which must be examined. It follows then that place as a concept is a crucial component of study in composition and rhetoric and way to think about the writing process more holistically:

> To move place forward in our studies, to add it to race, gender, and class, is to recognize more fully that place isn't just about environmental destruction, but is, in part, how we live in relation to other cultures, discourses, and species. In many respects, this move releases the environment from the background and expands it: it is no longer merely setting. (Cooper, 2001, xv).

Ecocomposition, in this way, functions both as an object of study and as a perspective to understand how discourse functions. Ecocomposition gives us the tools necessary to be effective

writers and citizens: "in seeing writing as one of the ways in which we participate in the web of life, ecocomposition provides a vision of how to achieve rhetorical and political efficacy not only in environmental discourse…but in all discourse" (Cooper, 2001, xviii). The process of writing is not a linear process that ends with one assignment; it is an ecological process that continues to shape discourse in many different systems.

Ethics in ecocomposition.

Beyond the ways an ecocomposition program can help a WPA navigate competing composition and rhetoric theories and articulate potential, shared best practices, ecocomposition is rooted in the ethical demand for a more sustainable relationship between discourse and environment, is rooted in an appeal for a land ethic in the same way composition and rhetoric appeals for human-based ethics (Leopold, 1966). Ecological perspectives, alongside feminist and indigenous perspectives, help develop a composition pedagogy that is ethical as a teaching practice and toward the environment (Berlin, 1996; Leopold, 1966). When building an ecocomposition program at a local level, it is important to think in broad ethical terms while establishing a theory of ecological literacy, as well as practices that derive from that theory.

One way to accomplish ecological ethics in writing programs is to think in terms of rhetorical ecological feminist agency, which Kathleen Ryan (2012) defines as "socially constructed, ecologically located and enacted, ethically responsible, rhetorically directed, and pragmatically oriented. It values experiential knowledge alongside disciplinary knowledge and recognizes that place and situation constitute knowledge" (p. 80). WPAs are responsible for considering their work from local and ethical perspectives, celebrating a multitude of voices and concerns (Ryan, 2012). Ryan's theory rests upon the concept of "epistemic responsibility," which "assumes we are accountable for where we stand as knowers, what we know, and how we

put it to use" (p. 79). Epistemic responsibility makes a WPA, such as myself, assume responsibility for the relationships, theories of composition and rhetoric, and classroom practices that exist within the ecological system of a writing program. In other words, even while being mindful of the diverse perspectives a writing program might hold, a WPA is epistemically responsible for moving forward with the best possible strategies that put what they know from ecocomposition to use in a writing program. Ecocomposition theories of stories and folklore, sense of place in writing, ecological writing process, and ethics in ecocomposition are localized and able to respond to what is happening in actual writing departments (Ryden, 1993; Welty, 2002; Reynolds, 2004). By enacting both rhetorical ecological feminist agency and epistemic responsibility, WPAs can promote beneficial changes within an environment of competing interests.

From Ryden's (1993) examination of stories and folklore to Reynolds's (2004) careful look at geographies of writing, a picture begins to emerge of the strengths of an ecological composition. By focusing on interdisciplinary work and how environment factors into discourse, writing becomes a more tangible educational venture that students can understand. Ecocomposition also responds to the need for academics to take more seriously the perilous state of the environmental crisis and how our theories of discourse either contribute to or begin to heal that crisis. A whole-system, ecological perspective provides the framework for an environmentally ethical composition program.

In my own program, there was tension with current-traditionalist approaches that had been used by senior faculty, dated pedagogies that continued unproblematized for decades. My hire as the writing center coordinator and eventually the writing program administrator put pressure on faculty to update methods. More directly, I put pressure on faculty to update

methods. Unfortunately, I struggled to accomplish my goals because I was seen as an "outside entity" trying to come in and change the local culture. By taking an ecological approach to curriculum changes, I could have been more successful in understanding the context I was working in—an aged program in which few new faculty lasted more than a couple years, where people rarely challenged the status quo. Instead of appealing to process pedagogy and best practices, appealing to ecological knowledge could have kept the focus on the local and kept community stakeholders involved in curriculum adaptations. The theories I detail, from cognitive mapping to the flaneur, provide academic rigor and also a way of understanding the community in which most faculty and staff can feel invested in (Ryden, 1993; Reynolds, 2004). Furthermore, the focus on ecological writing puts the exegesis for curriculum updates on the environmental crisis rather than on the perceived shortcomings of individual faculty members. In the next section, I will apply these theories to actual work done in writing classrooms.

Ecocomposition as a Writing Program

Composition scholars typically posit that writing pedagogies should be socially, contextually, and now ecologically aware. Cooper (1986) and Faigley (1993) assert that this cannot happen just in theory, supposedly by implementing process-based practices like peer review and drafting; composition pedagogy needs to be self-consciously aware of how it either reinforces or disrupts power structures, and students should be taught these power structures as well. Ecologically minded scholars promote action-based pedagogies that have value in and outside of the academy (Orr, 2004; Reynolds, 2004). The emerging composition pedagogy of ecocomposition has the ability to synthesize social-epistemic composition pedagogies with ecological theory, in a way that acknowledges former pedagogies like process that can still have value in local contexts. I argue that these attributes make ecocomposition a valuable perspective

to implement writing program curricula that retains writing program administration best practices.

Defining the subfield.

Ecocomposition emerges out of both composition theory and ecological theory. Cooper's (1986) ecological model of writing, also provided in the previous section, remains a foundation for ecocomposition: "writing is an activity through which a person is continuously engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems" (p. 367). This perspective is an important turning point in composition studies, toward the realization that writing is ecological:

> […] scholars have addressed growing awareness of the system itself as the locus of meaning rather than the individual actors or units within it. Consequently, much of current theoretical work in writing studies works from an inherently ecological perspective, envisioning writing as bound up in, influenced by, and relational to spaces, places, locations, environments, and the interconnections among the entities they contain. (Reiff, Bawarshi, Balif, & Wiesser, 2015, p. 3)

While process pedagogy initiated the idea that writing could be a relational practice that takes time, ecocomposition extended this idea to also articulate how writing is effected by "places, locations, environments, and the interconnections among the entities they contain."

The scholarship of Reiff, Bawarshi, Balif, & Wiesser (2015) works to understand what the ecology of writing programs looks like within their specific contexts similarly to how I am attempting to understand my program in context and thus provide a curriculum that acknowledges the place I am working in, rather than providing a blanket approach to writing program administration:

writing programs are quintessentially discursive and material ecologies because they

emerge through complex networks of interrelations, depend upon adaptation, fluidity, and

the constant motion of discursive systems, are generative and constitutive of diverse

rhetorics and discourses, and exhibit a range of other ecological characteristics. (Reiff,

Bawarshi, Balif, & Wiesser, 2015, p. 4)

Ecocomposition takes into consideration that one pedagogy cannot be an unmitigated fit for all

programs in all areas; pedagogy also emerges out of the interconnectedness of specific players in

different academic systems. In my case, ecology can be influenced as local and as specific as

individual members of faculty. The ecological theory that guides ecocomposition studies not

only allows room for modified, diverse pedagogies but actually perceives composition pedagogy,

at its core, to be borne out of the relations of multiple entities and needs.

When expanding composition to think of it in terms of ecocomposition, new heuristics to

think about programs become available. The main "ecological characteristics" discussed in

Writing Program Ecologies are "interconnectedness, fluctuation, complexity, and emergence"

(p. 5) The authors go on to explain how an ecological perspective is different from previous

modes of thought in composition studies:

[A]n ecological perspective shifts the emphasis away from the individual unit, node, or

entity, focusing instead on the network itself as the locus of meaning. All of the acts,

actors, and objects in an ecology are connected, both in space and time, and the

interactions among them reverberate throughout and beyond the system itself. (p. 6)

From this perspective, it is unproductive to think in terms of one individual's pedagogy, because

students will be affected by the entire network of instructors, and how programs function will be

determined by the multiple players and influences connected within the department. This

interconnectedness can be seen in many pragmatic entities, which influence how writing

programs come to be. Some examples of pragmatic, systemic entities that affect students and

should not be ignored are majors, minors, scholarships, budgets, faculty, buildings, and so on

(Reiff, Bawarshi, Balif, & Wiesser, 2015, p. 6).

Because ecocomposition expands the borders of the writing act to include an entire

system, I consider it post-process in a way that still utilizes aspects of process pedagogy, in that

it sees writing not as discrete parts but as fluid (Reiff, Bawarshi, Balif, & Wiesser, 2015, p. 7).

Components of process pedagogy that still usefully contribute to the writing process should

continue to be implemented, particularly in locations like my own which have yet to establish

any basis for process pedagogy (Ede, 2004). Process writing can be taught from an ecological

perspective in order to help students more tangibly articulate what it means to write and to write

well.

Isolating parts of the writing process to help students understand holistic ecology also

lends itself to an ethical approach of environmental analysis. Ecocomposition works on both a

system level in that it thinks ecologically—how different parts of a system interact—and it also

takes a decidedly environmental approach and includes environment in its discussions, texts, and

writing assignments. Dobrin and Weisser's (2002b) foundational ecocomposition work *Natural*

Discourse helps set in motion the defining characteristics of ecocomposition, both from the

theoretical side and the practical side of course content. Dobrin and Weisser (2002b) reiterate the

need for an ecological perspective in composition, as well as the need to study all environments,

from natural to political to electronic to ideological (p. 9). In studying all environments, it is

important to note that the idea of "natural discourse" is constructed (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002b).

Ecocomposition does not posit that nature is not real, but that humans make meaning of natural

elements through discourse, which is constructed and contextual (Ryden, 1993; Dobrin & Weisser, 2002b).

Because ecocomposition has now been established by the field of composition and rhetoric, I maintain that it is a useful approach for WPAs to utilize its methodologies in which to understand the ecologies in which they work. Dobrin and Weisser (2002a) state that ecocomposition was established by the late 20th century, beginning their history of ecocomposition by discussing the social nature of writing, a concept examined by composition theorists in the 1970s and 1980s (p. 566). They explain how compositionists have recently begun to argue that environment should be included as a critical social category alongside race, class, and sexual orientation, and that ecology could inform work in composition (p. 567). By 1999, the Conference on College Composition and Communication held a roundtable on ecocomposition and slowly the field began to define itself against the process movement (p. 567-568). Many theories informed ecocomposition; ecocriticism and environmental rhetoric, for example, were major components of the field (p. 569-570). The different players contributing to ecocomposition are expansive:

> Many other critical schools, including cultural studies, postcolonialism, and ecofeminism, have contributed and continue to contribute to this growing discipline through their pointed investigations of discourse and environment. Indeed, at ecocomposition's core is its interdisciplinarity; it draws upon and melds many perspectives, methodologies, and investigations from disciplines across the academic spectrum. (p. 571)

Though scholars come from different disciplines and use different terms to describe their work, they all seemed to agree that environment is another category constructed by human language, needing critique and attention. In order to meet the demand of today's cultural needs, students

must be educated on the ways discourse and environment are related in order to make informed decisions about the ecological crisis: "discursive construction of environment is the cornerstone of many ecocompositionists' understanding of environment" (as cited in Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a, p. 570). Work done in composition classes extends the argument of Orr (2004) who maintains that all education—composition and rhetoric included—is environmental education. Though I separate out the term "ecological" to refer to a whole systems approach, "environment" is a key component to ecology and a major focus of ecocomposition programs.

Ecocomposition also gives composition scholars a tangible way forward in the post-process debates. Richardson (2005) posits that most composition scholars will maintain that writing is a social activity, though process pedagogy has been critiqued as the main theoretical grounding for this social activity. Continuing their discussion of where ecocomposition is situated, Dobrin and Weisser (2002a) argue that ecocomposition is "post-cognitive, post-process, [and] post-expressivist" (p. 572). Ecocomposition unifies social-epistemic thought with environment:

> Ecocompositionists inquire as to what effects discourse has in mapping, constructing, shaping, defining, and understanding nature, place, and environment; and, in turn, what effects nature, place, and environment have on discourse. This includes *all* environments: classroom, political, electronic, ideological, historical, economic, natural. (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a, p. 573)

The field of ecocomposition rests on the understanding that writers both influence these environmental systems with their discourse and are also influenced by environmental systems and must tailor their writing to fit that system (p. 576). Because of the current environmental

crisis, the study of the relationship between discourse and environment is so crucial, the authors argue, that ecocomposition deals with human survival (p. 573).

Dobrin and Weisser (2002a) help establish the foundation of what ecocomposition is and what it does as well as explain its niche within composition studies. For example, ecocomposition is different from ecocriticism in that the first concentrates on the "relationship between the production of written discourse and environment" while the latter focuses on textual interpretation (p. 577). A question an ecocompositionist might ask is "What effects do local environments have on any kind of writing, any kind of writer?" (p. 577). I extend this argument to ask, "What effects do local environments have on any kind of writing program, any kind of writing program administrator?" Dobrin and Weisser go on to argue that ecocomposition is more of a political undertaking than ecocriticism, in that students are asked to be critical of discourse about environment and cognizant of how that discourse can effect or inhibit change (p. 577-578). While ecocomposition borrows from ecocriticism, the former focuses more on creating change via written discourse than the latter. This pointed focus in ecocomposition establishes immediate exegesis for the writing classroom, because students understand how their writing is socially situated. Ecocomposition also helps to solve the issue process pedagogies left unacknowledged, that peer review and drafting did not necessarily articulate how different power systems influence what "good writing" looks like in different situations or who gets to decide what makes academic writing acceptable or not (Miller, 1991; Faigley, 1993). The political nature of ecocomposition keeps power systems in the forefront of its study.

Classroom methods.

Dobrin and Weisser (2002a) consider the theoretical ramifications of ecocomposition as well as its practical application: "ecocomposition as pedagogy." This is the same perspective that

I utilize in this dissertation—the theory of ecocomposition leads to its practical application. They advocate for writing classrooms that "directly assist students in becoming better producers of writing in a variety of writing environments," a pedagogy that "encourages political activism, public writing, and service learning," and writing assignments that are geared toward public audiences (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a, p. 580). In this way, ecocomposition focuses both on ecological concepts as well as the ecology of writing. Dobrin and Weisser define these two central pedagogies that make up ecocomposition as "ecological literacy" and "discursive ecology" (p. 581). "Ecological literacy" focuses on sense of place and raising student awareness regarding the importance of sense of place (p. 581). Ecological literacy also encourages students to see how their writing can influence issues in the public sphere, and the authors advocate for a composition class that uses environmental issues as the subject for learning writing because of its urgency and importance today (p. 584). "Discursive ecology" builds on ecological literacy, "but also asks students and teachers to consider the very ecologies of writing" (p. 584). Dobrin and Weisser explain that "discursive ecology pedagogy (and critical inquiry) is situated within the notion that words, language, and writing are themselves parts of ecosystems and that when writers write they affect and are affected by environment" (p. 584). This pedagogy borrows from ecological thought, positing that all parts of a system are interconnected and interdependent on one another (p. 584). Dobrin and Weisser summarize this pedagogy by positing that ecocomposition focuses on the "production of written discourse" over textual interpretation, which sets it apart from other like-minded ecological theories (p. 587).

An example of what Dobrin and Weisser might term "ecological literacy" is in Lucksinger's (2014) focus on ecopedagogy in literature, a methodology I argue can be applied to a variety of different discourses, not just literature. In Lucksinger's (2014) article "Ecopedagogy:

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Cultivating Environmental Consciousness through Sense of Place in Literature," she discusses the structure of a course that uses literature to bring students to a new level of eco-consciousness. Lucksinger (2014) begins the course by having students explore the idea of sense of place, having students describe feelings and perceptions of places that are meaningful to them (p. 337). This lesson helps set the lens with which students will understand the literature in the remainder of the class. When choosing texts, Lucksinger (2014) writes that many types of literature are valuable and suggests instructors consider the following criteria. Does place:

contribute to character development,

play the role of character,

act as a force to be reckoned with,

appear as victim,

direct the plot,

allow themes to emerge,

provide the unifying or focal point of the text,

house character(s) with a strong sense of place? (Lucksinger, 2014, p. 360)

These characteristics help to show that place is integral in how characters perceive themselves and their relation to the world. Like Ryden (2014), Lucksinger (2014) sees sense of place as central to how people make meaning of their immediate surroundings. According to Lucksinger (2014), by "exploring the complex interplay between people and places, we consider the ways that the climate, terrain, and history of an area shape the culture and the day-to-day lives of the individuals who reside there" (p. 363). By connecting with the characters, students connect to the imagined places in the texts and eventually to the tangible places around them. This idea is

portable to composition classrooms as well, if students think of themselves as characters in their respective environments.

The class ends with students conducting field journals in which they describe places around them that they find important, and they use the backdrop of eco-literature to help them construct their narratives. It is important that literature is a companion in this course, alongside the field journal, because "the vivdeness of […] literature pulls students into worlds where place matters for the characters that inhabit them" (Lucksinger, 2014, p. 335). By thinking in these terms, students learn how place matters in the world they inhabit.

Lucksinger's ecopedagogy aims to cultivate an environmental consciousness, or what Aldo Leopold (1966) calls a land ethic. Modern economic practices do not always consider land in any way except as a transaction, or as a tool to progress and develop economically. Leopold (1966) argues that we need to consider place with an ethical lens in the way that we've developed interpersonal ethics. Lucksinger creates a thorough pedagogical model for instructors to help students understand a sense of place in literature, with characters and their settings, and eventually with themselves, in how they interact with their own environments. This pedagogical strategy can help students to not think of land as only a transaction to be exploited, but a core part of their identity and their community's identity.

The application of ecological thought is helpful for WPAs in implementing curricula in order to articulate a writing pedagogy that contains ecological consciousness. Lucksinger (2014) offers a structure that can be tweaked and modified but that also offers a strong foundational approach to raising eco-consciousness in undergraduate writing classrooms. I posit that the same list Lucksinger (2014) uses to choose literary texts can be thought about in terms of how students utilize space in writing—how do we write with spacial understanding, and what type of rhetoric

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do we use when we discuss places? Rhetorical choices in writing are embedded with meanings, similarly to how Lucksinger (2014) discusses eco-literature. By examining these concepts, students hopefully learn the context in which they are writing, the language they've unconsciously used to describe places, and eventually the skills to write in response to dominant narratives of place in the hope of critiquing and changing those narratives.

According to Dobrin and Weisser (2002a), this type of ecoliteracy that aims to examine sense of place is one way that ecocomposition functions in the classroom. However, they also advocate for an ecocomposition that moves beyond topical inclusion of environmental ideas, toward an ecocomposition that is a "discursive ecology" and examines the very system students are working in (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). In other words, ecocomposition is not simply a theme to be employed so students have something to write about in composition classes; ecocomposition, as a pedagogy, serves as a discursive structure in which language and systems can be examined. For instance, in an ecocomposition program students would not simply write *about* recycling programs; they would analyze, critique, and eventually produce the discourse of a community that could make a recycling program a rhetorical possibility. A similar assignment would be useful at a university such as mine that has a very limited recycling program and few resources (both in staffing and finances) to initiate a program.

Ecocomposition provides an expanded model for understanding writing, the web that is continually influencing and influenced by the components within it (Cooper, 1986). Edbauer (2005) offers a model of discursive ecology by having students examine discourse beyond the rhetorical situation and toward rhetorical ecologies. Edbauer argues that the traditional model for a rhetorical situation is compartmentalized, and that in reality the "the elements of the rhetorical situation simply bleed" (p. 9). Place is an important part of the rhetorical situation: "rhetorical

productions are inseparable from lived encounters of public life" (p. 21). Composition pedagogy should examine the continual process and action of writing. When students examine rhetorical ecologies, they are also taking into account how a rhetorical system changes according to what is happening in society: "rhetorically-grounded education […] can also engage processes and encounters" (Edbauer, 2005, p. 22-23). Whereas Smit (2007) argues that composition studies cannot move forward because we cannot locate the exact way writing is social, Edbauer (2005) embraces movement and posits that students can understand discursive ecologies when it is consciously placed in the curriculum (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002). Written products must be thought not only in terms of their discrete elements of the rhetorical situation but also how they function in the "wider ecology" of written and public discourse (Edbauer, 2005, p. 20).

Ecocomposition is defined by the way it bridges the gap between discourse and environment (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002b). However, it is also purposeful in its dedication to local and changing meanings, and therefore resists homogenous definition. Ecocomposition includes ecological theory, topics focused on environment, as well as discourse analysis from the perspective of ecology. Ecocomposition also retains an important interdisciplinary perspective, advocating for multiple ways of knowing and seeing, including the use of indigenous and feminist thought. By retaining this social justice perspective, ecocomposition is useful to writing programs at a local level in order to illuminate how discourse shapes us and can be shaped in many different contexts.

The Lens of Ecoliteracy to the Application of Ecocomposition

The trajectory of composition pedagogy moves us from belles-lettres, to meritocratic, product-based writing, to process pedagogy, to where we are now. This is of course an oversimplification of the diverse set of teaching practices that have evolved over the past 200

years, but in general there is a move toward more democratic, socially aware pedagogies. However, there has been much argument over what constitutes social-epistemic pedagogy (Berlin, 1996), a concept most composition scholars would endorse but see realized in diverse ways. Composition scholars are working to articulate what the field of composition looks like post-process, appealing to different themes and topics pedagogy might be focused on: vitalism, techne, or multimodality, to name a small few (Hawk, 2007, Pender, 2011, 2012). Even though many composition scholars have agreed that process pedagogy is too simplistic to accurately capture what writing is, we still see the remnants of process pedagogy everywhere in composition classrooms today (Ede, 2004).

If composition's goal remains to be rhetorically aware with a social-epistemic framework, it seems reasonable to suggest that composition scholars should understand the field's history and how it has responded to societal needs throughout time. One of the most pressing societal needs today is to acknowledge how education has not only failed to create ecologically literate students, but has actually to an enormous degree contributed to the environmental degradation of our planet (Orr, 2004). It goes hand in hand that composition should grow from its understanding of the writing process to the understanding of ecological writing process and also respond, rhetorically, to the pressing demands of education in the 21st century. As such, it is crucial to articulate a composition pedagogy that is able to understand the ecology of discourse and teach students how to develop a land ethic (Leopold, 1966).

Focusing on the demands of education that Orr (2004) argues need to be environmental, and therefore local and sustainable, gives WPAs the tools to address local problems from a perspective that understands writing programs in context. In my own work, I see ecocomposition as a way of promoting the best practices of process pedagogy through the lens of ecological and

local need, rather than as a mandate from an outsider who does not understand the ecological needs of the students, staff, faculty, campus, and community. An ecological approach to composition makes the local the primary focus and potentially helps to avoid alienating stakeholders within the writing program.

I argue that ecocomposition is the way to move composition pedagogy forward to a place in which it can not only better prepare students to be effective writers but can also prepare students to be ecologically literate citizens. I maintain Murray's (1972) premise that students learn writing best not "by talking about it, but by doing it" (p. 5), and therefore the aspects of process pedagogy that make sense for ecocomposition should be resituated in a framework of ecology, particularly in writing programs such as my own that have yet to see any form of process pedagogy in its curriculum. Students can access the theories, concepts, and topics of ecocomposition by seeing writing as both a process and a web that is clearly articulated in action-based pedagogies and methodologies (Murray, 1972; Cooper, 1986). With the marriage of discourse and environment, students are able to understand writing from a holistic perspective that has tangible, visible application.

CHAPTER IV

ECOLOGICAL WRITING PROCESS

In previous chapters, I discussed the situation I encountered at RMUWP when what I saw as foundational composition and rhetoric theories and practices were not recognized by many of the staff and faculty. While my own graduate study continued to push me forward into new scholarship that problematized these core theories and practices, at work I felt as if I were simply trying to establish the theories and practices I was critiquing. This disjointed relationship between my scholarly study and work application forced me to think about campuses that would find curriculum updates useful but did not have the faculty and staff resources to implement a completely postmodern, cutting edge composition program. By taking an ecological approach to some of the concerns in my department, I am better able to address concerns of both application and scholarship.

In this chapter I apply ecological composition concepts to process pedagogy—or the thinking of writing as an ongoing, recursive activity—to provide a framework of an updated ecological composition curriculum that also establishes foundational concepts of process pedagogy. I argue that this is a necessary step in writing programs that have yet to see the lessons of process pedagogy realized in their curricula. My aim in this chapter is to offer themes from ecological composition that establish process pedagogy in an accessible way so a variety of composition instructors can utilize the curriculum, including those without advanced backgrounds in composition and rhetoric scholarship. Though Murray's (1972) call to teach writing as a process and not a product has since been problematized, and composition scholarship now for the most part investigates post-process scholarship, the foundation of

composition is still in the rhetorical tradition that utilizes process-based writing exercises in the classroom (Ede, 2004). Through my experience, I have found that process pedagogy and social-epistemic rhetoric's call for socially-minded pedagogies cannot be taken for granted, because these perspectives have not been established at all institutions of higher education (Berlin, 1996). While ecological composition is often considered post-process (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a), some foundational practices can be reframed within ecocomposition at universities that have yet to establish process pedagogy. The drafting process, peer review groups, class conversation, and free-writing exercises are often the foundation of composition classrooms. Therefore, in this chapter I offer an ecological model to establish them within writing programs.

Even though composition and rhetoric as a field has moved past process-based calls to writing education, that does not necessarily mean that the work on the ground has caught up. This is certainly true of my current university, when some of the faculty have been teaching for 30 to 40 years, using the same pedagogical techniques they learned when they were in graduate school. This being understood, it is not safe to assume that all—probably not even most—composition instructors across all higher education institutions have moved at the same rate as composition scholarship; outdated methods still appeal to administrators, the public, and even some instructors who want to see measurable results in regard to English education (Zwagerman, 2015). It is therefore necessary to revisit the reasons process pedagogy was established in context in order to create sustainable models of writing programs that take into consideration the faculty working within them.

Murray's (1972) process pedagogy was responding in large part to the over-emphasis of written products, a reaction that accumulated over many decades because of universities opening their doors to more diverse populations after the Morrill Act of 1862. Focus moved from the

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bourgeois study of literature in the 19th century to grammar-based current-traditionalism in order to prepare a new population of students for their writing needs (Berlin, 1984; Berlin, 1987). Murray took a more holistic perspective to writing instruction and student development, a reaction against both bourgeois literary study and product-focused instruction, a pedagogy much closer to social-epistemic rhetoric (Berlin, 1996). By breaking down the writing process for students and giving them time to draft papers, process pedagogy offered a radical way to approach writing education, an approach that focused on student development and not just the written products they produced. The field of composition and rhetoric has since seen process pedagogy as foundational to all subsequent work, the "Givens In Our Conversations" in the last forty or so years (Villanueva & Arola, 2011).

Though composition and rhetoric scholarship has progressed past grammar and process-focused pedagogies, that does not necessarily mean students have progressed past these concerns in their own writing. As many composition instructors will attest, especially at open-admissions colleges, students still struggle with grammar. Many students have no baseline of a writing process to work with, or to work from, and therefore more complicated theories that problematize writing process are difficult to teach. At the same time, it is important to not reach back toward retrograde philosophies about grammar lessons and linear process; we just have to understand these student writing concerns in context. It is important WPAs (writing program administrators) recognize the local knowledges many long-time faculty have rather than always privileging new pedagogical practices that often originate outside of the local university (Owens, 2001).

An example of trying to meet the demands of our students, the school, and modern writing theory is the ongoing conversation about grammar instruction. Many faculty outside

composition departments will lament that grammar is not taught (or not taught well) anymore (Zwagerman, 2015), while composition scholars will reiterate the field knowledge that explicit grammar instruction has limited success, and focus on student grammar is often culturally problematic. According to Hartwell (1985), students who struggle with grammar do not benefit from context-less grammar instruction. In fact, grammatical skills-based teaching can actually make student writing worse (Hartwell, 1985). This does not mean poor grammar is not a problem or that faculty outside local composition departments do not have a right to be concerned; it simply means that we need to reformulate the way grammar is taught in order to address the issue while remaining cognizant of foundational composition scholarship. It is still necessary to teach students grammar, but within rhetorical ecologies, and with awareness of the various cultural factors that come into play (Edbauer, 2005).

This example of how the discussion of grammatical concerns among students, composition faculty, and the university at large serves as an illustration of how writing instruction must continually consider the differences between what is happening on the ground and what developments are happening in composition and rhetoric scholarship. This chapter attempts to mitigate these concerns between recognition of modern composition and rhetoric scholarship and the need for foundational practices, practices that still structure how composition classes are taught. By keeping Berlin's (1996) pedagogy of social-epistemic rhetoric in mind, writing instruction should address the usual concerns writers have—*reading skills, invention, drafting, revision, and editing*—while being mindful of the powerful social structures that determine how these concerns manifest themselves in our schools and culture. This social awareness of writing can help students write for modern day problems within the framework of

modern composition theory, leading to writing process instruction structured within an ecocomposition program.

Ecological Reading in Process Pedagogy

In this section, I will discuss what an ecological reading process can look like, as one component of the larger ecological writing process. By thinking about the writing process as ecological, I argue that WPAs can have the tools needed to make sense of new writing program ecologies and establish curricula in those ecologies. The following section will discuss reading in an ecological writing process that derives from the earlier discussions of ecological literacy.

Reading for Local Contexts

Understanding both place—where we are literally situated—and space—how we move through the world—helps us to understand our students and helps students to understand their surroundings. According to Reynolds (2004), places cut across the diversity of a student body given that the individuals that make up a class share at least one place in common—the shared space of the composition classroom. Of course, cultural identities influence how individuals move through and perceive these communal spaces, making shared places a useful experience in which to engage students and illuminate social issues in our world.

Often the scholarship that gets done in the university happens without concern for the actual place in which it is happening, and this results in institutions of higher education drastically underserving the communities in which they are situated (Owens, 2001). In order to allow the work of the university to influence what happens outside of the academy, there need to be opportunities for scholars to focus on the community. Students should be able to reflect on their lived experiences, the act of being in their places: "Throughout the curriculum we need to create opportunities for students to examine their immediate communities, since without

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heightened local awareness one cannot develop an understanding of sustainability" (Owens, 2001, p. 104). The goals of a sustainable curriculum cannot be achieved without engagement with local sustainability issues (Orr, 2004). University curricula often engages community with service learning projects, but these often cannot accomplish understanding the nuances of a place. Reynolds (2004) critiques modern service learning practices as being too altruistic without enough critique of the ideologies that perpetuate social issues in the first place. By having students read and then write their local surroundings—their neighborhoods, jobs, dorms, commutes, etc.—students and instructors get better acquainted with the lived experiences of a place. These reading assignments help spark observations, questions, and critiques that can lead to writing prompts, as students begin to notice the details of the world around them. By incorporating process-based practices like peer review, students then read about each other's places, grow awareness of what it means to live in their local community, and see how what they are learning at the university is connected to how the community functions, which helps them to be educated as whole persons (Orr, 2004).

Oftentimes composition programs will task students with the assignment of reaching out to an actual entity in the community and composing for that particular writing situation. For example, students might write to their congressperson, write a cover letter for a job opening, or even propose a solution to a problem they see in their community. However, these assignments for the most part have the university serving the interests of business, and not the other way around. If universities are going to engage the local community such as businesses or nonprofits in written service learning projects, we must establish a different perspective of the goal of these relationships, a perspective that does not see service learning as just an economic transaction

(Orr, 2004). We need a two-way dialogue with local corporations about ethical practices (Owens, 2001, p. 100).

Part of the goal of the reading place assignments is for students to dialogue not just with hypothetical rhetorical situations, but real-life rhetorical situations, such as writing to nonprofits, government officials, businesses, or within an internship scenario. Oftentimes written service learning programs only work to serve businesses, and writers focus on their sole capitalist needs, forgoing the cultural analysis that are often part of the class reading practices (Owens, 2001). Within a sustainable ecocomposition program with a social-epistemic framework, reading and writing for places in the community will necessarily come with social, economic, political, and environmental critiques of entities in the community. If community sponsors are open to having students write for their concerns and demands, they also need to be open to dialoguing with academic critiques of place and space in order to create more just practices as a natural consequence of working with thoughtful university students. In other words, students should not practice critiquing social spaces in the classroom and then abandon these ideals the minute they begin composing for "real life" writing situations.

These types of project sharing and communal reading activities can solve practical issues for the university, too. One example would be the time my student communicated how hard it was for him to get breakfast on campus because of a few flaws in how dining funds were administered while he was writing an assigned proposal for the course. During peer review, many of the students seconded this concern and we were able to have an open dialogue—and critique—about how the university's student services were not meeting their needs. After they had written proposals about the issue in class, I shared the students' concerns in a student affairs meeting as a potential retention issue. Because our university is currently focusing on retention,

the students' concerns about breakfast were tracked as an issue to address in upcoming semesters in order to improve our retention rate. Had students not been assigned to read their places, propose a solution to a problem, and share these concerns in the classrooms, the concerns would most likely not have reached the ears of the administration.

By applying analytical critiques to places and then actually offering these critiques as part of service learning projects, we can create a conversation focused on maintaining sustainable community projects and businesses as well as sustainably-minded curriculum. Too long has business been separated from academic critiques while still benefitting from university resources, and oftentimes the analysis of place and space that gets done in academia stays within the walls of academia (Owens, 2001). By engaging with local contexts there should be an ongoing conversation about how locality influences how the students—and the larger community—live, while the work done in the university also influences the practices of the community. Hawken writes that service learning should not be a separate part of the curriculum, but that "everyday acts of work and life accumulate into a better world as a matter of course, not as a matter of conscious altruism" (as cited in Owens, 2001, p. 89). In other words, the relationship the university has with the community should be an ongoing, reciprocal dialogue that invites ecological analysis while sustaining both the university and the community—not just in overt charitable or service learning projects, but through consistent engagement and critique. These types of reading projects not only help build a sustainable ecocomposition program but also in a radical way resist the corporatization of the university, allowing the university to ethically influence the business practices of corporation. Finally, by having a student engage with places over a period time, dialoguing back and forth and providing insights, they see writing projects as

a process of inquiry rather than simply as products to be graded. In ecological service learning

projects, process is established as a basis for social-epistemic rhetoric.

Indigenous Knowledge

A crucial component for a writer to be successful in the process of writing is to

understand the context in which he or she is writing. Therefore, part of ecological reading

necessarily includes an examination of that context in order to meet rhetorical demands. For

example, a student writing a cover letter for a small-town bank would need to write differently

than would a student writing a cover letter for a position in a national corporation. While one

letter would focus on local relationships and personal values, the latter would more likely focus

on education and professional skills.

An ecocomposition program takes this rhetorical focus a step further, incorporating a

social-epistemic framework, ecological design intelligence, and a land ethic (Berlin, 1996; Orr,

2004; Leopold, 1996). In other words, rhetorical context does not end with a sophist dedication

to argumentation, but to understanding context in order to create the most communicative,

ethical message possible. As discussed in the last section, dialogue should be established in order

to attain mutually beneficial communications between university and community.

Within an ecocomposition program, this means that students creating written projects

must attend to local contexts, and in the case of RMUWP, indigenous knowledges. Many

locations across the United States, including mine, have rich indigenous traditions that are often

marginalized and should be recovered as a core piece of the context of those places. When

examining local areas, it necessarily means examining the indigenous. According to Davey,

Shanks, Stewart, & Thunder Woman (2006), Western educational systems have systematically

ignored indigenous cultures' knowledge and identities, creating ignorance of local history and—at worst—violence and colonialism.

Snively and Corsiglia (2000) write that the way to resist Western hegemony is to recognize Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), a knowledge that incorporates the historical knowledge of a place and its people who are affected by relativist understandings of an area. Much of our ecological crisis has been caused by ignoring TEK and uncritically embracing Western modern science (WMS), a science that is sustained by economic growth and white capitalist patriarchy (Snively & Corsiglia, 2000; hooks, 1984). While Snively and Corsiglia argue that TEK can be of benefit to WMS, Carter (2008) problematizes this stance, arguing that TEK is its own good and should not be used in a way that only meets the interests of WMS, which are usually economic and without a land ethic. TEK resists capitalistic interpretations of progress and provides a basic understanding for sustainable living in a place, an understanding that synthesizes hundreds and even thousands of years of stories and lessons about living in a particular location.

Because ecocomposition focuses on making education a sustainable contribution to the betterment of our environment, it follows that local, indigenous knowledges should be examined within the curriculum so diverse groups in a place are not marginalized (Orr, 2004). A question that takes into consideration these concerns within an ecocomposition program might be as follows: How can students understand the writing process as an awareness of local, indigenous knowledges as they write for local and global concerns in an ecologically responsible way? While an ecocomposition program may not be able to accomplish this goal with every student who goes through the curriculum, it can at least establish exposure and introduce the process of understanding these concerns. Composition students should feel confident that they understand

local and indigenous needs as they write and that their words convey multicultural awareness, inclusiveness, and a commitment to indigenous needs. It is the responsibility of an ecocomposition program to give students the tools and exposure to indigenous knowledges so that at the time they leave our classrooms, they have a basic awareness of the history of their community so they can communicate in a way that is both non-offensive and ethically committed. Individual instructors do not necessarily need to be extensively trained on indigenous knowledges; in fact, it may be more useful—and more ethical—to invite experts from those communities to assist composition instructors in this training. Collaborating with representatives from indigenous communities allows for an interdisciplinary approach that does not demand instructor expertise in the subject area or coopting of indigenous knowledges. By exposing students to populations other than the dominant culture, we are helping educate students to respond to the needs of their local environments in an ethical way, rather than ceasing to make the university relevant (Orr, 2004).

The concrete inclusion of indigenous knowledges means a reading and analysis of indigenous concerns. On a macro level, this could mean exposing students to basic indigenous histories, illustrated in documentaries like *The Canary Effect,* and then having students reflect and respond in writing to how American history is constructed and who has the power to construct that history. Then, when they have to think/write about these matters in their personal and professional lives, they will have had the appropriate exposure to indigenous concerns so they can communicate responsibly in various rhetorical situations. Students can then move to the local level, receiving basic information about local indigenous tribes and reservations, responding in culturally-aware prose to the issues important to indigenous communities. Finally, by incorporating TEK into an ecocomposition curriculum, students are naturally exposed to

perspectives that illustrate how knowledge and education can be useful outside of sole economic

gain but also in order to be ecologically responsible.

Feminist Critiques

Cooper (1986) posits that ecological writing is a web of social activity that cannot only

be described, but analyzed and even amended. In an ecocomposition program with a social-

epistemic framework, reading assignments should be interpreted and grappled with. Students

should not be passive, but instead see how writing comprises a variety of constructed

knowledges that are socially situated and available for critique (Cooper, 1986). This type of

critical reading establishes that the process of writing begins with close reading, and our

responses to arguments and ideas are bound up in an ongoing conversation.

Feminist ecological critiques, like indigenous critiques, are crucial in order to analyze

how power is distributed within writing systems and environmental systems. In situations in

which faculty and staff feel uncomfortable critiquing power dynamics, they might again

collaborate with scholars in various fields to assist them in this unknown territory, which further

connects faculty and staff across many disciplines. Ecocomposition draws from many disciplines

and methodologies in order to study the relationship between discourse and environment, which

is similar to the goal of ecological feminism (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a; Warren & Cheney,

1991). Warren & Cheney (1991) concentrate on the intersection between ecology and feminism,

which focuses on environmental systems of domination. The authors advocate for a worldview

that gives voice to disadvantaged populations and resists destructive socioeconomics.

Schneiderman (2001) explains that the agenda of feminists to overcome oppression for

disadvantaged populations intertwines with environmental injustice. Oftentimes places of serious

environmental degradation are places where people are marginalized in other ways and are

disenfranchised from political processes. Gender, race, class, and environment overlap and must be examined in relationship to each other (Schneiderman, 2001, p. 126). In other words, the goals of feminism to critique dominant systems of power pair with the ecological goal of understanding how systems function. Ecocomposition furthers this examination within the framework of power distribution in written systems, in which writers who lack the education, writing skills, or social capital to enter a dominant discourse (such as academia) continue to see their concerns marginalized or not taken seriously.

The inclusion of ecological feminism in an ecocomposition program is not simply a thematic choice, but a perspective that situates readers in a way that makes them aware of power dynamics in writing and illuminates how rhetoric is used to promote justice or injustice. By examining places, students will necessarily investigate who has access to resources, who has the power to determine resources, and how these power dynamics can be altered (Reynolds, 2004). Rhetorical awareness is key in educating composition students, and an ecocomposition program can incorporate rhetorical ecological feminist agency as a key component in the curriculum (Ryan, 2012). Rhetorical ecological feminist agency "values experiential knowledge alongside disciplinary knowledge and recognizes that place and situation constitute knowledge" (Ryan, 2012 p. 80). Like indigenous knowledge, rhetorical ecological feminist agency sees intrinsic worth in relativist, local knowledges that resist the homogeneity of WMS. Students and faculty have experiential knowledge of their places, and this knowledge should be valued alongside disciplinary knowledge.

In my own program, students often discuss gender from a binary perspective and not as an issue that is related to other types of concerns—access, safety, and even environment. By focusing on gender within an ecocomposition program, students become exposed to a variety of

viewpoints and start critiquing social norms—the universal "he" as a pronoun, for example. While these written critiques seem small, they help students become more epistemically responsible (Ryan, 2012). Ryan uses the term "epistemic responsibility" to describe our responsibility to examine what we know and where that knowledge comes from, which illustrates a continuance of Berlin's (1996) social-epistemic composition pedagogy; writers must understand context and the constructed nature of their knowledge, applying that knowledge ethically. When reading indigenous and feminist texts, students should be made aware of the way discourse functions in our society and their responsibility to produce, alter, or resist discourse in a way that resonates with an understanding of ecological design intelligence (Orr, 2004). From the perspective of an ecocomposition program, students should know how their knowledge about places and environment is constructed and be able to apply their experiential knowledges in their personal and professional lives in a way that is environmentally ethical. Ecofeminism pairs with these goals by providing students with a way to critique gender issues in the process of writing their own projects.

To summarize the needs of reading within an ecocomposition writing process, there are several features that need to present. Instructors should include texts that will promote active conversation about ecological concerns, not just from the perspective of environment themes, but also social-epistemic awareness that is holistic and interdisciplinary. I take up this issue in more detail in Chapter Five. Along with this curricular design, students should have the opportunity to use their own experiences and knowledge to examine their local places in order to share their understandings with other students and to come to better awareness of what makes a place sustainable or not. Finally, students should be given the tools to analyze, critique, and resist discourse as appropriate to their lived experiences, identities, and cultures. This means explicitly

including emphasis on both indigenous knowledges and feminist critiques, in order to continue to promote holistic understanding of discourse and socially conscious reading skills. In many programs, this could mean utilizing a collaborative approach rather than expecting all faculty and staff to have the same ability or willingness to provide students with the tools to critique. By establishing ecological reading practices as part of the writing process, students begin to understand their writing projects as being part of the social web of written discourse (Cooper, 1986).

Ecological Invention in Process Pedagogy

Throughout my undergraduate and graduate experience of writing papers for courses, very little was ever mentioned by way of how to create those papers. It was almost as if it was expected that our ideas as English majors were "majicked" out of us and onto the page. Much of this perception had to do with the fact that instructors often did not intervene in the writing process until revision, after full drafts were already created; invention remained a mystery, up to the student to figure out what to write about.

It was not until many formal years of education in my degree that I finally gained a sense of what invention looked like for me, a realization that came about through experience and also simply talking to friends in the department. I realized I had to—of course—read carefully and critically, otherwise I would not be able to take part in the conversation. I also found that I needed complete seclusion; I could not write in my dorm room, and I could not write in busy study areas. And finally, I realized that for me, the key to learning how to invent was to go for a run.

I found in talking to friends in my major that I was not alone in this need for movement. I heard many stories about English Majors pushing away their laptops and taking their dogs for a

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walk, to finally find their thesis topic when traversing the city's walking trail. Others called their intramural sports days their "sanity," and many friends had a near religious devotion to yoga. One friend in graduate school for anthropology insists on spending equal time outdoors, exploring, as she does indoors, writing. When I was an editor for the university newspaper, the editorial staff even instituted a pick-up basketball game during production, despite our negligible basketball skills (I still laugh thinking of what the regular gym attendees thought of our Englishy bball games). The revision and editing process for the newspaper could take anywhere from six to twelve hours, and we simply were not capable of sitting in one place for that long. That basketball game was anything but frivolous; without it, we may not have been able to produce the paper.

I still have memories about running certain roads in my college town and deciding what I was going to write about for an important paper. Maybe I was listening to a podcast during a sweaty run that sparked an idea, or maybe I just needed time to work out an argument away from computer. I found the running and writing process to be so similar; one step in front of the other, one word after the next; mileage goal in mind, a word count goal in mind; sometimes tired drudgery, sometimes euphoria and creativity. Just like my running pace and distance, my ability to write well was incremental and built up over time, though sometimes I struggled and had a bad day. I could go backward if I took too much time off, but often rest was exactly what I needed for my body and my mind. And just like running a race, there was an end in sight—a completed paper, or maybe even a graduation. But the real work always happened before that goal was completed, with an individual step and an individual word.

Physical activity became the interdisciplinary space between reading and writing, the space in which the ideas, knowledge, creativity, and experiences I had could be rearranged in my

mind as my body moved. The relationship between running and writing is so important to me, just as many writers have their own physical activity they need to write well. What strikes me about these various anecdotes is that they were relayed informally and organically; I've never actually had a professor tell me to go for a run, and at no point were invention techniques covered formally in my classes. In terms of formal education, it seemed that anything other than reading and writing was seen as less important or not useful. Even as I write a dissertation about the relationship between environment and writing, I feel guilty being outside when I should be inside, working. This tells me that even if it is inadvertent, we do not spend enough time articulating invention for and with our students, and not enough time explaining its connection to kinesthetic movement and outdoor environment.

This section will create a bridge between reading in the writing process and invention in the writing process. Linking invention to ecocomposition, I will discuss the need for kinesthetic movement and outdoor environment when exploring ideas and creating arguments for papers. Though the writing process is recursive and does not need to be completed in the linear order described here, I maintain that it is helpful for students to at least articulate a writing process so they can meld components of it to their needs and experiences.

Kinesthetic Movement

The importance of kinesthetic movement in writing is related to good reading/analysis, invention, and wellness in general. As discussed in previous chapters, Reynolds (2004) explores different ways of moving through spaces with the image of the "flaneur," who "embodies the spatial practices of walking as writing, writing as walking; his main focus is to absorb and render the city through writing" (p. 70). This concept is useful in thinking about how composition students can learn descriptive techniques and understand writing as movement. When students

become part of the conversation through reading and writing, they often think of metaphorically moving through texts and ideas and arriving at conclusions. Reynolds shows how it is also possible to literally move through places in order to arrive at conclusions. By actually going to places that are included in written arguments, moving between texts and physical places, using one to further understand the other, students begin to examine the intersection between discourse and environment (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). A place could potentially inform a paper topic, while a text about a place could further inform understanding the socio-historical features of that place. Students then must negotiate between the two, to see how discourse is shaped by geography and in what ways geography can better inform discourse.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, another important reason to include kinesthetic movement is because of its positive relationship to cognitive productivity (Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, 2013). The medical science of the relationship is well-established, and many writers and students can name anecdotal examples of the relationship between movement and thinking as well. A feminist perspective to ecocomposition also takes an embodied approach, keeping in sight the people and the voices behind the papers, the physicality of environmental justice, particularly in regards to division of labor and resources (Schneiderman, 2002). It is crucial to remember the embodied nature of writing, and to not ignore the literal aches and pains that come with writing, but to help our students mitigate those issues.

The benefit of physical movement has been well-documented, and therefore I will not spend a great amount of time on the overwhelming evidence here. Getting the recommended amount of physical exercise each day (45-60 minutes) is linked to healthy weight, physical strength, reduction in illness, a reduction in depression and anxiety, and better cognitive

development—students who are regularly physically active perform better on standardized tests (Institute of Medicine, 2013). As stated by Dobrin & Weisser (2002a), a goal with such far reaching ends is necessarily interdisciplinary, and this interdisciplinarity extends to the physical health of our students, just as environmental ethics extend to the physical health of our planet and its citizens. An ecocomposition program is devoted to educating students to write and live for sustainable lives. If schools care about the well-being of their students, it follows that they should care about their physical health (Institute of Medicine, 2013). Promoting kinesthetic movement in and out of the classroom not only helps students work through their writing processes but also establishes a model for a holistic life.

Instructors can include kinesthetic movement in the curriculum in multiple ways, based on their curriculum, within the kairotic moments of the classroom. It is possible to assign a walking tour of the college campus or town, which can be especially useful for freshmen new to the area. Requiring students to reflect on their favorite sport or exercise encourages the movement-writing connection, the same way as including movement in the actual curriculum. Sometimes small changes of position, like having students come to the board to write, stand up to give their answer, or rearrange themselves into pods or small groups is even enough to wake them up and create an embodied curriculum. I have on occasion asked my students to stretch or take a yoga pose when they seemed especially sleepy. At the very least, small movement breaks like these can reenergize the students or give them a focus to laugh at (their instructor) as he or she requests a tree pose from the students.

Outdoor Environment

Alongside including kinesthetic movement in the curriculum, an ecocomposition program should predictably include opportunities for students to get outside of the classroom walls. A

critical component of an ecococomposition program trying to establish process pedagogy is that students engage with the community outside of university buildings and begin to see that engagement as part of the process of creating informed writing, just as library research creates informed writing. Nabhan (1994) argues that formal education can stifle the development of ecological knowledge, and therefore cultural knowledge, when students do not get the opportunity to actually investigate their surroundings. Many university instructors are beginning to insist on assignments that have students investigating outdoor environments in order to draw a closer connection between discourse and nature (Reynolds, 2004; Lucksinger, 2014). Though adult students may not think of play in the same way as children, unstructured access to the outdoors is still critical to wellbeing for people of all ages.

This engagement with the outdoors can be—and some would argue should be —an enjoyable experience (Sobel, 1997). Enjoyment is an important feature of ecological education and the lack of it a serious concern for ecological educators—an issue that could potentially result in ecopohbia (Sobel, 1997). Students need time to explore their local surroundings in order to grow affinity for them, in order to want to protect the places in which they live. The list of the problems attached to our current ecological crisis can be overwhelming, but we really have no choice other to be optimistic about the future, try to reverse the damage, and try to reestablish human connection with nature (Owens, 2001). Gruenewald (2003) advocates for decolonization—ceasing to exploit the environment—and reinhabitation—reconnecting with environment. The structure of the classroom on indigenous lands is inherently colonial, and the current capitalist, merit-based structure of schooling is inherently patriarchal. By allowing the class the freedom of the outdoors, we cease to contribute to ecophobia and in a radical way teach

resistance to the typical failures of education, what Orr (2004) describes as the business of education to prepare students for the global economy, with no concern for environmental ethics.

By reconnecting with movement and the outdoors, ecological education becomes incorporated into the curriculum and gives students a tangible way to think about writing process, to think about invention. Instead of assigning vague brainstorming activities, or worse— not addressing invention at all—students will have the opportunity to test ideas about their written arguments, geographical autobiographies, or place-descriptions by actually moving among those places. Rather than making invention seem intangible, a thing that originates from nowhere, students can see invention as something that is stirred by the process of kinesthetic action in the environment. The movement and connection to place is proven to increase cognitive development and creativity and therefore a feature of composition programs that can be argued for and incorporated across disciplines and with administrators (Institute of Medicine, 2013; Sobel, 1997). Finally, if an ecocomposition program is truly committed to holistic, interdisciplinary education, the physicality of education and specifically writing should not be ignored but actually included in the curriculum as a way to promote whole living.

Ecological Drafting and Revising in Process Pedagogy

According to Ede (2004), even within a post-process composition era, the remnants of process pedagogy are everywhere, and the drafting process is one of those key features. Allowing students to draft freely, with guidance and minimal pressure of evaluation, helps them to develop ideas without fear of making mistakes. Drafting avoids stifling student creativity, giving them the opportunity to work and think through the writing process (Murray, 1972). Within an ecocomposition program, drafting and revision would follow many of the usual standards of composition programs, given that drafting inherently captures the holistic and social

nature of writing. Multiple drafts, peer reviews, and student-instructor conferences are all useful strategies that are foundational to the process movement.

One benefit of having students submit multiple drafts before the final assessment is to give them an opportunity to rework their ideas and retrace their steps. If students are writing about a specific location, going there on repeated occasions and revisiting their drafts helps to illuminate how perspectives can change, and how place can be affected by other people, time of day, weather, etc. Their understanding of a place will grow at the same time as their writing skills sharpen. As students negotiate the space between discourse and environment, they will have multiple opportunities to reflect on how their own discourse is representing the environment and how reoccurring visits to a place shape the way one articulates that place.

Drafting also allows students to use kinesthetic movement and outdoor environment in a way that is unique to them. Unlike a test, or even an all-at-once written assignment, drafting grants the luxury of time, therefore allowing both rest and movement as part of the process. Writing, stepping away, revising, moving outdoors, writing, resting—or whatever schedule necessary according to the students' needs—can be incorporated into the project. Not only does this type of drafting typically produce more thoughtful papers, it reinforces the idea that education is a holistic process that cares for the student and links that student to their own needs and the needs of the community at large.

A crucial component to revision is feedback from one's peers. A guided peer review process is an opportunity to address student writing from an ecological perspective. While the readings, assignment prompts, and guidance during invention will establish an ecological framework for a class, it is possible that students complete these assignments without critically addressing the social-epistemic features of their work. Using drafting and revision to intervene at

the right moments helps students to see their work from this critical light. By having peers assess one another's work from the perspective of social-epistemic ecocomposition, students will have to consider the intersection between discourse and environment. A main goal of the revision process should be to have students grapple with how place functions within a story, narrative, or prose (Lucksinger, 2014). Examples of questions that can guide students in peer review are as follows:

- In what ways does this paper address ecological concerns?

- How is environment addressed in this paper, and from what perspective (conservationist, economic, indigenous, etc.)?

- Who gets to control how spaces function in the prose? What stakeholders are interested in the space?

- Would you articulate spaces differently than what is in the paper? Why or why not?

- How is the prose organized, and how does the organization affect how the reader interprets the space?

- Where can the writer elaborate more, with either sensory description or sources? Do any of the descriptions require more thorough research?

- How is this place limited by the way it is discussed? Or, how is this place accessible according to the perspective people have of it? What type of rhetoric is used to describe it?

- What, ultimately, is the argument of this piece? What are the ecological ramifications of such an argument?

- What was your understanding of this place before reading this paper? How has that understanding changed? Will your behavior change as a result of this new understanding?

The responses to these questions contribute to the writing process in two main ways: first, the writer receives feedback on his or her work and can revise accordingly, and second, the reader has to reflect on the writer's perspective of the intersection between discourse and environment. By seeing one perspective of this intersection, and offering feedback that can shape the discourse, students see the social-epistemic nature of writing and how multiple stakeholders are involved in creating knowledges.

Another key strategy in the revision process is instructor-student conferences. These individualized sessions help students revise from their point of understanding, and within their unique paper. This is a crucial component to an ecocomposition program because it offers the most localized type of education possible. Just as we do when we visit a new place, when writing in a new and difficult genre, we look for familiar signs to make our way (Reynolds, 2004). With a helpful travel guide, we can still follow our own course but with the tools and knowledge of someone who has tread the same path before. This is the function of a travel guide and a writing instructor. Students determine their arguments and their writing goals, but we can help them shape those arguments and goals, pointing out familiar signs in order to help them make their way through organization, elaboration, revising, and brainstorming. Travel guides have the social capital to help travelers make sense of a place, and instructors have the genre knowledge to help writers make sense of discourse.

The instructor-student conference also functions as a way to engage in writing process while developing more ethical relationships in higher education (Murray, 1972). Often conferences are when we really get to learn about the student—their interests, goals, desires— but also the things that may be impeding their education—family issues, financial concerns, roommate problems. While some may take the position that these issues, positive or negative, are

not the professor's concern, an ecological approach to writing understands these concerns as pieces of the web that affect the whole; one change reverberates through and changes the makeup of the web (Cooper, 1986). Empathizing with students through their writing and education process is not simply a moral choice made by a nice teacher; it is the core of what it means to teach whole persons, within communities, in a holistic way, from an ecological perspective. By modeling what it looks like to be concerned about various components of a student's life, rather than just a narrow vision of meritocratic academic success, students are also educated about how their own schooling, choices, and behavior affects other people—the environment and the community.

Ecological Editing in Process Pedagogy

Teaching editing, or grammar, is the final piece in the process of an ecocomposition program. When I use the term editing, I am referring to surface-level errors, mechanical or grammatical, that are noticeable or distracting but do not impede in understanding the student's message. Grammar refers more specifically to the syntactical rules of a given language (which is constructed through various discourse communities), though for my purposes here (and for the purposes of teaching students), I use the term editing to denote grappling with these types of concerns generally. For students, editing is often seen as their Achilles heel, the thing that will prevent them from being taken seriously or turning in a good paper. It is a reality that students, stakeholders outside of academia, and even professors within academia put great emphasis on thorough editing.

The most effective way to teach editing, along with when to teach it in the writing process, has been a contentious argument in composition and rhetoric for many years. This topic is the one that is most polarizing issue at my own university, with one camp believing thorough

grammar instruction must precede drafting and writing instruction, and that any small amount of writing done should be quickly sanitized with heavy editing. The other camp sees editing instruction as being introduced in context, at appropriate kairotic moments, after students have begun drafting and developing their ideas. According to Murray (1972), editing instruction should come at the end of the writing process in order to give students the opportunity to try out ideas without the fear of mechanical errors. Hartwell (1985) argues that grammar instruction does not help, and can actually inhibit, the development of writing skills. Therefore composition programs have often taken the foundational approach, based on these findings, to embrace drafting and save editing instruction for the end of the process. Since the process movement, the linear metaphor of writing has been problematized, given that writing and writing instruction happens recursively, in different ways and at different moments according to the needs of the students, and it is therefore inappropriate to designate the exact time when editing should come into play. While I agree with this critique, I also argue that for the sake of nascent student researchers and writers, editing instruction should be for the most part restricted to the end of the writing process and within the framework of social-epistemic rhetoric. Because many of our students have no organizational schema for writing process (other than to not make a grammatical mistake), it is helpful to provide a flexible template for writing process that emphasizes, most of the time, drafting first and editing later. More advanced students have the capability of critiquing the linear process, which is good and necessary in their writing educations and career. However, until students have developed a way to organize their writing process, it is useful to provide opportunities when they do not have to worry about surface-level issues while they are still trying to work out their ideas. This strategy can also be useful to WPAs who have faculty and staff who are keen on making students perform immediate and rigorous

grammar exercises—not demanding that these faculty and staff cease assigning such exercises completely, but at least holding off until later in the process.

Within the framework of a social-epistemic ecocomposition program, the goal of editing instruction would be to help students understand the expectations of local discourses and ecologies. In other words, grammar instruction is not taught as an objective knowledge, but as the subjective privileging of particular ways of speaking and writing that are connected to class, gender, race, geography, position, and discipline. The teaching comes in at particular moments in the classroom that are appropriate for the particular concern, rather than as a warning to the class that creates a dynamic of fear about lower-order writing issues.

An example of how to teach a grammatical issue is based on need and geography. A common geographical, grammatical inconsistency I see in North Dakotan vernacular is to say "I seen" rather than the standard "I saw." Rather than lecturing on past tense verbs before students have even begun writing, pointing out the inconsistency in context can be more helpful (Hartwell, 1985). Discussing how the reader then interprets the writing when there is an inconsistency like this (are they seen as less educated? do people take their ideas less seriously? are they seen as less professional?) helps writers see how editing issues are connected to social context and are not simply an objective issue. It may even be appropriate to suggest times when you could purposefully say "I seen" instead of "I saw," maybe in creative writing or with a sense of irony, if it is appropriate in a given rhetorical context. It is also useful to analyze local speeches and prose pieces to see in what ways speakers and writers purposefully include local vernacular, whether that is slang, grammatical errors, local sayings, or local stories.

Establishing this form of editing instruction not only provides a basic education in grammar; it provides an understanding for the social, constructed nature of discourse and how

discourse is linked to sociological issues. These seemingly lower-order writing concerns can then lead to higher-order writing conversations, such as writing with the universal male pronoun, or the basis for political correctness, or the argument for teaching African American English (AAE) in certain areas of the country. By showing how editing issues are related to the privileging of certain discourses, students may actually care about editing issues even more than they did previously, without the need for overt editing instruction. Finally, this type of editing instruction further promotes equitable relationships between instructor and student, establishing that the goal of education is not to mark every mistake a student makes but to help them grow in holistic, purposeful understanding of the writing process.

An Ecological, Recursive Process

Though composition programs do their best to define the goals and outcomes of writing education, and to provide pedagogical strategies to accomplish these outcomes, the reality is that each semester and class is going to be markedly different from the other, given the uniqueness of the individual needs and diversity across the student body. Rather than seeing this diversity and change as problematic, and trying to create objective measures to assess a subjective process like writing, an ecocomposition program embraces the fact that localized education is necessary within the context of a community. The dynamic between the instructor and class will always be changing, and this is a metaphor for ecological systems inside and outside the classroom.

Considering that I argue for system-level understanding of writing, it may seem odd that this chapter is structured as if writing is a linear process, from reading to invention to drafting to editing. Reiff, Bawarshi, Ballif, & Wiesser (2015) argue that ecological writing is post-process, in that it sees writing not as discrete parts but as fluid (p. 7). This position acknowledges the history of composition and rhetoric scholarship, and I would agree that ecocomposition is

essentially post-process. However, it is important to keep in mind that students do not have the benefit of understanding the history of this scholarship. To tell them that writing is post-process and therefore we will not be learning writing process as discrete parts is unhelpful to first-year composition students. Instead, writing process should be taught with a grain of salt, so students have tangible ways of seeing process and language to articulate that process, but also an understanding that writing is recursive and that their own writing process will be unique to them.

This articulation of a writing process in an ecocomposition program attempts to offer students and faculty tangible strategies to teach writing that do not refute that writing is recursive and fluid. By articulating invention and linking it to kinesthetic movement and the outdoors, students have a way of thinking about brainstorming; they have something they can actually do to begin to invent. By thinking about reading and editing within the framework of social-epistemic rhetoric, with indigenous and feminist critiques in mind, students have a goal at these points in the process; they know what to look for and what to do. Analysis of readings and the shaping of a writing project cease to be mysterious, because they have been instructed in tangible ways about how to begin writing and how to revise writing, within a socially responsible context. By simply maintaining that this process is changeable and flexible (you can edit while you draft and you can reread while you edit!), composition instructors can be helpful travel guides through the writing process without taking over a student's journey.

Articulating components of a writing process is not just helpful to students, but also to the faculty—adjunct, part-time, tenured, older, younger—who are looking for ways to meld their own experiences, training, and skills into an established framework provided by a department. I have worked for departments that have standardized curricula and for departments that have no guided curricula whatsoever; there are pros and cons to both. An ecocomposition program

embraces the developed, thoughtful rigor of a standardized program while allowing localized factors—such as faculty and students—to be embraced as well. In the next chapter, I will look more closely at how to build such a curriculum by including ecological course materials and activities.

CHAPTER V

CHOOSING ECOLOGICAL COURSE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

The use of haiku

To engage place, description

Student engagement

In the previous chapter I outlined the usefulness of an ecocomposition program in local contexts—specifically RMUWP—that focuses on establishing writing program administration goals like writing process within a framework of ecological literacy. The similar goals of social-epistemic rhetoric and ecocomposition provide students, and writing programs, with the framework to examine discourse from an ecological and self-consciously political standpoint. This chapter begins to apply these theoretical perspectives to the actual work done in writing programs, from my own perspective of trying to choose appropriate course materials and shared writing assignments at RMUWP. The following arguments attempt to provide a template for what ecocomposition could potentially look like in a writing program in which a WPA (writing program administrator) also has concerns about updating basic pedagogies in order to provide students with rigorous reading and writing (rather than grammar-based) instruction.

Many instructors of English can empathize with the struggle to find suitable texts to prompt student response, both in discussion and written analysis. Not in love with the written word (at least not yet), many composition students are uninspired by the literary pieces that captured the hearts of their instructors. If students are not provided the context to make social critiques meaningful or provocative, they can struggle to examine such readings on a collegiate

level. In my experience working in the RMUWP, students and sometimes even faculty find readings on class, gender, race, and sexual orientation threatening, and we struggle to find common readings everyone in the program is willing to work through; it a struggle to find materials students (and faculty) are willing to critique when those critiques may illuminate problems in society. On top of trying to find course materials that students will be interested in, instructors also have to worry about making sure the chosen texts align with the goals, assessments, and rigor of the program.

I have often found in teaching first-year composition that certain students—the type who often proclaim an affinity for English Studies coming out of high school—are surprised by the curriculum of composition courses. Perhaps they had an invested interest in poetry or British literature, journalism or creative writing. Their friends asked them to "proofread" their papers as they always had a knack for finding typos. They've been told they have the intellectual inclination for literary studies and have always prided themselves as being thoughtful and open-minded. It then turns out that college composition is very different from what they are used to. The readings are more demanding, and instructors demand more from student reading. Students are being asked to analyze in new ways and suddenly be accountable for not just what is in the text but what is also assumed or implied, the ramifications of various arguments and ideas. Many times students who were once confident in English Studies find themselves challenged in a way that is unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

I would argue that a bit of discomfort is a good sign; it signals growth and rigor. However, the discomfort becomes problematic when the unfamiliarity of the texts leads to student apathy. The most seasoned English scholars can grow frustrated and subsequently uninspired by James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, simply because the territory is so foreign that it is

difficult to make connections or transfer skills that the reader already has to this new reading challenge. The guidance of a helpful instructor/guide can alleviate some of this reading shock, but if the student disengages, many of the learning objectives of the class come to an abrupt halt.

An ecocomposition program looks to retain the rigor of social-epistemic curricula while providing a more accessible framework for students, staff, and faculty. Ecocomposition can fulfill many learning objectives, including understanding of rhetoric, process writing, interdisciplinarity, ecological literacy, and a holistic education. When creating the course curricula it is important to choose materials that help introduce students to ecological concepts:

- Texts that utilize local stories and folklore

- Texts and assignments that focus on sense of place

- Writing that is place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic

- Writing assignments that have social and/or ecological exigence

An ecocomposition curriculum should be flexible, changing, and generated in connection to the local environment, so no two curriculums would look the exact same; in fact, ecocomposition resists this type of standardization.

Course materials that are particularly suited toward ecocomposition can engage students and provide meaning even when texts are difficult, whether that difficulty stems from the prose itself, the in-depth research, or even the length of the materials. Furthermore, instructors can implement an ecological design to the courses that provide students with a guide to investigate the intersection of environment and discourse (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). By focusing on points of interest, such as story and folklore, students can see a bridge between what originally engaged their love of English Studies to what they are doing in their composition courses. An ecocomposition-focused text is one that urges the understanding of sense of place, the reading of

immediate surroundings, and establishing of context so literary analyses have tangible

application. Most importantly, the perspective of ecological composition contributes to a holistic

education, so students are better equipped to deal with the urgency of real-life issues of

sustainability and environment. Because issues of environment are some of the most critical for

future generations, it is important that course materials and activities reflect the current social-

epistemic needs of our society.

Story and Folklore

It is an all too common experience for a composition instructor to ask an open-ended

question about a reading assignment, hoping to ignite active conversation, and to hear silence.

Sometimes questions have to be asked two, three, four different times and in multiple ways

before a student will feel comfortable enough to discuss for just a brief moment. At the same

time, many composition instructors can reference times when their classes—to the instructor's

surprise—exploded with interested, and the students, some who had remained silent for the

majority of the semester, became quickly dedicated to the conversation. Perhaps it was a text that

worked really well, the right discussion prompt at the right time, or a combination of both;

whatever the precise formula, it is these engaged moments that often create thoughtful written

drafts.

My own experience informs me that students are oftentimes most interested in the course

materials when they have some personal connection to them. Garrard (2007) notes a similar

trend in his research in ecological literacy, that students find the information most useful and

interesting when it can be applied to their lives. Most people connect to information that can fit

within their already existing framework of understanding. Stories and folklore, though unique

genres in many respects, both take advantage of this heuristic process, because they use

discourse as a creative means to interpret the environment people are living in. Not only do stories and folklore promote interest in the topic, they are often handed down through generations and adapted within generations. Therefore, the study of story and folklore in a composition class has the ability to engage students intellectually on a topical level as well as relationally on an emotional level. This focus on people, particularly in local contexts, is particularly important when Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) are trying to mindfully update writing programs and avoid one-size-fits-all updates that have no regard for the local culture. Folklore is by its very nature a regional genre of the local people.

Composition instructors have good reason to incorporate stories and folklore into their curriculum, whether that curriculum is standardized or up to individual instructors. One of the joys of teaching composition is the often unacknowledged fact the curriculum content is usually wide open (Owens, 2001). Because composition teaches a skill and a knowledge base that is not dependent on the course's reading materials, instructors have the ability to choose from a wide range of texts in order to satisfy learning objectives. In this way, I argue that ecocomposition can be seen as both an overarching philosophy of composition departments and also the pragmatic inclusion of ecologically focused materials.

Stories and folklore are key components to ecocomposition, because they engage students in the area in which they are situated and create relationships and affinity within that area. An added perk is that stories and folklore are often a lot of fun. Folklore is interesting to students for reasons embedded in the word itself—it's the stories and legends of people. Folklore exists outside of the walls of academia, therefore making it a point of connection for students becoming newly acquainted with the demands of the university. Everyone has been exposed to folklore. It could be the legends from the neighborhood in which a child grows up, the ghost stories that

emerge from the architecture of old buildings, or the fairytales and movies children are exposed to; folklore touches nearly every aspect of our lives, giving our physical surroundings literary and cultural meaning (Ryden, 1993). The moments when our students suddenly "wake up" and become engaged with the reading are often moments when we have touched upon a story or narrative that resonates with something in the students' lives, that already has meaning to them.

In one writing lesson, I incorporated a very accessible form of poetry—haiku—to break up what I perceived as my students' exhaustion of database research on social issues. At first, I was met with the usual passive listening when explaining the haiku: the Japanese origins, the 5/7/5 syllabic structure, and the nature-image focus. I then asked my students to give me a physical structure in the university to write about as an example of a haiku for the class, and they were suddenly wakened by this immediate application. They told me to write a haiku about a rather dilapidated classroom, so right then on the board, I wrote a haiku describing the classroom. We laughed together as a class while I counted out the syllables and chose descriptive language to create the image of the sorry-looking room, something to this effect:

The paint is peeling

Around us, as we research

In a hot classroom

Eventually I turned the haiku writing over to them, and the students suddenly became engaged in the lesson, invested in word choice, rhythm, and description, as they created haikus about their surroundings that would impress their classmates, or, at the very least, make them laugh.

Had I asked the students to give me a generalized image to write about (a tree, or a river), I do not believe I would have received such an engaged response. It was not until I connected the literary lesson to something they knew—literally the buildings they live in—that they saw the

connection between language and physical structures. These are buildings the students spend time in and have heard legends about; the floor we were working on even has, as the story goes, a resident ghost that causes all kinds of student and faculty problems—lights that shut off, doors that lock shut, and printers that inexplicably break down on a weekly basis. According to Ryden (1993), stories and folklore such as these are repeated because they are embedded with personal and social meaning and values, and in this case, even humor. Is it any wonder that that the legend of the resident ghost on third floor creates problems for students who are trying to submit their work on time?

Students may not perceive their stories and folklore as contributing to the ecological web that creates sense of place, but they do, and the stories are already there before the instructor even steps into the classroom; it's just a matter of tapping into these stories to create engagement. Folklore does not have to come from a traditional canon, and in many cases, it is better if it doesn't. Instructors should use the stories already permeating their locales, so they can help students connect the material in the composition classroom to their everyday lives. By helping students understand how places are important, how places can have personalities, and how people interact with them (in my example, how a dilapidated classroom can have humor and a ghost that stops students and faculty from getting their work done properly), composition programs can grow students' awareness of the folklore already present in their lives.

Of course, it is possible to formalize folklore to some degree in the classroom in order to accomplish similar goals, though the farther the stories move away from students' immediate environment the greater likelihood interest will wane. However, many places in the United States have Native American histories and stories that are criminally under-examined. Often students who have lived in a geographical area their entire life can cite information about colonial British

History but not about the local people who once lived where they now walk. By researching, finding, studying, and incorporating these stories, students are able to reconnect to folklore and the history of their local environment.

As I continue to explain how to choose course materials that provide foundational concepts in composition and rhetoric pedagogy while also promoting an ecocomposition program, I will also describe key ecological theories while providing specific examples of texts and assignments that could be utilized in the classroom.

Reading Sense of Place

Folklore and sense of place are interdependent, and one cannot be understood without the other. Ryden (1993) states that "place necessarily has a physical geographical existence, [but] sense of place is primarily a narrative construction" (p. 77). In other words, to teach students how to sense places, and eventually read places, they need to understand how language creates and interprets different places. As Ryden (1993) explains, place begins with geography but evolves into a more comprehensive phenomenon. According to Reynolds (2004), geography determines everything from our values to how we talk; compositionists often argue, on the other hand, that language determines how we interpret our world, including geography. Therefore it becomes of utmost importance that we examine the relationship between place and language, teaching students the embedded values present in how that relationship gets articulated.

Sense of Place Texts

While there is not necessarily a "sense of place" canon, Lucksinger (2014) provides criteria for choosing texts that help illuminate the place-language relationship, from how place determines the actions of characters in novels to whether place becomes a character in the novel. As I argued earlier, this idea can be incorporated beyond just literature and into materials focused

on agents interacting in places of discourse. The most important component of ecocomposition-focused course materials is that the texts merge disciplines that focus on discourse with disciplines that focus on environment (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). These course materials may contain environmental themes that illuminate the current environmental crisis, but should also raise questions about how discourse shapes and is shaped by our local environments (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a).

There are endless options for instructors to choose from in order to accomplish these goals, and each instructor's unique education, locality, and even personality will to a great extent determine which texts are ultimately chosen. Therefore, I in no way intend to give a definitive guide to what texts work best in an ecocomposition course but rather how a few texts address the concerns of ecocomposition, concerns that can be generalized to other possible course materials.

It can be useful to utilize a range of texts in composition classes from many different genres so students see how writing is altered from one rhetorical ecology to the next, including fiction and nonfiction materials (Edbauer, 2005). In my experience students' interest often piques with the inclusion of novels beside other more critical pieces, because fiction provides a creative element to the course. Furthermore, some fictional texts to begin the course give students an opportunity to practice critique in a way that may feel safer, because the content is not based on real current events (yet). Quinn's (1992) *Ishmael* is a novel that focuses on a discussion between a man and a gorilla, the gorilla teaching the man about human environmental history. The novel provides a foundation of knowledge for many of the concerns important to ecology—issues about agriculture, resource usage, and population growth. The novel raises big questions about what it means to be human and live well on the earth, questions that work well within a composition classroom in which engaged discussion begins the drafting process. In my own

experience, *Ishmael* has been a useful foundational text to begin our discussions about environment, discussions that cut across issues of environment, morality, economics, and even religion—nearly all students feel like they have a stake in the reading and the ideas being discussed. The novel helps students perceive themselves in their relation to the world and provides an introductory lesson in core concepts of ecological literacy (Lucksinger, 2014; Orr, 2004). Most importantly, it provides a framework for understanding environment not just as something that can be exploited for human purposes, but as a necessary extension of human ethics and stewardship (Leopold, 1949). Books that establish these foundational ecological concepts can help engage students in thinking about discourse from an ecological perspective for the rest of class.

Because composition focuses a great deal of its time on nonfiction writing as well, it is useful to choose texts that self-consciously address, critique, and grapple with place. In "Spirit-Fried No-Name River Brown Trout: A Recipe," Duncan (2001) connects his own desires to explore, engage with nature, and catch fish to the need to put aside our desires for the betterment of the land—what I see as an engagement with social-epistemic rhetoric. Duncan writes about his individual quests in nature, a perspective that could potentially be very interesting in rural areas where many students hunt and fish. His work is also characteristically interdisciplinary, borrowing from ecology, environmental policy, and literature—a central component to work in ecocomposition (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). Duncan's creative nonfiction provides a literary model for students wanting to shape their own discourse in order to discuss issues important to them. Duncan's refusal to give into his desires provides a point of critique in class discussion. According to Owens (2001), environmental restraint is often a very hard sell for students who are programmed to believe success is measured by economic growth and consumption, so texts that

provide an alternative perspective help establish an ecological framework for the class and prompt discussion among students.

Creative nonfiction authors like Norris (1993) also use place to concentrate their personal and social critiques, with the Dakotas being her place of focus in *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography.* This work of geographical autobiography discusses Norris's sense of place and makes a convincing argument for the need for sense of place when developing as a writer. Norris writes about the places that made a deep impression on her, citing Hawaii and New York City as influences but not nearly as much so as the Dakota Territory. Eventually she moved to South Dakota with her husband because she felt a call to live—and write—on the prairie. Norris describes her affinity for Dakota in terms of environment—"the way native grasses spring back from a drought […]; the way a snowy owl sits on a fencepost" (p. 10)—but also in terms of people—the "countercultural" decision of Dakota citizens to live on the plains and in isolation instead of in bustling cities (p.8). Through these descriptions, readers can sense that Norris's relationship to the land is meaningful and personal, a relationship that exists beyond the parameters of economic profit (Leopold, 1949). Texts like Norris's that invoke sense of place can serve as a model for students trying to sense their own places.

The previous three examples of texts deal explicitly with environmental themes and sense of place, but a lack of *environmental* focus in a text does not mean it does not contribute to an *ecological* focus. The ecological focus of writing is exemplified in Cooper's (1984) metaphor about writing being a web that emerges from multiple interlocking social systems. Because environmental themes naturally connect to ecological themes, environmentally-themed texts work well, but it possible to teach from an ecocomposition perspective without all course materials being focused on sense of place or environmental activism. Dobrin and Weisser

(2002a) write that a core question course materials in ecocomposition should be able to prompt is "What effects do local environments have on any kind of writing, any kind of writer?" (p. 577). In this way, environment is treated almost as a genre, requiring writers to make different rhetorical moves according to their surroundings. Therefore, theoretical texts such as Bartholomae's (1985) "Inventing the University," which focuses explicitly on the genre of academia and how language is constructed for it, are a useful if not needed supplement in order to teach how discourse and environment are related, to get students writing about writing. According to Dobrin and Weisser (2002a), ecocomposition focuses on the intersection of all discourse and all environments:

> Ecocompositionists inquire as to what effects discourse has in mapping, constructing, shaping, defining, and understanding nature, place, and environment; and, in turn, what effects nature, place, and environment have on discourse. This includes *all* environments: classroom, political, electronic, ideological, historical, economic, natural. (p. 573)

In other words, ecocomposition helps to investigate different genres of writing by focusing on the intersection that creates a genre—the discourse in a particular place (real or abstract). Therefore, the curriculum does not need to concentrate solely on texts that focus on obvious environmental issues. Alongside course materials that create an environmental framework and establish themes important to ecomposition courses, instructors should include theoretical texts such as Bartholomae that promote metacognition and self-awareness about environmental course materials.

Part of teaching composition is of course teaching reading and making students aware of the competing socio-political forces happening in a text. When going through readings together in class discussion, students need an understanding of how the author is using discourse to

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manipulate our ideas about the environment inside and outside the text. The following are

questions that can help guide reading:

- Who is speaking, and what is their argument? What are the stakes of this argument? Who

    is the speaker influenced by?

- How is the speaker discussing environment? From what vantage point are they coming?

    What are the ramifications of this vantage point?

- Does the writing seem truthful? Does it seem biased? In what ways is it biased? Does the

    bias prevent us from engaging with the speaker's message?

- How are spaces treated in the text? Is the space controlled by anyone—if so, who? In

    what ways does the speaker try to manipulate the space and in what ways is the speaker

    manipulated by the space?

Through discussion of readings, structured by these types of rhetorically-grounded questions,

students can begin to grow an awareness that the texts they read and the spaces they move

through are not inert; they are socio-political, manipulated by different players, and in need of

thoughtful analysis (Reynolds, 2004).

Place as text

Students can also engage with sense of place not just by reading *about* place but *literally

reading the place*. The previous haiku example shows how descriptive language can be used in

order to write many places into existence, places that students maybe had not given much

thought to. However, most composition courses work closely with the concept of the rhetorical

situation, and social-epistemic composition does not function well within context-less writing

assignments. By learning to read or analyze an actual physical place, students can practice

research skills that have a direct relationship with eco-political issues in a particular location.

One example of "reading place" comes from the 1997 Environmental Literacy Institute at

Tufts University (as cited in Owens, 2001, p. 33-34). The assignment asks writers to research

their own locale, their own institution:

1) In what watershed(s) is your campus situated?

2) In what city, town, or municipality is your campus located?

3) Name the following officials representing the community your campus is a part of:

   (a) City Council; (b) State Senate and Congressional Representatives; (c) Federal

   Senate and Congressional Representatives

4) (a) Where does the energy for electricity on your campus come from? (b) What is the

   fuel source? (c) Who is in charge of energy management?

5) (a) Where does the water on your campus come from? (b) Where does it go when it

   leaves? (c) Who is in charge of water management?

6) (a) Where does the majority of food from your campus come from? (b) Where does it

   go when it leaves? (c) Who is in charge of food management?

7) (a) What are the major materials used (i.e., construction, office, laboratory, etc.) on

   your campus? (b) Where do they come from? (c) Where do they go when they leave?

   (d) Who is in charge of purchasing and disposal?

8) What problems does your university impose on the environment?

9) What would you identify as your current administration's top three policy issues?

An assignment such as this accomplishes many ecocomposition goals. First, the content itself is

environmentally based and contributes to the ecological literacy all graduates from higher

learning institutions should have (Orr, 2004). Secondly, the prompt links research questions with

tangible issues. Composition courses set the foundation for written communication and research

at the collegiate level, but often times students struggle to see how sifting through newspapers and library databases is relevant outside of a particular assignment. Prompts that link research to the place students live exemplify the important relationship between reading, research, and writing as social-epistemic action. Reynolds (2014) argues that when we do not examine spaces, "the ideology of transparent space takes over—the idea that space doesn't matter" (p.14). In order to teach students what forces—gendered, racial, economic, and spatial—are at play in the ecological web of writing, and how students can effect change within this web, spaces and their nuances need to be examined (Cooper, 1986). Finally, asking students to read places and respond through writing on a very practical level helps them learn important environmental features of that place, teaching analytical skills with both multimodal and traditional texts. In turn, these assignments help illuminate how language is used to construct the way we make sense of the physical world.

While engagement may not be necessary for students to do well on their assessments (though it usually helps), it is necessary if we want students to see their educations as applicable and transferable (Garrard, 2007; Smit, 2007). Folklore, stories, and sense of place help root students to their current locations, when many first-years do not yet have history or personal affinity to their university. Teaching this rootedness and concern for place allows collegiate writers to apply reading and analytical skills to new places and rhetorical situations.

Writing Sense of Place

The previous section discussed potential reading assignments that work within a philosophy of ecocomposition. If they sounded a bit like writing assignments, it is because they are—reading and writing are inextricably linked in the same way discourse and environment are linked (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a), because the analyses we do on a text is tied up in the

language we possess to make sense of that text. The rest of this chapter, however, will focus more explicitly on writing assignments within an ecocomposition program.

Place-based Writing

The ecological literacy assignment from Tufts University not only teaches students how to read place; it also immerses students in the language of genre—in this case, environmental policy—in a way that illuminates how genre expectations change across the curriculum. In order to answer the Tufts University questions well, students would have to become acquainted with local political knowledge/policy and be able to interpret the responses they get from different players in environmental issues. Students would have to reference a variety of sources—both primary and secondary, local and distant—teaching them research skills that are characteristic of most composition programs.

The Tufts University assignment accomplishes many of the goals of writing curricula, but any prompt that engages students in their local culture, forcing them to research the place they live and respond to their discoveries through language, can accomplish the goals of an ecocomposition program with a dedication to social-epistemic rhetoric. Not only do assignments such as these ask students to become engaged in environmental concerns important to their locality, they also ask students to articulate their responses to those concerns in a way that makes sense in that locality. In order to report on the Tufts University questions well, students must utilize the local vernacular, know local information, and organize the information in a way that privileges the concerns that are most pressing for a certain community. In one community, it might be most rhetorically effective to spend the most time in a written report discussing issues of recycling, because that is what the community is concerned about and needs to work on. In another community, it could be most rhetorically effective to spend time discussing water

treatment and safety, because that is the issue that has been on the news and has the most political weight. Thinking about these types of rhetorical issues, writing to them and then reflecting on them, helps students build rhetorical skills that improves self-awareness and makes their writing and research more effective for particular audiences (Berlin, 1996). In my own experience I have seen students succeed in understanding rhetoric better when they have to write for a situation in which their words actually engage with the culture and are being read by others.

Engaging with culture helps students to understand rhetoric and the way pathos (emotion) is an important concept in written debates. Students benefit from environmental sensory experiences that help develop written projects from an emotional perspective, a perspective that instills affinity and not just fear (Sobel, 1997). It is a serious political as well as an intellectual problem that environmental concerns often turn people off because the severity of the issue seems too large, too unmanageable. If the earth's ecosystems are deteriorating, and there is no peeling back climate change, why should people engage in the issue or make decisions that require self-sacrifice (Owens, 2001)? Sobel argues that people need to have an emotional connection with their environment and feel affinity towards it in order to have the exigence needed to participate in social-environmental issues that develop a land ethic.

One way to develop this emotional connection, and therefore sense of place, is to have students write about their favorite places. I often begin my first-year composition class by connecting students with their favorite places. We watch "Sense of Place" by Manicmads (2014) on Youtube in which she explains the role favorite places have in our lives, and how the act of even describing one's favorite place to another person can result in intimacy and relationship building. She then goes on to describe her favorite place in sensory detail—the way it looked, the way it sounded, and the way it smelled. She then describes the emotional connection she has

with this place and how just thinking about it grounds her and makes her feel safe. After students see this example of sense of place, they write their own favorite places in sensory detail, and I give them the option to share with the class. This exercise makes students reach for vocabulary and sentence imagery that they may not have utilized previously, pushing them to describe their places in the most rhetorically effective way possible in order to invoke just a portion of emotion in the readers or listeners that they themselves feel for their place. This begins our semester-long journey in trying to understand the rhetorical situation and how discourse can address particular issues/problems/goals in particular ways. Because this assignment does not automatically contain or necessitate a research/social element, I usually pair it with a research assignment, such as the geographical autobiography that I discuss later in the chapter.

It remains crucial that while students have the benefit of a rigorous composition curriculum that teaches writing and research skills, students still feel personally and emotionally connected to what they are learning. This is not always a priority in the higher education system, just as making research and teaching applicable for a reason outside of career building has not always been considered a priority (Orr, 2004). If the goal of an ecocomposition curriculum seeks to break down disciplinary boundaries and provide holistic educations to equip students with the skills to take on social problems that cross disciplinary boundaries, it makes sense that an ecocomposition curriculum should also have a stake in educating whole persons. This means paying attention to what seems emotionally and personally important to the students we teach.

Interdisciplinary Writing

The previously described assignments cross many different disciplines and require a range of content knowledge to successfully complete them. Ecocomposition affirms the need to understand and write for many different disciplines: at ecocomposition's core is its

interdisciplinarity; it draws upon and melds many perspectives, methodologies, and investigations from disciplines across the academic spectrum (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a, p. 571). Many universities celebrate interdisciplinary work, if not for the intellectual benefits of the students, for reasons of assessment and grant funding. At the time of this writing, my own department is writing a grant that asks universities to choose a theme that crosses disciplinary boundaries and can promote collaboration—sense of place being the core theme that crosses physics, geography, and writing studies, among others. Therefore, the interdisciplinary nature of these assignments not only promotes written communication skills and ecological literacy; they are also flexible, attractive assignments to administrators that can easily be promoted within and across departments.

I pause for a moment to discuss the importance of including interdisciplinary work not just because it is a key concept for ecocomposition but also for the practical reason that assignments in writing programs have to be sustainable from an administrative level. In RMUWP, faculty are given academic freedom as long as the curriculum fits within the mission of the university. Part of that mission is to of course keep students on campus and to promote financial sustainability within departments. In other words, we have to make sure our department, and composition classes, remain viable with acceptable pass and retention rates, and that they prepare students for writing once they move on to other departments. One way to accomplish this is to embed interdisciplinarity into the classes in order to promote it across departments. Interdisciplinary writing helps prepare students for their majors and creates communication lines with scholars in other disciplines. In this case, it is a positive attribute that ecocomposition work can create sustainable writing programs not just from theoretical but a

practical level. It is a reality in writing program administration to consider the goals of university administration as well as the goals of individual instructors.

Luckily, interdisciplinarity is not just an important practice for administrators but truly a useful educational venture for students. By providing texts that have environmental themes and structuring the course from the perspective of ecocomposition, interdisciplinarity happens as a natural consequence of the course design. However, instructors can also make the interdisciplinarity purposeful and differentiated to the student. Composition courses teach research skills, and most instructors include an extended research project in which students have to do a significant amount of independent research for their papers. By using the texts—either the literal texts or place-as-text—the perspective of ecocomposition remains the foundation of the assignment while interdisciplinarity is incorporated. Then, students can research their chosen topic from within their respective majors' disciplines. For example, prompts for an extended research paper could be structured around the previously discussed texts as follows:

Ishmael

- How can humans address the population crisis?

- What is the most beneficial relationship between humans and environment?

- How has human history been shaped by religious/ecological stories, and why is this significant?

Place

- How can [insert local community] create a more sustainable recycling program?

- How sustainable are [insert local community]'s food and waste programs?

- How do [insert local community]'s local politics shape issues of sustainability?

Students can then respond to these prompts with research derived from their majors; in many ways, students become responsible for the content of the course while the composition instructors guide them in writing rhetorically responsible pieces. A student would be able to create an argumentative thesis for the question "What is the most beneficial relationship between humans and environment?" from a literary, economic, environmental, managerial, health, or sociological perspective, among many other possibilities. Because students will have to research their ecological concern and articulate their argument via prose, the work will be inherently interdisciplinary. By relying on process-based teaching strategies like shared drafting, peer reviews, and conferences, students will also be exposed to one another's perspectives, arguments, and disciplines. In this way, students can successfully write within an ecocomposition program with a social-epistemic, process-based framework; students will be engaging in writing projects that will ultimately teach writing and research skills as well as ecological literacy (Berlin, 1996; Orr, 2004).

An ecocomposition program is at its core already committed to interdisciplinary work, because it is examining the relationship between discourse and environment (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). By making this interdisciplinary work transparent to students and allowing them to engage in research projects from the discipline they are majoring in, students may see composition's applicability and be better able to transfer the writing and research skills to their field of study (Smit, 2007). Furthermore, research assignments that embrace interdisciplinarity and allow students to write from their majors ensure that ecological literacy is taught across all disciplines in the university, rather than being relegated to the environmental sciences. Orr (2004) argues that ecological literacy can only be taught well in the university once all scholars see how their disciplines affect and are effected by environment, understanding that ecological

literacy is the most pressing concern for today's educated population. In the same way—and for many of the same reasons—that students in all disciplines need to be critically engaged citizens who understand how they can both affect and be effected by discourse, students in all disciplines need to have basic ecological literacy, with the research and writing skills to deal with the current ecological crisis. Garrard (2007) argues that environmental concerns are ultimately cultural in character, because people must define what pollution is and what concern means or looks like. Only by engaging with environmental questions across the curriculum, establishing the intersection between discourse and environment, can the university system begin to adequately address the environmental crisis (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a).

Holistic writing

If composition studies at one time suffered from seeing writing as simply the product of the individual mind (Berlin, 1984), today we are closer to suffering from forgetting about the individual entirely. Dobrin, for example, focuses on the need for eco-consciousness in the early 2000s, but in 2011 (*Postcomposition)* he abandons this social-epistemic mission and begins advocating for the study of writing without considering the writer at all. Many composition courses—my own included—get held up by spending so much time on reading and writing analyses that they forget about the actual people in the classroom and the place in which these students live their lives. While composition studies have a decent track record of considering gender, race, and economic status in the study of writing, we often completely forget about environment and how students interact with that environment. According to Glotfelty & Fromm (1996), when English scholars began looking at cultural issues of the field in the late 20th century, they forgot to consider how the role of environment also affects readers and writers. Much work in ecocomposition has been done in the subsequent 20 years, though environment

has received less time for analyses than other concerns of identity. Given these concerns, it is prudent to recalibrate and refocus our energies on students, social-epistemic rhetoric, and environment.

The students in our classrooms come from rural and urban areas, from backgrounds of affluence and backgrounds of poverty. While academic journals focused on composition pedagogy often concentrate on progressive schools with ample resources, many students see themselves in other writing ecologies, ecologies staffed by an ever-revolving staff of adjuncts and part-timers, such as the university where I work. Within this year-to-year instability, WPAs may forget to look at the actual people who make up the universities where writing instructors teach. Instructors too often treat students as blank slates onto which they can easily transmit their own pedagogies and academic identities. As academics, we sometimes forget that our concerns are often not the students' concerns. Many students are parents and employees. Many come from underserved populations. Faculty often cite them as underprepared. At open enrollment universities or universities with less stringent admissions requirements, such as my own, the mission to learn written composition within an ecological, social-epistemic framework, that utilizes process-based pedagogy, and will ultimately teach them environmental literacy, does not even begin to enter students' minds (nor, honestly, does it enter the minds of most of the part-time and adjunct faculty who are recruited to teach these students before moving on to other jobs).

Of course, just because students and staff are not conscious of the role of ecocomposition does not mean it is not important. It does mean, however, that we have to understand who these students are in their new college environments, an issue that my university consistently (and necessarily) focuses on in pre-service faculty trainings. We also have to understand that

composition courses are often taught by a constant stream of adjuncts, part-time faculty, and graduate students (Crowley, 1998). These are the kinds of students and faculty that make up our composition classrooms, and we have to see them as part of the web that is connected to the whole (Cooper, 1984).

I will offer a few examples of student stories in order to illustrate my concern for ignoring the people we teach and where they come from. A few years ago I taught a student-athlete who came to my university on a partial scholarship to play football. Like many of the freshmen student-athletes on our campus, for whom retention to the university is low, this student struggled to get his work in on time. He slowly got more and more behind, really struggling from the drafting process rather than benefitting from it. In fact, it seemed as if every draft got worse. I finally intervened and asked the student why his work was suffering when at the start his drafts seemed so promising. Without complaining, he explained that he was not a very good "typer" and had a difficult time rewriting his essay each time a draft was due, and by the time he had written it out again, he did not have time to make changes. After questioning this process a bit more, I realized that he did not understand that drafts could be saved and then revised, saved again and revised again. He was typing out each draft completely from scratch.

Another student was desperately missing home and struggling to apply any of the values and concerns of his Midwestern university, peers, and RMUWP to his life in Southside Chicago, to which he would soon return. Another student's long term girlfriend was back at home in California, while he was across the country pursuing an education; they spent night after night on the phone trying to work through their long distance relationship issues. The writing education one student experienced in Great Britain was vastly different from the one I was giving him, from organizational schemas to syntactical structures to the use (or the banning) of comma

splices. Another student began suffering from depression when she moved away from her family and started college.

All of these anecdotal scenarios exemplify the immense role place and geography have in our lives, from our learned values to the way we talk and write to where we feel comfortable and where we do not (Reynolds, 2004). When we attempt to divorce education from the constant yet ever-changing interaction between student and place, we cease to make the education applicable. Like the banking concept of education, the content loses its context and meaning to the person; the education is static and transactional (Freire, 1970). So often education still suffers from Freire's banking metaphor, depositing and retrieving information, and both the individual and environment get erased from the process.

When students are not only allowed to be a part of their own educations but actually encouraged to examine themselves within their education, they become engaged and better able to cope with struggles they encounter. Garrard (2007) writes that students report being most interested in their curriculum when they have personal experiences within their educations, particularly related to ecological literacy. When part-time and adjunct faculty have example writing assignments they can use in their new place of employment, even if they have no previous experience with ecocomposition, they are potentially more prepared to help students develop written communication skills and ecological literacy in a way meaningful to them. By providing a framework for ecocomposition within these chapters, I hope to provide a model for how ecocomposition can become more approachable for composition instructors in diverse situations, whether or not they have had specific training in composition and rhetoric theory or ecological literacy. By articulating key concepts of ecocomposition and the way they adapt to

local concerns, instructors can potentially see how their own expertise within their locality can contribute to an ecocomposition program.

One example of a writing project that promotes ecocomposition across faculty and student populations is the geographical autobiography. It is well known that writers struggle to write about research and abstract concepts when they are not versed in these skills. Writing about the self, however, usually comes more naturally. A geographical autobiography asks students to place themselves in the narrative as they research the places they came from, how those places affected them, and how those places influence their current lives in the university. I ask students to examine all of the places they are from or that have influenced them and to incorporate information about those places in a way that both an insider and an outsider could understand. In other words, students have to do a good amount of rhetorical work to make their places understandable to the rest of the class, whether that be social, economic, racial, religious, or political descriptions. This forces students to examine rhetorical contexts and determine how setting shapes not only discourse, but themselves. A student who has a much different cultural capital in Southside Chicago is able to examine why he is competent in one setting and less so in another. A student allowed to write about sense of place and the affinity of her hometown is able to reflect on environment, change, and growth in a way that is cathartic and makes her fears of a new place seem manageable. By incorporating assignments into the curriculum that allow students to examine themselves in their environments, they can potentially better understand their own place in the writing curriculum. Of course, the class needs to retain the social-epistemic and ecological frame in order to make these writing pieces critical.

To avoid writing assignments that rely too heavily on trite nostalgia rather than self-aware critique, it can be useful to pair various ecological writing assignments to make them more

rigorous. I often use the "Sense of Place" assignment discussed previously to scaffold the geographical autobiography; students can build on the description of their favorite place in order to write about how all of their geographies affect them, for better or worse. Adding requirements such as inclusion of related sense of place writing (one semester I asked students to include at least one quotation from Norris [1993] that contributed to the geographical autobiography), or socio-economic information about the areas students are writing about (one student needed to inform me of the poverty rate of his hometown to describe the way his neighborhood had affected him), the assignment becomes more research-focused and rigorous. The geographical autobiography ends up being a demanding assignment that is enjoyable, personal, and applicable. It also reminds the students that they, too, have a place in the curriculum and the ability to write for social and environmental demands (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a).

Environmental Exigence

Owens (2001) argues that composition programs need to be invested in students, and therefore invested in the places they live, come from, and plan to go. His reflections are worth quoting at length:

Educators have a responsibility to help students resist the cynicism and hyperboredom of contemporary, consumer culture by discovering the kind of self-worth that comes from being amazed at one's local worlds. But to do this we must first learn all we can about the environments our students live in, day after day, and give them opportunities to testify about what is wrong and what is good about these worlds, what they think should and shouldn't be changed, and we must provide them with a vocabulary with which they might critique their environments and develop an awareness of what exactly it is about

one's environment that can make a person miserable, bored, angry, tired, scared,

depressed. (p. 69-70)

If reading place promotes an even nascent awareness, writing place should help students feel equipped to actively respond to the world around them. Owens notices a desperation in many of his students' narratives, a need to understand how places function and what their role is in that place. These types of reading and writing assignments move students far beyond the basic course objectives of learning research, writing process, and documentation standards—or sentence diagramming. They give students the exigence to write.

When ecocomposition programs are able to offer students writing exigence, many of the goals of an ecocomposition program—discourse analysis, interdisciplinarity, ecological literacy, application to public life—start to come together. The same holds true for students reading and writing from an ecocomposition program. Their commitment to the work serves many purposes for themselves, their educations, and their communities. According to Edbauer (2005), this type of ecological focus makes "the elements of the rhetorical situation simply bleed" (p. 9). Writer, audience, purpose, and context meld together, and they cannot be easily separated from public life (Reynolds, 2005). When given the opportunity to write from a position that is meaningful to them, students find exigence and a way to ground their work in public advocacy projects that could potentially improve their and their communities' lives.

Another factor that promotes writing exigence for students in an ecocomposition program is the current social need for scholarly work that focuses on environment and discourse. According to Owens (2001), we really have no other option but to teach students ecological literacy across the disciplines; ecological literacy is the most pressing social need at this point and time, which is even more true at the time of my writing, over ten years after Owens put out

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the siren call for these types of programs. Therefore, ecocomposition materials—both reading and writing assignments—should not and cannot be considered old hat, an interesting trend in composition studies. As each year passes, ecocomposition becomes more and more necessary and should take up greater space in our conferences, journals, and textbooks. The exigence for students, and for composition scholars, is urgent and necessary, because without ecologically-minded curriculum, we will eventually find ourselves in an ecology so damaged that other pursuits in higher education will no longer be relevant.

Implementation of Ecological Course Materials and Activities

By creating an outline of an ecocomposition program, along with potential course materials and assignments, all types of instructors can participate in the curriculum design no matter what their role to the institution. Instructors can utilize the various concepts embedded in ecocomposition to fulfill learning objectives and also have the freedom to tailor the class to their expertise and experiences, as well as their students. By keeping the people and environment in the forefront of class planning, and understanding the diverse ecologies that present themselves each new semester in every higher learning institution, students can successfully write for the program in ways that will transfer to their own personal and career goals, in ways that will contribute to ecological literary and social engagement.

Reticent faculty and staff can find solace in the freedom and flexibility an ecocomposition program provides, its ability to be tailored to individuals. They can choose stories of folklore important to them growing up and share that affinity with students; likewise, they can choose local stories that affect everyone in the classroom. The space of the classroom is a common intersection for all students and faculty in a given semester, and an examination of how those diverse and changing groups sense that place in a given moment can be a point of

unity. Writing assignments that are place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic attend to the needs of everyone involved in a writing program and suggest collaboration of skills rather than a demand for a particular expertise. Assignments with social and/or ecological exigence can be scaffolded by the previous ecological concepts mentioned here, bolstered by a likeminded affinity for a place which demands protection and care.

In the next chapter, I will apply my experiences as a WPA to theories of composition, theories of ecological literacy, the ecological writing process, and potential course materials and activities to outline a flexible, localized writing program. By utilizing these discussions based on ecological literacy in composition and rhetoric, WPAs can create curricula that is place-based, rigorous by writing program administration standards, and ecologically conscious. Such a curriculum can acknowledge the place in which a WPA is situated as well as the current environmental crisis for which we all are responsible.

CHAPTER VI

A MODEL FOR AN ECOLOGICAL WRITING PROGRAM CURRICULUM

In the introduction, I discussed the intellectual rationale for this dissertation project—specifically, I discussed the moment of disjuncture when a writing program administrator (WPA) seeks to build toward more progressive composition pedagogies but the university lacks the foundational practices to do this. The literature review in Chapters Two and Three outlined how my work experiences and study of composition and rhetoric led to this moment, and how ecological literacy can help navigate through such a moment. I responded to this problem in Chapters Four and Five by outlining ecological writing processes and course materials that can be implemented in writing curricula to create a foundational ecocomposition that simultaneously establishes composition best practices.

In this chapter, I will provide an even more pointed focus on curriculum to offer curriculum materials that would be useful for other ecocompositionists situated in similar university settings as me. Specifically, I look at the Council of Writing Program Administrators (2014) composition outcomes and use them as a basis to retool composition courses from a perspective of ecocomposition. While the original writing program administration standards are useful on their own and amenable to the various needs of composition departments, they are not specifically ecological or specifically focused on implementing updated curricula. Therefore, the revised outcomes provide a model for how universities similar to my own might consider their curricula from an ecological standpoint.

Part of implementing a nuanced curriculum like ecocomposition means articulating the broader goals of composition. According to the Council of Writing Program Administrators (2014), the main outcomes after first-year composition include practice in rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions (see Appendix A for full description of outcomes). The goals of ecocomposition discussed so far in this dissertation, in particular understanding the connection between discourse and environment (Dobrin and Weisser, 2002a), naturally correlate with these Writing Program Administration Outcomes. By expanding the outcomes, which are based in what "composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory" (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014), to include concepts from ecological literacy, writing program administrators can create structures of higher education that support the basic ecological knowledge necessary in various disciplines to ensure sustainability—academic and environmental. The following writing curriculum seeks to create a flexible model for an ecocomposition program that can be adapted to local contexts, with particular attention given to establishing the goals of process and epistemic rhetoric, a need in outdated programs (Murray, 1972; Berlin, 1996). The program is especially geared towards contexts in which the Writing program administration outcomes may not seem commonplace, where process pedagogy in particular is not taken as a given. While this curriculum offers programmatic structure, such as outcomes and assignment examples, it purposefully does not standardize an entire semester or year, leaving daily pedagogical decisions, appropriately, to instructors in their local contexts. Many of these materials originate from a collaboration between my local context and the writing program administration outcomes; other programs can and should adopt a similar collaborative structure for their own needs.

Course Descriptions

These course descriptions are based on the use of two semesters of composition, with an option of two different courses in the second semester, one which is more focused on business and technical writing. Much of the wording is adapted from the Regional Midwestern University Writing Program's (RMUWP) evolution of course descriptions since I began my work there (see Appendix B for original course descriptions at the time of my arrival) and also follows the practice of two required composition courses with a possible option for courses in the second semester. Universities utilizing just one course in the second semester may be better served by combining the two course descriptions. The following revisions to course descriptions remove the focus of grammar skills and literary analysis (Appendix B), instead placing focus on the writing process, social-epistemic rhetoric, and the ecological relationship between discourse and environment (Murray, 1972; Berlin, 1996; Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a).

English Composition I

English Composition I develops the foundational skills for college-level writing. These skills include learning how to read and respond critically to texts, develop a thesis, make claims and support them with evidence, respond to and work with sources, frame a written project with organization and transitions, cite and document sources in accordance with documentation standards, and edit scholarly work. Students will learn how to consider the rhetorical nature of academic discourse, as well as the relationship between discourse and environment, as they move through the drafting process.

English Composition II

English Composition II expands on English Composition I, offering extended practice in college-level writing. This class utilizes library resources to work on research skills that are essential to

academic study in field-specific work. Students will learn how to evaluate credible sources and frame a longer written project, building on the rhetorical writing skills taught in English Composition I. Students will actively engage in the research process by collaborating with entities in their local communities. Furthermore, students will understand how utilizing research skills can create positive, sustainable impacts in local and global contexts.

[or]

Business and Technical Writing

Business and Technical Writing builds on the rhetorical skills learned in first-year composition and emphasizes writing and research genres common within professional settings, such as memos, reports, proposals, and trade magazines. Students will learn how to evaluate credible sources and frame a longer written project with library resources, building on the rhetorical writing skills taught in English Composition I. Students will actively engage in the research process by collaborating with entities in their local communities. Furthermore, students will understand how utilizing research skills can create positive, sustainable impacts in local and global contexts.

Ecocomposition Outcomes

The previous course descriptions provide the basic language in which to implement ecologically-minded curricula that is in line with current composition and rhetoric literature. Ecological course descriptions alongside Writing Program Administration outcomes provide a framework for a composition program. For schools who might benefit from updating curriculum, these outcomes (Appendix A) provide a clear, flexible template to establish composition pedagogy that derives from the distillation of composition literature and best practices, derived from "what we know" as composition and rhetoric scholars (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015).

The outcomes also serve as the basis to engage concepts of ecological literacy, a need that has been established throughout this dissertation and in composition and rhetoric literature (Coe, 1975; Cooper, 1986; Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a;2002b; Edbauer, 2005; Lucksinger, 2014; Marx, 2008; Owens, 2001; Reynolds, 2004; Ryan, 2012; Ryden, 1993; Weisser & Dobrin, 2001). Working from each respective outcome, a revisionist set of outcomes with the inclusion of ecocomposition standards could be structured as follows:

In accordance with The Council of Writing Program Administrators' 2014 Outcomes (Appendix A), ecocomposition recognizes rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions as the core concepts in a composition program. Ecocomposition also recognizes ecological design intelligence, or the ability to see relationships and patterns that contribute (or not) to sustainability, as a cornerstone to higher education (Orr, 2004). Furthermore, these outcomes focus on the ecological relationship between discourse and environment and provide language that establishes this relationship (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002a). The synthesis between standard Writing Program Administration composition outcomes and ecological design intelligence form the basis for ecocomposition. The following are flexible ecocomposition outcomes, adapted from The Council of Writing Program Administrators' 2014 Outcomes, to structure a first-year university program:

Rhetorical Knowledge

Composition students should recognize the context in which they communicate and be able to negotiate purpose, audience, and context within their writing, understanding how compositions are generated within value systems. As such, students should be aware of how writing both derives from local environments and, at the same time, can alter those same environments through rhetorical and ecological awareness.

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing

Composition students should engage in critical thinking, reading, and composing, or the ability to both challenge and be challenged in their reading and writing. Students should actively assess the claims, evidence, and underlying assumptions that accompany a variety of compositions, including but not limited to texts, oral culture, web content, and digital images. These same considerations should accompany students' own compositions, with particular focus on how their written products contribute (or not) to sustainable discourse.

Processes

Compositions emerge from a complex web of processes, including but not limited to reading, invention, drafting, revision, and editing. Composition students should understand these processes as recursive, unique to them, yet interdependent with local contexts. Students should understand writing process from a holistic perspective, as involving whole persons and communities in an ongoing process of development and dialogue.

Knowledge of Conventions

As students become familiar with rhetorical knowledge, they also come to know the writing conventions that accompany different rhetorical occasions. Composition students should understand conventions such as linguistic structures, tone, organization, vocabulary, formatting, and documentation as being reliant on constructed value systems that change across genres. Students should not only be competent in writing with these traditional conventions but also be able to analyze where the conventions come from, whom they benefit, and how they can (and at times, should) be altered. Special consideration should be given to how conventional discourse contributes (or not) to issues of diversity and sustainability, both in local and global contexts.

These retooled outcomes, along with the course descriptions articulated previously, flesh out an ecocomposition program that is at once ecologically-minded and amenable to programs that need the updating provided by the basic WPA outcomes. They recognize the ecological web of writing as well as the argument that all education is environmental (Cooper, 1986; Orr, 2004). The next section implements these outcomes into potential assignments that can be amended for specific composition program ecologies.

Example Assignments

Assignments in an ecocomposition program should support the above ecocomposition outcomes in which students receive sustained practice in rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions. Ecologically-minded composition in particular focuses on utilizing knowledge of sustainable composing practices in a globalized world. Even more specifically, assignments in an ecocomposition program often include the following themes, described at length in Chapter Five:

- Local stories and folklore

- Sense of place

- Place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic assignments

- Reading and writing assignments that have social and/or ecological exigence

The provided assignment examples derive from the course descriptions, the revised outcomes, as well as these themes.

Daily Reading Assignments/Prompts

As discussed in Chapter Five, there are many options for readings in an ecocomposition program. No matter which texts are chosen, it is important that instructors guide students in this reading, because the way we interpret and respond to discourses makes up how we see the world

(Berlin, 1996). Along with the reading guides discussed in Chapter Five, these prompts can be used for both in-class discussion and daily writing assignments. They can be adapted as responses to particular texts, but they also work on their own as guiding questions to assist students in thinking about ecological themes in discourse, particularly *local stories; sense of place; place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic assignments; and reading assignments that have social and/or ecological exigence*:

- How does space function in this text? Does anyone "own" the space? How do the players in the text interact with the space? How does it affect them? Who gets to be inside the space, and who is kept out?

- Does the reading remind you of experiences you've had with particular places? What details stand out to you? What emotions do you attach to these places?

- How can you "read" physical locations in your own town or city? Who controls these areas? How did they come about—who "discovered," them, named them, and/or fought for them? What does the town or city mean to different people in different demographics? How might they describe the place differently according to their experiences?

- What language is used to describe places in the text? For example, does the language insinuate private or communal ownership? Is land discussed as existing on its own or only in relation to people? Are places thought of as spiritual, economic, multicultural, political, or a combination of these? Is the language in this text sustainable—why or why not?

Geographical Autobiography

The following assignment works well as an introductory essay to engage students in thinking about sense of place. It uses Kathleen Norris's (1993) geographical autobiography as a model, but many other texts would be similarly appropriate as a substitute. It has been adapted from my course materials at RMUWP. This assignment focuses on the ecological themes of *local stories and folklore; sense of place; and place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic assignments*:

In Kathleen Norris's *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, Norris sketches a portrait of the Dakotan landscape and how that landscape informs her life: physically, intellectually, and spiritually. In order to write this geographic autobiography, Norris wrestles with finding sense within the place she lives, a wrestling that happens throughout the entire book. Norris splices together her own writing with poetry, weather reports, quotes, and so on in order to create a more complete picture of what it means to live in Dakota.

For this paper, you will write your own geographical autobiography, whether you are from Dakota or from far away. You will consider how place has affected you as a person: physically, intellectually, and spiritually. Like Norris, you will need to use descriptive language and provide context for your story. Show where you're from and how the landscape affected you; don't just tell. Practice using language that is clear and precise as well as evocative. Your story can start anywhere, but you should all end up where you are— [town/city][2]. This miniature autobiography should not be full of facts and figures (e.g., I was born on this day in this town) but should be a creative endeavor in which you engage language in a descriptive and thoughtful way.

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[2] Named removed to preserve anonymity.

You will write a 4-6 page geographical autobiography, formatted in MLA-style, drawing from Norris's text. You are required to include at least one poem of original work, one image (photographic, digital, or artistically conceived are all options) and at least one quotation from Norris. Feel free to format these extra pieces how you'd like (consider how Norris usually places them on their own, in between text). Your prose, alongside these supplementary pieces, should create an evocative and creative experience for your readers.

You will be graded according to the following questions:

- Is the essay a geographical autobiography, ending with reflections on [town/city]?

- Does the writer evoke sense of place, allowing the reader to see how place has informed the writer physically, intellectually, and spiritually?

- Does the writer use descriptive language that is both clear and illustrative?

- Does the writer utilize a poem, picture, and quotation from Norris in a rhetorically effective way?

- Is the essay organized, well-developed and between 4-6 pages?

- Is the essay free from grammatical/mechanical errors and documented in MLA style?

This assignment retains a place-based focused while initiating sense of place writing in the above questions: "how place has informed the writer physically, intellectually, spiritually." In this way, the social-epistemic framework of ecocomposition is not solely political, but also considers students as individuals and holistic persons with many dimensions that make up their identities.

Community Engagement Project

Owens (2001) cites the Tufts University assignment, described at length in Chapter Five, as a way for students to use ecologically-minded questions such as "Where does the energy for electricity on your campus come from?" to read their places. Owens argues that these assignments need to have two-way dialogue so universities do not teach students to simply give way to the rhetorical needs of corporations but to instead provide thoughtful and sustainable feedback to community stakeholders, whether that be businesses, charities, or schools. A writing guide, particularly one suited for business and technical writing, would be a helpful companion for students when formatting projects that require specific genre expectations such as proposals. This assignment asks students to read local places, write for particular rhetorical situations, and offer feedback that can be disseminated into the community; it is adapted from my own course materials at RMUWP. It engages the ecological themes of *sense of place; place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic assignments; and reading assignments that have social and/or ecological exigence*:

> This writing project involves extended research in which you will actively engage in your community. You will choose an issue, organization, or place in the city that is important to you and you will engage with that choice over the course of the semester. You could, for example, choose to research recycling options in the city or services for domestic abuse victims. If you are actively involved in a church or nonprofit, you could decide to make that organization your focus of study. Perhaps you're drawn to particular places in the area—a park, a basketball court, or a derelict neighborhood; you could concentrate your efforts there. Whatever seems most compelling to you is a good place to start your work. You will be engaging with it all semester, so it should be something important to you.

Before you begin working with your issue, organization, or place, be sure that you have permission to begin this project with the stakeholders connected to your focus of study, and that they have a full understanding of what the project entails. You will begin the project by researching your focus of study, using both primary and secondary sources:

- What is the issue, organization, or place you are researching? What is its history, and who currently interacts with it?

- How has your focus of study impacted the city? Who has it impacted?

- Walk around your organization or place, or to the different locations your issue most impacts in the city. What do you see? How is it situated in the city? What are the current conditions?

- Talk to people associated with your focus of study. What have been their experiences? What positives and negatives do they see? (Be sure to record responses accurately and be transparent with any participants about how you're using the information they give you.)

Next, you will begin writing an investigative proposal for your focus of study, detailing its history, impacts, goals, and needs within the city. This part of the project will be entirely unique to each student depending on their focus of study. Be thorough and extensive when engaging in research, using both primary and secondary sources, and write a detailed account of your issue, organization, or place. This part of the project should be between 4-6 pages.

Now consider the goals and needs of your focus of study, paying attention to how they might impact the community:

- How does your focus of study serve the community well? What positive impacts do they have? How might they continue the practices that seem beneficial to the city?

- Are the goals and needs of your focus of study beneficial to everyone in the community? If not, why? Who does your focus of study serve? Does it harm anyone?

- How could the issue, organization, or place you are studying be more inclusive for diverse sets of people? What language might they use to improve inclusion?

- How could the issue, organization, or place you're studying be more sustainable in the environment it is situated? What language might they use to improve sustainability?

- What concluding remarks or insights can you offer your focus of study?

This part of the proposal should follow a typical proposal format. Be sure to provide a thorough discussion of what you discovered during the investigation phase and why it is relevant today. Consider your language, vocabulary, and tone when writing recommendations and be sure to remain respectful to all potential stakeholders of your project. This section should be 2-4 pages.

You will be graded according to the following questions:

- Does the project choose a suitable focus of study that is thoroughly researched?

- Does the writer use both primary and secondary sources, detailed description, and personal encounters to write the investigative proposal?

- Do the recommendations focus on all members of the community, considering the needs of different ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic identities?

- Do the recommendations refer to issues of sustainability, understanding how the focus of study operates within the local context of the community?

- Is the writer sensitive to language and tone, making an effort to be simultaneously clear, direct, and thoughtful?

- Is the writing and project organization professional in structure and free of grammatical/mechanical error? Is intellectual property appropriately accounted for through documentation standards?

In this assignment, students are required to actually move through their places, like Reynolds's (2004) description of the flaneur. This introduces them to ecological invention strategies that also situate them in their places. Students must then investigate their places using research—primary and secondary—to understand their locales and eventually the place-based characteristics that make up the genre in which they will be writing. Finally, students are directly instructed to think about sustainability in ways that impact all members of a community, establishing the importance of ecological thinking that emphasizes feminist critiques and TEK.

An Ecological Curriculum

The assignments described here focus on ecological themes and are derived from the ecocomposition outcomes and course descriptions described early in the chapter. They all have the potential to teach community engagement and sustainable composition practices; they focus on the composition standards of rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions. Some of the challenges of revising the writing program administration outcomes toward a more ecological mindset is the potential for faculty resistance, the same resistance I encountered when trying to make basic updates to my program. However, by keeping an ecological mindset and engaging the instructors and community through

these assignments, the department will naturally already have unique and individual expertise to offer an ecocomposition curriculum. Instructors can contribute to the diverse ways local stories and folklore; sense of place; place-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic assignments; and reading and writing assignments that have social and/or ecological exigence might function in their classrooms. Because the curriculum is flexible, instructors who are used to using literature (such as those who may have written the course descriptions in Appendix B) to teach composition can utilize stories and folklore. The course descriptions already consider regional languages, so building from that conversation offers a smoother transition to ecological thinking. Any time a WPA can build from what is already present in a curriculum, changes may come more easily. While a curriculum like this cannot be implemented magically with no resistance, it can— potentially with some faculty development—concentrate on what faculty and staff already know and are already doing, incorporating those skills and experiences. Finally, moving the conversation away from what instructors should not do but what they can do, as well as away from retrograde practices to the real concerns of a current environmental crisis, can help faculty and staff feel less threatened and more in solidarity with one another, and hopefully more willing to make needed changes.

All of these assignments can be tailored to suit individual programs and curriculums. A crucial aspect of all writing assignments should be, as discussed in Chapter Four, the accompanying writing process. Students should be given time to read, think, reflect, move, revise, and edit in a recursive process that is unique to each student. By reflecting on major ecological themes such as sense of place and sustainability, incorporating those themes into the curriculum, and tailoring assignments to fit individual programs' local contexts, writing

curriculums can succeed in applying writing program administration outcomes to their program in a way that acknowledges 21st century concerns about discourse and environment.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS: ECOLOGICAL WRITING FOR AN ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

In my struggle to articulate an updated composition pedagogy, I tried to apply scholarship that were the "Givens In Our Conversations" in my graduate program (Villanueva & Arola, 2011). I quickly found that my experience was not necessarily a given, especially at universities with a fluctuating staff, few research faculty, and minimal professional development opportunities. The scholarship of post-process composition and rhetoric simply did not apply in a location which had not yet recognized process pedagogy. I had to recalibrate my perspective on the history of composition and rhetoric and widen my perspective of my department and of my field.

As I continued my professional work, I continued to study the foundations of education in my graduate work. When I studied ecological literacy and began to see it as not only foundational to how schooling happens in the 21st century, but a primary global concern for all educators committed to teaching sustainability for future generations, it changed my narrow view of composition and rhetoric studies. I began to see past my individual academic work and toward the community I was working in, the people I was working with, and my contribution to both. In other words, I began to think ecologically.

This dissertation attempts to locate this moment, put a microscope on it, and articulate a sustainable ecocomposition program that establishes foundational practices in composition and rhetoric. I see it as being useful in two main ways—1) in its articulation of an ecocomposition program responding to a particular need, and 2) as a realization for many writing program

administrators (WPAs)—and the field in general—that easy application of graduate work to a newly acquired academic position is not likely. While I focus on creating a process-based ecocomposition program in this dissertation, I see the issue of disjuncture between graduate work and professional work as being generalizable to many WPAs and to even many other fields.

If, as educators, we are truly committed to a sustainable future for those we are educating, we will see these concerns of graduate school application and professional life as patterns and connections we must examine, as threads of a whole cloth (Orr, 2004). We cannot simply continue to push forward without taking time to examine where we are, addressing the work that needs to be done right now. For many WPAs, that work looks different in their places than what is represented in the scholarship. At the same time, that work feels more urgent because of the environmental crisis we are in and the problems educators of all disciplines have a responsibility to address. By examining our professional work from the perspective of what our cultural moment needs while also being cognizant of how our university is currently functioning, we can do a better job of tackling local, community-based concerns that have global impacts.

Aldo Leopold (1966) writes that "All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts" (p. 239). These parts consist of racial ethics, gender ethics, class ethics, and many other person-to-person relationships that are crucial for a just and peaceful world. However, as Leopold argues, we are still struggling to articulate a land ethic and see ourselves as subject to the interdependency of the earth as well as to one another. This interdependency does not stop at environmental studies; it is also connected to how we perceive, make knowledge, and communicate that knowledge to one another. The connection between discourse and environment needs to continue to be examined, even in locations where writing programs have not yet considered that conversation (Dobrin &

Weisser, 2002a). By acknowledging the moments in our professional lives where we can meet

our communities where they are at in order to engage the discourse/environment conversation,

we can work toward establishing a land ethic, a goal that has been off higher education's radar

for too long (Leopold, 1966; Orr, 2004). It is an ethic that can be a part of all composition

programs, no matter where we might find ourselves.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Writing Program Administration Outcomes

Rhetorical Knowledge

Rhetorical knowledge is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations.

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing.

Processes

Writers use multiple strategies, or *composing processes*, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects. Composing processes are seldom linear: a writer may research a topic before drafting, then conduct additional research while revising or after consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions.

Knowledge of Conventions

Conventions are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Most obviously,

conventions govern such things as mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design.

Conventions arise from a history of use and facilitate reading by invoking common expectations between writers and readers. These expectations are not universal; they vary by genre (conventions for lab notebooks and discussion-board exchanges differ), by discipline (conventional moves in literature reviews in Psychology differ from those in English), and by occasion (meeting minutes and executive summaries use different registers). A writer's grasp of conventions in one context does not mean a firm grasp in another. Successful writers understand, analyze, and negotiate conventions for purpose, audience, and genre, understandingthat genres evolve in response to changes in material conditions and composing technologies and attending carefully to emergent conventions.

ENGL 110 COLLEGE COMPOSITION I (CCN) 3 S.H. An introduction to traditional English grammar as the foundation of modern prose style, leading to the understanding of the concepts of classical Aristotelian deduction and generative rhetoric. This approach teaches the logical structure of the sentence as well as its editorial elements, such as usage, punctuation, and spelling. The structure of the sentence is used as a model for constructing paragraphs and later multi-paragraph essays in the various modes of organizational patterns of written expression. This course offers guided practice in college-level writing and critical thinking, and appropriate IT skills. Pre-requisite: ENGL 100 or equivalent. Fall, Spring.

ENGL 120 COLLEGE COMPOSITION II (CCN) (IT CERTIFICATE LEVEL I 3 S.H. A combination of print and electronic library research skills, taught in the University Library with the cooperation of Library personnel and leading to the concurrent writing of papers based on that research; also an introduction to the social and cultural purposes of language and social and regional language variation through the study of fiction, including an introduction to literary analysis of the short story and the novel. This course expands on ENGL 110, offering advanced practice in college-level writing from sources and in applying rhetorical strategies. Pre-requisite: Successful completion of ENGL 110. Co-requisite: ENGL 106-Electronic Research. Fall, Spring.

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