Making It Your Own: Writing Fellows Re-evaluate Faculty "Resistance"

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Abstract: Faculty resistance to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is an issue that has been recognized by WAC program directors and practitioners for decades, yet it remains unresolved. Perhaps the problem is not resistance per se, but how we interpret and react to it. Faculty resistance is typically viewed as an impediment to the pedagogical change WAC programs hope to achieve. Moreover, the label of "resistance" is often used without further examination of the underlying causes. Based on research and experience as doctoral Writing Fellows in the Borough of Manhattan Community College WAC Program, we argue that so-called resistances are often justified concerns in regard to implementing WAC under given institutional, disciplinary, departmental, and personal constraints. We also suggest that if we listen and respond to these concerns, they become means to facilitate faculty engagement with WAC. By working through their concerns and adapting WAC to their context, faculty can take ownership of WAC and further develop the practice. Thus, what at first appears to be an impediment to deep-rooted pedagogical changeâ€"resistanceâ€"can be used to encourage faculty to make WAC their own.

Introduction

Faculty resistance to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is an issue that has been recognized by WAC program directors and practitioners for decades, yet it remains unresolved (e.g., Swanson-Owens, 1986; Boice, 1990; Swilky, 1990; Glaze and Thaiss, 1994; Mahala and Swilky, 1994; Walvoord et al., 1997; Patton et al., 1998; Anson, 2002). Perhaps the problem is not resistance per se, but how we interpret and react to it. Faculty resistance is typically viewed as inherently negative, an impediment to the pedagogical change WAC programs hope to achieve.

Moreover, the label of "resistance" is often used without further examination of the underlying causes.

In "Strange Resistances," Donahue (2002) illustrates this type of reaction to resistance. Donahue describes how after years as a faculty-driven, grassroots effort, the WAC program at Lafayette College finally received increased funding and the college established a Writing Intensive (WI) course graduation requirement. Just as this happened, professors who had once embraced WAC practice distanced themselves from the WAC program and WI courses. Donahue characterizes the faculty's behavior as "resistance" to WAC, "strange" because it emerged just as the WAC program won the battle for institutional recognition. She presents this resistance as a paradox, an unfortunate and inexplicable turn of events. Rather than to delve into the reasons why institutionalization may have marginalized WAC and writing in the curriculum and disengaged certain faculty members, she leaves the paradox unexplored.

However, prior research has shown that when the context in which faculty use WAC is examined, so-called resistance will rarely remain strange or inexplicable. Swanson-Owens (1986) argues that resistance is often a "natural" and even "appropriate" response when an instructor's goals, pedagogical style, and epistemological assumptions are at odds with innovations proposed by "outsiders" (i.e. WAC proponents) (p. 72). Swilky (1992) similarly identifies pedagogical beliefs, practices, and priorities as sources of resistance. Boice (1990), a psychologist and writing-to-learn proponent, suggests that resistance to incorporating writing into pedagogy and learning is a manifestation of inhibitions (p. 13).

Not only is resistance explicable in most cases, framing resistance as a negative reaction to what WAC proponents view as positive pedagogical and curricular change limits our understanding of and response to resistance (Swilky, 1992). Donahue's assessment of faculty resistance is not unique; WAC proponents often treat resistance as a problem to "overcome" or "get past" (e.g., Boice, 1990), even though studies have demonstrated how resistances can benefit the development of WAC programs (Glaze and Thaiss, 1994; Patton et al., 1998). Some have even suggested that resistance is in accordance with the spirit of WAC. Patton et al (1998), for example, state that some "skepticsâ€¦embody the very critical spirit advocated by the Campus Writing Program and need to be taken seriously" (p. 65). To engage faculty resistance productively, Swanson-Owens and Swilky both advocate examining the sources of resistance and collaborating with faculty so that they may eventually adopt WAC practices. Swanson-Owens (1986) further suggests that we should expect teachers to adapt curricular innovations rather than passively apply them as they are given (p. 71). However, as compared to adoption, she considers adaptation a form of resistance (pp. 90, 94). These studies present a model of pedagogical development which regards adoption as the anti-thesis of resistance and adaptation as an intermediate, quasi-resistant phase. Is adaptation a form of resistance or a way for faculty to take ownership of WAC and keep it vital and dynamic?

The importance of faculty taking ownership of WAC has been established in the literature (e.g., Sandler, 1992; Walvoord, 1992; Miller, 1993; Blumner et al., 2002). Sandler (1992) suggests that a sense of personal ownership and commitment is integral to sustained pedagogical change and to the success of WAC programs. To foster such commitment, she recommends that WAC programs allow "faculty to own the program, and build it, and customize itâ€”bit by bitâ€”to suit

[their] curriculum" (Sandler, 1992, p. 37). In line with Sandler's argument for flexibility, Farris and Smith (1992) propose that the "way toâ€¦deal with [WAC and faculty development is] as locally and as discipline and professor-specifically as possible" (p. 61). They frame their recommendation as an extension of WAC's emphasis on revision, calling for WAC program leaders to revise their techniques, expectations, and guidelines in response to faculty and student needs. Together the studies of faculty resistance, ownership, flexibility, and specificity point to adaptation as an important means to pedagogical development. Moreover, these studies seem to suggest that WAC programs not only accept resistance as inevitable, but also recognize the potential benefits to be derived from faculty resistance.

To assess faculty experiences teaching WI courses and implementing WAC, we conducted a study at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), one of the largest community colleges in the City University of New York (CUNY), where we served as Writing Fellows for two years. Based on our findings and the WAC literature, we have re-evaluated faculty resistance to WAC. First, in the tradition of Swanson-Owens and Swilky, we argue that "resistances" stem from understandable and often justified concerns in regard to incorporating WAC into individual pedagogy. To uncover the bases for faculty concerns, we examine the individual practices, beliefs and values as Swanson-Owens, Swilky and Boice have. We also pay attention to the structural conditions, such as the university, discipline, and department in which faculty operate, adding an important dimension to the literature on faculty resistance. Second, we argue that in many cases "resistance" signifies a personal struggle on the part of the faculty that may actually prove to be a positive catalyst for the kind of deep-rooted and sustained pedagogical change that is the goal of most WAC programs.

The spirit of WAC encourages engagement and critical thinking among students, yet we often fail to encourage faculty in a similar way. Consider how as teachers we push our students into the struggle-laden process of writing. We help with guidance and support, but the struggle is almost a necessary element of a successful writing process and the troubled look on the student's face is a sign that they are engaging in the struggle to write. Why don't we expect the same concerned look from faculty faced with the daunting task of changing their teaching methods and pedagogy?

In our experience, if we respect, listen and respond to the criticisms and concerns raised by faculty, rather than treat them as obstacles, resistances become means to facilitate faculty engagement with WAC. Often, resistance emerges from an instructor's attempt to implement WAC under the constraints of their institution, discipline and department, and as such, constitutes a demand that individual faculty be allowed to tailor WAC to meet their needs and constraints. By working through their concerns and adapting WAC to their context, faculty can take ownership of WAC and further develop the practice. Thus, what at first appears to be an impediment to deep-rooted pedagogical changeâ€”resistanceâ€”can be used to encourage faculty to make WAC their own.

Research Methods: Interviews, Workshops & Collaboration

Our re-evaluation of faculty resistance is based on three research components: interviews, participant-observation, and collaborative work between WAC faculty and Writing Fellows.

First, the BMCC Writing Fellows interviewed 34 faculty members from humanities (3), social sciences (13), science (5), math (2), and career programs (11), who had been trained in WAC pedagogy (see Appendix 1). Most of the interviewees had taught at least one WI course. The interviews addressed WAC faculty development, the impact of WAC on individual pedagogy, and discipline specific needs and concerns (see Appendix 2).

Second, the Writing Fellows helped develop and conduct the workshops faculty must attend in order to teach WI courses. Participation in and observation of the WAC faculty development workshops offered insight into the instructors' initial encounters and struggles with WAC pedagogy.

Third, close collaboration with individual instructors for one-year presented opportunities for the Writing Fellows to witness the process by which faculty go from novice to experienced WI course instructor. Typically, each BMCC Writing Fellow is assigned two faculty partners and devotes three-to-six hours per week to each. Collectively, the seven Writing Fellows who contributed to the findings of this study closely collaborated with over two dozen instructors. In general, Writing Fellows partner with an instructor to develop or revise the syllabus, formal and informal assignments and activities for the instructor's WI course. Writing Fellows hold regular conferences with their faculty partner, attend their class, make in-class presentations on writing, and review drafts of their students' papers. In the process, Writing Fellows observe the actual implementation of WAC pedagogy and can see which practices work in a given course and which do not. On that basis, Writing Fellows help faculty negotiate their struggle to develop a WAC-informed pedagogy that serves their particular goals and accommodates their course, disciplinary, departmental, and individual constraints. In these ways, Writing Fellows gain insight into how much revision and re-thinking effectively incorporating WAC into one's pedagogy necessitates.

Findings

The Case of Disciplinary Differences: Concern over the Quantity of Formal Writing

One of the most revealing instances of "resistance" we witnessed at BMCC manifested in the WAC faculty development workshops. Each semester a cohort of faculty members are introduced to WAC in a semester long series of workshops. The workshops are designed to prepare faculty across disciplines to teach Writing Intensive (WI) courses. At BMCC, WI courses are supposed to incorporate informal, writing-to-learn activities and at least 10-12 pages of formal writing with opportunities for revision; the formal writing may consist of a single extended paper or several shorter assignments. In the workshops, instructors develop a WI portfolio consisting of a syllabus, formal and informal writing assignments, and critical thinking activities informed by WAC pedagogy. Outside of the workshops, each faculty member reads WAC literature and works with a Writing Fellow to produce their portfolio. As incentives to participate in the WI program, class size is limited to 25 students (as compared to 40 in most non-WI courses and 27 in science laboratory courses); faculty are assigned a Writing Fellow and receive general support from the WAC Program; and faculty are paid to participate in the WAC workshop.

During the early sessions of the Spring 2005 workshop,[1] it became clear that humanities and social science faculty seemed to be more engaged with the activities of the seminars than the science and math faculty. Whereas the humanists and social scientists enthusiastically contributed to discussions of discourse, pedagogy, and the meaning of critical thinking, the science and math professors persistently steered the conversation to the quantity of formal writing required for WI courses. We tried to reassure them that the 1012 page requirement was flexible, but they continued to focus on this issue. This was just one aspect of the apparent resistance of these professors. In fact, it seemed that they were resistant to WAC practice in general, particularly when compared to their enthusiastic colleagues.

Why did these professors feel such anxiety over 10-12 pages?

Unfamiliarity with WAC, Not Quite Voluntary Participation

To understand the dynamics of the workshop, we had to take into consideration certain underlying issues and reflect on what we were finding in interviews with faculty across departments. First, several instructors in the workshop were recently hired and thus influenced by their desire to achieve tenure. To a certain extent, their participation in the workshops and WI program was not wholly voluntary. When they were asked if they would "like" to teach a WI course, they agreed in the interest of professional development; yet many were not familiar with WI course guidelines and only a few had heard of WAC, WID or writing-to-learn. The science and math faculty were the least familiar. In part due to their unfamiliarity, they could not have anticipated that applying WAC pedagogy while adhering to departmental and institutional requirements might be challenging.

Content Coverage

We discovered that the math and science instructors' anxiety about the formal writing requirement stemmed from rigid content coverage and examination specifications mandated by their departments. Though content coverage is a concern raised by most faculty, we found it to be particularly salient for faculty in departments where courses follow a set syllabus, text, and/or sequence. In math, science and certain career development programs, courses are strictly sequential in part because knowledge is considered serially cumulative. For example, in an interview, a chemistry professor pointed out the potential hazards that may occur if students in her advanced laboratory courses do not know that combining certain chemicals produces a volatile reaction, especially since she expects them to enter her class with knowledge of basic chemistry. Her expectation is based on the established sequence of courses with specified content. While such dangers are not inherent in the failure to cover the prescribed content in most fields, the expectation exists nonetheless. This expectation is reinforced by the importance of content coverage in faculty teaching evaluations, which in turn influence the decision to offer ongoing employment to non-tenured faculty. Since at BMCC approximately two-thirds of instructors teach part-time and fewer than one-in-five instructors are tenured, the tenuousness of employment influences pedagogical priorities (BMCC Office of Institutional Research, Academic Affairs, 2004). Thus, the pressure to cover content is quite real.

Whether or not using WAC limits content coverage, if instructors *perceive* WAC as an impediment to their ability to cover the requisite material, they will limit if not abandon writing in their courses. Thus, faculty's skepticism must be respected as a justified concern. We found that the most fruitful response is not to deny such faculty concerns, but rather to understand their basis and then find ways in which WAC can facilitate rather than impede faculty's goals. For example, in one case a Writing Fellow and her science faculty partner tacitly agreed to limit the quantity of writing (formal and informal) and emphasize short, focused critical thinking and writing-to-learn activities to help students master key concepts. Though students may not have produced ten pages of formal writing, the instructor did not perceive the writing activities to be an obstacle to content coverage. Now, this professor incorporates writing and WAC-based activities into her non-WI courses. Flexibility in how and to what extent this professor used writing in her first WI course fostered a sustained pedagogical change.

Confidence, ESL Faculty, and the Responsibility for Teaching Writing

Besides content coverage, we also found that some instructors shy away from WAC and WI courses because they lack confidence in their own ability to write or teach writing. This concern stems from both disciplinary and demographic differences. Some of the non-English Department faculty in the workshops and interviews stated that teaching writing is the English Department's responsibility or fortÃ©. As one professor simply stated, "I teach Science, not English." While this attitude towards WAC and writing came as no surprise since it has been noted in a number of studies (e.g., Boice, 1990; Kaufer and Young, 1993; Patton et al., 1998), we discovered that writing confidence was a particularly significant concern for professors who learned English as a second language. Just as writing poses special challenges for ESL students, teaching with writing forces ESL faculty to grapple with their linguistic insecurities. Many of these instructors expressed concern about their ability to respond to student writing, especially in terms of grammar and usage. As Writing Fellows we were aware that WAC pedagogy emphasizes ideas, rhetoric, and expression and de-emphasizes "mechanics" and tried to convey this to the WI faculty. Still, some ESL faculty were slow to overcome their discomfort with using writing to teach and learn. As a compromise, these faculty members tended to incorporate short critical thinking activities in lieu of formal papers. While these instructors may not have made full use of the range of WAC pedagogy, they did succeed in incorporating those elements that support their teaching goals into their pedagogy.

WAC Is More Work, Labor Demands Are High at BMCC

While content coverage and confidence in writing disproportionately affected certain departments and demographic groups, workload seemed to be a universal concern for faculty at BMCC. Most instructors we spoke with felt that a WAC-based pedagogy requires more work and that they do not have the time to devote to reviewing the increased volume of student writing that WAC practices typically produce. To understand faculty concerns about WAC's impact on their workload, it is important to recognize the conditions under which they teach and the additional responsibilities they assume. BMCC is part of the largest public urban university nationwide, CUNY. The college serves both traditional as well as academically underserved students.[2] Approximately half of CUNY students are not native English speakers, 64% fail the basic writing skills exam upon entry and 1 in 4 students fails the basic reading skills exam

(CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2005).[3] The size of BMCC's student body, currently over 18,000, increases the challenges of teaching in such a setting. Moreover, the wide-ranging responsibilities faculty assume are somewhat daunting. Not only are professors expected to teach four to five courses per semester, with many classes exceeding 40 students, but they also perform other duties such as provide academic advising, serve on committees, occupy posts in their departments and/or coordinate special programs, of which the WAC program is an example. There is also a growing expectation that faculty conduct research and publish their work, indicative of the general climate of academic inflation. These conditions are far from ideal for a full-scale implementation of WAC.

When faculty hesitate to take on the task of teaching a WI course, they may be acting on their concern over workload, not out of resistance to WAC or WI courses per se. For example, several WI faculty members we interviewed confided that they were uncertain they would continue to teach WI courses, despite the fact that they found WAC to benefit their students and enrich their teaching experience. Some stated they would continue to use WAC, though not as extensively and rigidly as they perceived the WI guidelines to mandate. They wanted greater flexibility and autonomy in how and to what extent they applied WAC methods, in an attempt to control the increase in workload. In a sense, these instructors were among the most successful at making WAC their own, for they no longer needed institutional incentives to use the practice.

Flexibility & the Importance of Making WAC Serve the Instructor's Goals

Once we acknowledged the structural constraints on faculty, we faced the challenge that many WAC programs must confront: how to make WAC facilitate an instructor's specific goals for their course. This was particularly challenging when we worked with faculty who were teaching courses in which we had little background.[4] Nearly all CUNY Writing Fellows are graduate students in the humanities and social sciences; the same is true of the WAC program coordinators; thus we have limited familiarity with the conventions of math and science. For example, one chemistry professor seemed quite "resistant" to WAC and became particularly vociferous about the 12-page requirement. He initially viewed WAC and the WI course guidelines as an added imposition. He could not see how WAC might help him achieve his course aims and initially we did not know enough about chemistry or his pedagogy. Before we could find ways to integrate WAC into his course, we had to ask more questions about chemistry and what he wanted his students to learn. We discovered that this professor wanted students to understand the core principles of chemistry, so that they might apply them in a variety of situations, rather than view chemical reactions as equations to be memorized. Together with the professor, we began to brainstorm WAC activities based on everyday life applications of chemical phenomena to help students grasp the underlying principles. As we became increasingly flexible in the application of WAC to chemistry, he explored more ways to use WAC to serve his pedagogical aims. The same held true for the rest of the faculty in the workshop. It was becoming clear that the objections we first labeled as "resistance" were in fact justified concerns based on the personal and to a large extent structural constraints and conventions of instructors' courses, disciplines, departments, and institution. As a result, we made a concerted effort to be more flexible and attentive to each instructor's immediate concerns and situation.

Discussion

The concerns of BMCC faculty initially attempting to incorporate WAC practice into their pedagogy echoed the concerns of faculty at other institutions (Swanson-Owens, 1986; Boice, 1990; Swilky, 1992; Glaze and Thaiss, 1994; Mahala and Swilky, 1994; Patton et al, 1998). Like faculty at SUNY-Stony Brook and teachers at Thomas Jefferson High School in Virginia, BMCC faculty were concerned about the added work of reading and grading more papers, the loss of classroom time to cover content, and their confidence in teaching writing (Boice, 1990, p.14; Glaze and Thaiss, 1994, p.9). Expertise in different disciplines was also a source of resistance to WAC just as Mahala and Swilky (1994) found. Like the science faculty in Patton's (1998) study of the University of Missouri, the math and science instructors seemed particularly resistant to WAC due as much to the distinct pedagogical and epistemological assumptions they held as to the contextual limitations they had to negotiate.

What distinguishes the findings of this study is the specific institutional context and the attention paid to structural as well as individual factors. With the notable exception of Glaze and Thaiss' study (1994), most research on faculty resistance pays little if any attention to structural conditions that factor into faculty concerns. By examining individualistic concerns within the context of structural conditions, we hope to offer a model of evaluating faculty resistance holistically.

An example of how taking context into consideration can inform interpretation of seemingly individualistic concerns can be found in the faculty's concern over workload. Most studies identify workload as a potential source of faculty resistance; however, there is disagreement in terms of its legitimacy. Swilky (1992) acknowledges the role concern over workload plays in faculty resistance to adopting more writing. Yet, she seems to dismiss this as a selfish concern in which faculty (wrongly) place their own needs above those of students. "It appears that Robin made no genuine attempt to use writing to promote learning and that he resisted reform because improving the quality and conditions of learning is less important to him than managing time and labor" (Swilky 1992, 57). By contrast, Glaze and Thaiss (1994) suggest that the dilemma over workload is legitimate and presents "no easy solution" (p. 14). While we cannot comment on the conditions at Swilky's school, at BMCC the institutional and teaching demands on faculty's time and labor are great, producing a high level of burnout and turnover. Thus, we consider concern over workload not only a legitimate concern, but one that must be addressed directly in order for faculty to successfully and persistently incorporate writing and WAC practices into their pedagogy. As such, faculty, Writing Fellows and coordinators frequently discuss strategies to minimize and/or compensate for the increase in workload. This type of response is not limited to concerns over workload. In general, we make an effort to take all faculty concerns seriously and work closely with instructors to help them adapt WAC to enhance (and not impede) their teaching.

Conclusion

The findings from the interviews, workshops and faculty partnerships lead us to re-evaluate faculty resistance and arrive at three related conclusions.

First, our experiences at BMCC suggest that faculty resistance often stems from understandable and legitimate concerns born out of the institutional and personal context of individual faculty members. On this point, we agree with the general views expressed by Swilky and Swanson-Owens. However, whereas they focus almost exclusively on personal constraints, we found that many concerns regarding the implementation of WAC were due to the structural conditions of the specific institution, department and course. Hence, it is not just a matter of understanding the personal particularities, ideologies and preferences of faculty, but also the real or perceived structural constraints to pedagogical change.

Second, our re-evaluation of faculty resistance prompted us to conclude that sustained development of pedagogical practices depends on faculty sincerely taking ownership of new methods and re-inventing pedagogical strategies to fit their needs, and that resistance often plays an important role in this process. The adoption of WAC methods does not seem sufficient to create a truly dynamic WAC culture at a college. It is critical that faculty also feel some personal commitment to these new pedagogical methods to make a permanent change in their teaching styles. As noted earlier, WAC program leaders have recognized the importance of faculty taking ownership of WAC . Sandler (1992), in particular, emphasizes the centrality of personal ownership and commitment to sustained and deeply rooted pedagogical change. Flexibility to customize practices is a basic condition for faculty ownership, according to Sandler. We agree. For faculty to take ownership of WAC as pedagogy and practice, WAC programs and the practices they espouse must be flexible enough to accommodate the specific contexts and constraints under which they are applied. By adapting WAC, individual instructors make WAC their own pedagogy. If adaptation is a form of resistance as Swanson-Owens suggests, then perhaps resistance is productive after all.

The issue of ownership is linked to a third point. On the basis of our experiences at BMCC we hold that resistance is a potential catalyst for positive pedagogical change. Specifically, resistance often demonstrates an instructor's engagement with the struggle to implement WAC. In the process of criticizing, questioning and resisting, faculty personalize and reinvent WAC, thereby creating a personal pedagogy that they are likely to feel committed to and hence sustain. When working with students, we recognize criticism as an expression of engagement and personal involvement that may serve as a catalyst for learning and retaining new knowledge. In our opinion, faculty resistance should be viewed as a comparable potential catalyst. Glaze and Thaiss (1994) suggest in a similar vein that resistances can serve as a positive force, inspiring the work of WAC programs. Reflecting on the development of the Northern Virginia Writing Project, they find that "without resistances, nothing happens" (p. 10). However, they do not explain how this radical claim may be applied proactively and our claim stops short of making resistance a necessary ingredient to change. What we do want to suggest is that resistance has the potential to promote the kind of pedagogical change that is most likely to be sustained in the long run, namely the change that results when faculty go through the process of adapting WAC to fit personal and structural constraints.

On a practical level, listening to resistances and maintaining flexibility are conducive to faculty ownership of WAC and thus foster better pedagogical practices, as Walvoord (1992), Sandler (1992), Blumner (2001), and Farris and Smith (1992) aver. This tenet was important in the first stage of the WAC movement, but is often forgotten in the drive towards institutionalization

(Bamberg, 2000; Blumner et al., 2001). We share the belief expressed by Farris and Smith (1992) that listening to faculty and their specific concerns provides the best route to better pedagogical practices in individual classrooms and that this approach is also the most effective way of addressing and working with whatever resistances professors might have to WAC (p. 61). Moreover, as Patton et al. (1998) point out, "some of the issues don't so much require a once-and-for-all resolution as they do continual negotiation throughâ€¦communication" (p. 75).

Our re-evaluation of faculty resistance reaffirms the importance of flexibility of WAC programs and practices for faculty to be able to make WAC their own and further develop their pedagogy. Beyond actual flexibility our findings indicate that the perception faculty members have of WAC and WI courses is immensely important. It is their perception of WAC that determines in large part whether or not they want to take on the task of changing their teaching habits.

Ideally, listening to resistances opens a dialogue with faculty members from which WAC practitioners can gain insight into the obstaclesâ€”actual or perceivedâ€”faculty face when trying a new pedagogy. The result can be more satisfying for faculty in the sense that they feel that their concerns are being heard and further attempts are being made to help them resolve these concerns. But even when this dialogue does not result in a meeting of the minds, taking resistances seriously and trying to understand their background seems to be of greater value than the quick dismissal of faculty as mysteriously opposed to an effective pedagogy.

On the basis of this discussion it should be clear why we find Donahue's (2002) evaluation of faculty resistance problematic. Donahue begins the section entitled "When Faculty Behave Badly" with a dictionary definition of *strange* as "unfamiliar, abnormal, or exceptional to a degree that excites wonder or astonishment; difficult to take in or account; queer, surprising, unaccountable" (p. 34). This is almost the exact opposite of how we would describe the faculty resistances at BMCC. We found that when we listen to resistances, they turn out to be understandable given the context. Donahue finds the *problem* of faculty resistance at her college mystifying but suggests possible explanations, which all imply that faculty resist because they project various neurotic and academic anxieties onto the WAC program (p. 34-35). In short, she thinks of the problem as entirely due to the faculty members themselves. Thus, the door has been shut to any kind of self-examination on the part of the WAC program. Furthermore, it seems that labeling resistance as "bad faith" (p. 35) also prevents the kind of understanding and dialogue we find critical to harnessing the catalytic potential of resistances. Our findings suggest that WAC programs should be careful not to fall into the kind of us-versus-them dichotomy that impedes understanding and helping faculty in the process of adapting WAC to their individual contexts.

We need to remember that the ethos of WAC and related writing and communication intensive pedagogies is not a ready-made pedagogy to be simply handed out, but rather a philosophy that underlies teaching practice, which must be reformulated by individual faculty to fit the individual instructor, course, field and institution. This means that each faculty member who engages with WAC ideas and methods must try them on and go through the often resistance-producing and challenging process of recognizing their own preferences and tailoring the pedagogy to fit their objectives and style. In other words, they must make WAC pedagogy their own.

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Notes

[1] The Spring 2005 workshop faculty included one professor from each of the following fields: English, ethnic studies, philosophy, teacher education, mathematics, biology, as well as two from chemistry. They attended seven half-day sessions.

[2] 38% of students work at least half-time, 1 in every 5 students is a single parent, and 1 in 4 is a care provider.

[3] These statistics reflect the Fall 2004 student body.

[4] In "Writing Across the Content Areas: Some Theoretical Complexities," Kaufer and Young (1993) describe the initial challenges in the collaboration between English-based WAC proponents and a biology professor. The formers' lack of disciplinary knowledge led to inappropriate suggestions for ways to apply WAC in a science course that were later remedied by meeting their colleague in the sciences halfway, by gaining familiarity with biology.

Appendix 1: Faculty Interviewed

Department Specialization	# Faculty Interviewed
Social Science	12*

Political Science 3

Psychology3

Sociology 2

Anthropology 1

Economy 1

History 1

 Philosophy 1

Science 5

Biology2

Chemistry 2

Physics 1

Math 2

Business 9

Teacher's Education 2

Speech 2

Video, Arts and Technology1

Ethnic Studies 1

Total 34

* 7 full-time, 5 part-time

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

WAC Training:

- How well did the WAC faculty development workshops prepare you to teach a WI class?
- If you currently teach a WI course, what additional training or support do you feel would be helpful?
- If you do not teach a WI course, why not? What kind of additional training or support do you feel you would need to teach a WI course?
- How did having a Writing Fellow affect your use of WAC in the classroom?
- What difference did it make when you were no longer working with a Writing Fellow?
- What else would you want a Writing Fellow to do?

WAC Practice:

- How has WAC changed your pedagogy and teaching style?
- What course(s) have you taught as WI? In what non-WI course(s), if any, have you used WAC? Has WAC proved useful to teaching these courses? If so, how?
- Have you noticed a difference in learning between students in your WI class and your non-WI classes?
- Describe some of the disappointments/difficulties you experienced with using WAC.
- What changes have you made from semester to semester as a WAC instructor?
- How would you make WAC more effective?
- What are your plans or ideas for the next time you teach this course?

WAC in Your Department:

- What courses in your department would be most suitable for teaching as WI?
- What are common problems you see in student writing in your department?
- Do you have any assignments, rubrics, lesson plans, or other materials that you would be willing to contribute to a department-specific bank (for the web site and to be stationed in your department and the WAC office)?

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