Lisa Ede

Work in Progress

A Guide to Academic Writing and Revising

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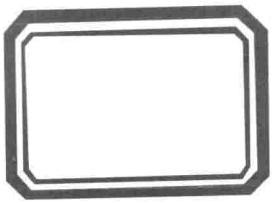

EDITION

Work in Progress

A Guide to Academic Writing and Revising

LISA EDE

Oregon State University

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Acknowledgments
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To my students
and
(of course)
to Gregory

Preface

With the first edition of *Work in Progress,* I wanted to write a theoretically sophisticated but commonsensical textbook, one grounded both in the centuries-old rhetorical tradition and in recent theoretical and pedagogical research on writing. I wanted to write a textbook that would enrich but not dominate the life of the classroom. Traditional textbooks too often place students and teachers in opposition: The teacher acts as the provider of knowledge, while students are positioned as passive absorbers of this wisdom. *Work in Progress* would, I hoped, foster the development of a genuinely collaborative community, grounded in mutual respect and a shared commitment to inquiry. Learning and teaching are, after all, both works in progress.

Fortunately, *Work in Progress* has been successful enough to warrant subsequent editions, and thus it continues as my own work in progress. With each new edition, I have attempted to build on the strengths of earlier editions and to respond to the needs and suggestions of instructors and students who have used the text. The fourth edition, for instance, recognized the increasing importance of collaborative writing and online technologies by adding two new chapters on these subjects. This new fifth edition expands the discussion of online writing by incorporating discussions of this subject throughout the text and by adding a new section on document design (in Chapter 9, "Strategies for Planning, Drafting, and Document Design").

The most significant changes in this fifth edition are all intended to clarify and enrich the text's treatment of academic writing. *Work in Progress* has always provided a solid foundation for students entering the academy, for its rhetorical approach encourages students to learn how to analyze and address different disciplinary contexts and expectations. Two new chapters — Chapter 4, "Understanding the Research Process" and Chapter 15, "Putting It All Together: Writing Academic Arguments" — build on and enrich this strong foundation. A reorganization of the text also foregrounds the centrality, and interconnections, among the processes of reading, writing, and research. These interconnections are further supported by a new "Writers' References" section at the back of the book, which provides information students need to engage effectively in academic argument and research-based writing. This edition of *Work*

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in Progress also includes a significantly expanded number of student essays. *Work in Progress*, Fourth Edition, included five student essays. Twenty student essays appear in the fifth edition. As a result, this edition provides both more — and more diverse — examples of academic writing across the disciplines.

These additions will, I hope, increase the usefulness and timeliness of *Work in Progress* — as well as reinforce the text's central goals. These goals continue to be reflected in a number of key features:

- a focus on the concept of the rhetorical situation (Chapters 5 and 6)
- explicit support for and reinforcement of collaborative learning and writing activities (Chapter 12)
- a broad range of examples of successful student writing in the disciplines (Chapter 15)
- attention to the impact of new technologies for student writers (Chapter 7)
- inclusion of a mini-anthology of readings focused on online writing technologies and situations (Chapter 3)
- extensive attention to the processes of reading and research, and to reading, writing, and research as dynamic, interdependent activities (Chapters 3 and 4)
- full discussion of the demands of academic writing (Chapters 13, 14, and 15)
- a strong emphasis on the importance of social context and textual conventions of writing (Chapter 6)

NEW TO THIS EDITION

A new chapter on the research process. Chapter 4, "Understanding the Research Process," presents the strategies that writers need to master to conduct research effectively — whether they are looking for a few details to enrich an essay or working on an extensive research paper. This chapter presents research, in other words, as central to academic writing, rather than as an isolated activity. Chapter 4 teaches students how to carry out the most critical activities researchers undertake — from assessing their goals as researchers to developing appropriate search strategies to evaluating print and online sources. It also includes an annotated sample student research paper. Information about MLA and APA documentation styles is provided in a readily accessible section at the back of the book.

A new chapter on academic argument. Chapter 15, "Putting It All Together: Writing Academic Arguments," presents a detailed case study of a student's writing and revising to strengthen the argument in an academic essay. Included are the student's analysis of her rhetorical situation and notes about her writing process. The chapter concludes with a "Miscellany of Student Essays" from the disciplines. The eight essays represented in this miscellany represent such diverse disciplines as biology, philosophy, political science, English, chemistry, history, anthropology, and ethnic studies.

A substantially increased — and substantially diversified—selection of student essays. The fourth edition of *Work in Progress* included five student essays, most from first-year writing classes. This fifth edition includes twenty student essays, both in chapters throughout the text and in the "Miscellany of Student Essays." Many of these essays have been drawn from disciplines across the curriculum; as a consequence, students will have a better introduction to — and examples of — the kinds of writing they will be asked to undertake as they progress in their studies.

A new "Writers' References" section. This provides information students need to become successful academic writers and researchers. The section includes MLA Documentation Guidelines, APA Documentation Guidelines, Web Resources, and Developing a Portfolio of Your Written Work.

A new discussion of document design. Chapter 9, "Strategies for Planning, Drafting, and Document Design," now includes a rhetorical approach to document design. The section begins with a discussion of the historical trends — trends that include but are not limited to online technologies — that have increased the role of visual elements in communication. The section concludes with guidelines that enable students to make effective decisions about document design.

A new organization. To emphasize the significant interconnections among the processes of reading, writing, and research, *Work in Progress* is now divided into four major parts and the chapter on reading is presented earlier (Chapter 3, formerly Chapter 11).

A companion Web site. Additional resources for students and instructors can be found at <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/workinprogress>.

ORGANIZATION

Part One is an introduction to the interdependent processes of writing, reading, and research. The four chapters in Part One approach these processes from a

rhetorical perspective, one that calls attention to the situated nature of any act of communication. Rather than presenting students with formats or rules to follow, these chapters encourage students to build upon their commonsense understanding of communication through reading, writing, and researching. In keeping with this approach, detailed documentation guidelines have been provided in a separate section of the book.

Part Two, which includes three chapters, focuses on the concept of the rhetorical situation. The first chapter in Part Two introduces students to the concept of the rhetorical situation and encourages them to take a strategic, situated approach to writing. Such an approach encourages students to ask questions about their role as writers, about their readers, and about the textual conventions that come into play in any particular rhetorical situation. The second chapter builds on the first by looking at textual conventions as socially constructed, socially negotiated understandings between readers and writers. It includes three articles on the same topic by psychologist John H. Flavell. Because these articles are directed toward quite different audiences, they provide a powerful case study of what it means to both address and invoke an audience. The final chapter in Part Two applies these understandings to online writing situations.

Part Three offers practical strategies for writing. The five chapters in Part Three cover the topics of invention, planning, drafting, and document design, revision, and collaboration. These chapters introduce students to a variety of practical strategies they can use as they plan, draft, and revise. Rather than emphasizing a single, prescribed series of steps or strategies that students must follow, *Work in Progress* encourages students to develop a repertoire of strategies they can use (working alone and with others, on- and offline), depending on their purpose and situation.

Part Four initiates students into the reading and writing they will do as members of the academic community. The first of the three chapters in Part Four articulates a rhetorical approach to academic argument. This chapter offers suggestions for analyzing disciplinary conventions and for understanding what is expected for assignments. The second chapter discusses the relationship between academic analysis and arguments and provides several student examples that clarify this relationship. And the final chapter presents an extended case study of one student's experience writing an essay on a poem by Emily Dickinson. It includes three drafts of the essay, as well as the student's analysis of her rhetorical situation and notes about her writing process. This chapter closes with a miscellany of eight examples of student writing across the disciplines.

As previously noted, this fifth edition of *Work in Progress* includes a new "Writers' References" section at the back of the book. The topics covered in this section are MLA Documentation Guidelines, APA Documentation Guidelines, Web Resources, and Developing a Portfolio of Your Written Work.

I have attempted to make *Work in Progress* an innovative textbook — but also to be sure it remains a practical textbook. It provides a conceptual frame-

work and activities that stimulate effective classroom instruction, yet it also offers teachers considerable autonomy and flexibility. Some teachers will particularly appreciate the book's emphasis on reading and on academic writing, for instance, while others may draw more heavily on its numerous interactive, collaborative, workshop-oriented activities. Still other instructors will appreciate the ways in which *Work in Progress*'s rhetorical approach supports an emphasis on cultural and/or literacy studies. The *Instructor's Notes* to *Work in Progress* provide further elaboration of ways in which the text can be used and the book's companion Web site offers additional resources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before I wrote *Work in Progress*, acknowledgments sometimes struck me as formulaic or conventional. Now I recognize that they are neither; rather, acknowledgments are simply inadequate to the task at hand. Coming at the end of the preface — and hence twice marginalized — acknowledgments can never adequately convey the complex web of interrelationships that make a book like this possible. I hope that the people whose support and assistance I acknowledge here not only note my debt of gratitude but also recognize the sustaining role that they have played, and continue to play, in my life.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues at the Center for Writing and Learning at Oregon State University. I could accomplish little in my teaching, research, and administration without the support and friendship of Moira Dempsey, Saundra Mills, Matt Yurdana, and Wayne Robertson. They, along with our writing assistants, have taught me what it means to collaborate in a sustaining, productive fashion. Others in the OSU English department, my second academic home, supported me while I wrote and revised this text. I am indebted to my colleagues Chris Anderson, Vicki Tolar Burton, and Anita Helle for their friendship and their commitment to writing over the years.

I have dedicated this book to my students, and I hope that it in some way reflects what *they* have taught me over the years. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to another friend and teacher, Suzanne Clark, who allowed me to persuade her to interrupt her own important works in progress to collaborate with me on the *Instructor's Notes*.

I also wish to acknowledge Carole Ann Crateau, instructor at OSU's Honors College, who generously helped me identify a number of new student essays for this edition. And I want very much to thank Matthew Johnston, whose writing is featured in Chapter 7, "Negotiating Online Writing Situations," as well as the seventeen other students whose essays appear throughout the fifth edition of *Work in Progress*.

Colleagues and students play an important role in nurturing any project, but so do those who form the intangible but indispensable community of scholars that is one's most intimate disciplinary home. Here, it is harder to determine who to acknowledge; my debt to the composition theorists who

have led the way or "grown up" with me is so great that I hesitate to list the names of specific individuals here for fear of omitting someone deserving of credit. I must, however, acknowledge my friend and frequent coauthor Andrea Lunsford, who writes with me even when I write alone. I owe Andrea a particularly strong debt of gratitude for an important role she played in this fifth edition of *Work in Progress*. For when she learned that this edition would include extensive discussions of MLA and APA documentation style, Andrea insisted that there was no need to reinvent the wheel, and thus generously shared examples developed for *The Everyday Writer*. The material that appears on pages 419–50 of *Work in Progress* is adapted from *The Everyday Writer*.

I would also like to thank the many dedicated teachers of composition I have worked and talked with over the years. By their example, comments, suggestions, and questions, they have taught me a great deal about the teaching of writing. A number of writing instructors took time from their teaching to read and comment on drafts of this edition. Their observations and suggestions have enriched and improved this book. These reviewers include: Linda Bensel-Meyers, University of Tennessee; David Blakesley, Southern Illinois University–Carbondale; Thomas Burkdall, Occidental College; Donna Dunbar-Odom, Texas A&M–Commerce; Anne Farmer, Allen County Community College; Ron Fortune, Illinois State University; Robert Holderer, Edinboro University; Kate Massey, California Polytechnic State University; Tim Miank, Lansing Community College; Donna Niday, Iowa State University; Jonna Perrillo, New York University; George Sebouhian, SUNY College–Fredonia; and Heide-Marie Weidner, Tennessee Technological University.

I wish to thank the dedicated staff of Bedford/St. Martin's, particularly Diana Puglisi, whose editorial expertise — and wonderful sense of humor — helped make a difficult, deadline-ridden process both more manageable and more enjoyable. Marilyn Moller and Nancy Perry, who each edited earlier editions of *Work in Progress*, also provided insight and assistance at critical moments. It is a pleasure — and a gift — to continue collaborating with (and learning from) them. In addition, I want to thank project editor Shuli Traub, whose patient attention to detail proved especially valuable.

As this book goes to press, teachers and scholars of composition are mourning the loss of Robert Connors, who died in an accident on June 22, 2000. I was fortunate enough to know Bob and to collaborate with him on several projects. Bob was a person and scholar of great intelligence, generosity, and wit. The loss to his family and friends — and to the field of composition studies — is inestimable.

Finally, I want to (but cannot adequately) acknowledge the support of my husband, Gregory Pfarr, whose passionate commitment to his own work, and to our life together, sustains me.

Lisa Ede

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