From the Editor
Susan M. Hunter

The authors of the articles and the book review in this issue of Dialogue accepted the invitation central to the journal's mission: to engage in reflective dialogue about ways of being and teaching in the field and to encourage others to do so as well. In this issue, readers are able to listen in on dialogues about professional identity formation and reflective pedagogy. Each of the articles sets up a model that others in the field might adapt to fit their own professional contexts.

For "Coming into the Field: Intersections of the Personal and the Professional in Graduate Student and Faculty Narratives," five graduate students in the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Program at Syracuse University collaborated to discover what it means to become a professional in the field of composition and rhetoric. In the words of reviewer, Joseph Janangelo, the "project is provocative and potentially very useful for Dialogue readers who may wish to pursue, or to have their graduate students pursue, a similar one."

Continuing the reflective turn of the articles in this issue, William P. Banks in "Just Off the Mark: A Story of Pedagogical Reflection" invites readers to join him in examining their past attitudes toward their students' writing in light of their present theoretical understandings. In another article that attests to the insights collaboration can give rise to, five experienced instructors from various fields in English Studies designed "The Credible Writer: Teaching Ethos in First-Year Composition" to reflect on why each of them emphasizes ethos in the writing classroom and how each reveals her own ethos in doing so.

Finally, the book reviewed in this issue couldn't be more appropriate to the mission of Dialogue: A Journal for Writing Specialists. M. Todd Harper's review of Frank Farmer's Saying and Silence: Listening to Composition with Bakhtin generates this response from the author: "Dialogue itself . . . is forever incomplete, and if I have left openings for readers to extend, or revise, or answer what I say, then I will have accomplished one of my central purposes" (383). The contributors to this issue would concur with Farmer's statement.

Coming into the Field: Intersections of the Personal and the Professional in Graduate Student and Faculty Narratives
Susan M. Adams, Damian Baca, Justin Bain, Paul Butler, Amy E. Robillard, and Eileen E. Schell

Over the past decade, scholars in rhetoric and composition have established "narrative scholarship" as an important form of knowledge making. Collections of essays such as Writing Ourselves into the Story: Unheard Voices from Composition Studies (Fontaine and Hunter), Narration as Knowledge: Tales of the Teaching Life (Trimmer), The Personal Narrative: Writing Ourselves as Teachers and Scholars (Harorian-Guerin) among others explore the interconnected nature of composition teacher-scholars' personal and professional histories. Mike Rose's Lives on the Boundary, Keith Gilyard's Voices of the Self, and Victor Villaneuva's Bootstraps connect the authors' literacy autobiographies to the theoretical, cultural, and pedagogical contexts of their literacy work both inside and outside the academy. These contemporary narratives are paralleled by an equally rich set of historical texts that retell the histories of rhetoric and writing instruction from the voices and perspectives of women, the working class, and people of color. For instance, Jacqueline Jones Royster’s Traces of a Stream and Shirley Wilson Logan’s We Are Coming provide us with a glimpse into the literacy experiences of African-American women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, drawing upon published addresses, nonfiction works, diaries, memoirs, and biographical accounts. Together, these accounts provide us with a rich and multi-faceted view of literacy work, allowing us to shift our perspectives on where, when, how, and why literacy work has taken place. However, the intersections of the personal and the professional represented in the above named texts are often absent from introductory graduate courses and introductory composition anthologies surveying traditions of scholarship and teaching practices in our discipline. Often such introductory anthologies, in an effort to offer coverage, provide graduate students with an "intellectual parade" of prominent scholars, theorists, and types of scholarship. Like the annual Macy’s parade, such anthologies may leave students with an uneasy feeling that the profession and its scholars, waving and nodding, have passed them by without a true opportunity for engagement and understanding. As part of an effort to counter the "intellectual parade" effect, I asked the graduate
students in my Fall 2000 introductory doctoral seminar Composition and Cultural Rhetoric 601 “Introduction to Scholarship in Composition and Rhetoric” to investigate and engage scholarly narratives of “coming into the field” by soliciting and studying the narratives of scholars in our doctoral program. How have scholars in the field come to composition and rhetoric? How are our understandings of the field socially and historically located? How do specific personal and professional histories lead scholars to construct specific narratives of the field and to engage in particular methodological traditions of scholarly work?

To engage these questions, I asked graduate students to interview the ten tenure-track faculty who teach in our doctoral program about their research, teaching, and administrative work. In preparation for the interviews, the class generated a list of common questions to ask the faculty, as well as questions appropriate to each faculty member’s particular background and professional history. (These questions are in the Appendix at the end of this article.) In advance of the interviews, the students read faculty members’ curriculum vitae (CVs) and a representative article or book drawn from their scholarship. After undertaking the interviews, students offered seminar presentations on the faculty work and wrote profiles of the faculty members based on the interviews, which we shared and distributed. But the process did not end there.

As the students mined the faculty’s professional and personal narratives for common themes and insights and looked for patterns and parallels, they began to construct their own narratives of coming to the field. As they solicited, wrote, and read the faculty narratives, they began to come to terms with what Wendy Hesford refers to as autobiographical scripts, the “culturally available models of identity and narrative templates that structure experiential history” (xxi). The students began to consider how their personal and professional scripts and that of the faculty intersect and interact in their understanding of the intellectual work of the field. At first and perhaps predictably, the students’ responses to the faculty narratives were driven by identification, by the need to see parallels and commonalities between their own narratives and that of their newly acquired faculty mentors. As we continued with the project, the students began to register some of the challenges and differences in their entry points in the field—issues they take up across the pieces as they reflect on the challenges of juggling personal and professional lives.

In the accounts below, the five first-year Composition and Cultural Rhetoric (CCR) students involved in the project draw connections between the faculty interviews and the narratives they bring as new students in the discipline. True to theme of investigating the intersections of the personal and the professional, Justin Bain examines the role that family history and social class play in narratives of coming into the field. In his account, Bain deploys the metaphor of “family” to discuss how family histories intersect with professional histories. Breaking down the divide between the personal and professional, Bain’s analysis insists on an understanding of the field that allows composition scholars to connect their professional and personal lives and to explore rather than ignore class issues. Likewise, Amy Robillard examines class identity and the importance of autobiography as she struggles with how to integrate “two very different worlds, two very different ways of being”: her working-class background and her life as a doctoral student. Bound up with her interest in connecting the two worlds is the question of the time it takes to be in those different worlds, or, as she puts it, “the time it takes to care” for others and about one’s work, one’s students, one’s colleagues, one’s family and home community. Like Bain, Robillard struggles with ways to build a bridge between the personal and professional parts of her life. Paul Butler takes up the theme of “community-building” in his piece. Telling the story of the suicide of a fellow student, Butler speaks of the deep commitment he and fellow graduate students and faculty made to the departmental community as we came to terms with “the unfulfilled promise of someone with whom we hoped to enter the field.” Even as he explores the significance of community as a space for difference, for political work, and for healing, Butler wonders if the academic community he and his colleagues seek to enter will allow for the integration of the personal and the professional, asking: “Is it possible to have a personal life in composition, sometimes leaving the professional behind, and still earn recognition and tenure?” Again, the theme of time and potential conflicts between the personal and the professional emerges. In her piece, Susan Adams explores the complexity of faculty researchers at Syracuse University and the complex and diffuse methodological traditions that the faculty bring to the study of language, literacy, and writing instruction. Although she finds a variety of approaches to inquiry, she finds that she and the faculty she interviews share a commitment to questioning. Finally, Damian Baca, connecting his interest in Chicano political movements to progressive theories of writing program administration, explores writing program administration as a potential form of political advocacy. Through his interwoven analysis of faculty narratives and his own history, Baca reminds readers
that "understanding and working with a diversity of American civilizations, many of which historically do not think and write from the imagined centrality of Western cultures" will be a major challenge for those of us who teach and administer writing programs.

Together, these narratives provide accounts of the personal/professional narratives of established scholars in the field interlaced with the stories of five beginning doctoral students as they work with/in those narratives to create their own integrated understandings of the field. As a collective body, these narratives model and enact a process of collaborative inquiry whereby the students and faculty, from various social contexts and historical locations, begin to map the scholarship of the field and locate one another in relation to it.

Turning Life into Text—Justin Baln

I went home for Christmas this year, flying cross-country from Syracuse, New York to Fresno, California. My first night back, sitting in my parents' house in what used to be my room, I came to what is probably a typical realization: I cannot, in any definite way, separate my family from myself or the work they do from my own. Like many graduate students from a working-class background, I have inherited a tacit script that tells me to leave my family behind to seek an education, and yet now, more than ever, I am aware of just how much family matters to me.

I am not alone in this feeling. Many within the field of composition, especially those from backgrounds and cultures typically underrepresented in university settings, have found family to be a crucial term for their work. Beverly J. Moss, writing of her experiences as a female academic from the black middle class in "Intersections of Race and Class in the Academy," argues that it is a remembrance of her family, and of the community she came from, that leads her to include the personal in the academic, an inclusion she sees as invaluable to maintaining diversity and accountability within the field. Composition is not, after all, merely a profession of ideas, but a place where private and professional lives intersect both inside and outside the academy.

Now in my second semester at Syracuse University, I find myself drawn to scholars who write of these personal and professional intersections and of their value to the field. Jim Zbroski, who holds a joint appointment in English and Writing at Syracuse University, is one of these scholars. The son of a factory worker, Zbroski sought escape from a working-class life through school, especially through reading and writing, activities he felt opened up new worlds for him. Though he respected his working-class culture, he felt at the time that he wouldn't be able to survive in it. Looking back now, however, Zbroski realizes that he does not want to break with his heritage and tradition since they are a crucial part of who he is and the work he does.

Gesturing out his office window during our interview, Zbroski comments on the powerful cultural scripts that inform working-class lives: "At Syracuse University, those students who are working class don't disclose it; they take night classes or early classes so they can still work." Zbroski's gesture highlights for me that certain type of shame carried by working-class individuals in the academy, but there is also a certain determination that accompanies it, a determination bound closely to the desire not to forget their class, language, values, and family. Zbroski sees part of his own job, therefore, as disrupting academic discourse—in the field, in journals—with a working-class discourse, one that resists the characterization of the academic loner, the hermit in a tower. This resistance, forged at the intersections of past and present families, of private and professional lives, finds expression in Zbroski's political and theoretical stances about life both in and out of academe.

Xin Liu Gale, Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Syracuse, shares Zbroski's interest in aligning the personal and the academic in her work, often confronting these contradictory scripts by theorizing the uses of autobiography. Gale was born and raised in China, where she received her undergraduate degree in English and her Master's in British and American Literature. While attending the University of Idaho to earn a second Master's in English as a Second Language, Gale discovered that composition offered her a concrete path to helping both her students and herself continue to develop their writing skills.

Her interest in developing student writing coupled with her interest in telling stories, including her own, led Gale to understand autobiographical writing—the process of telling stories and the resulting collective understanding of experience—as a means of forming community within the classroom. Autobiography introduces the element of choice into the classroom, and choice enables both students and teachers to begin to understand the stories they tell themselves about who they are and the work they do.

Perhaps Gale's work with autobiography is evidence of her seeking, as Moss and I are, a way to make the seemingly divided
worlds of her scholarly life and the life she comes from compatible. And perhaps, as Moss writes, autobiography is a means by which the public and private aspects of life may enrich each other and "establish my place in the academy without giving up myself" (162). As bell hooks suggests in Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black, to separate the personal and the academic "reinforces the notion that the academic world is separate from real life, that everyday world where we constantly adjust our language and behavior to meet diverse needs" (78). While I agree wholeheartedly with hooks, integrating the personal and the academic in meaningful ways is not an easy thing to do, nor is it an act that is widely sanctioned in a discipline that asks its practitioners to always be at work. But despite the inherent dangers, I cannot leave the personal behind. It must be as much a part of my writing as my family is a part of me, and the now seven months and three thousand some odd miles of separation have only intensified this belief.

As I write this I hear my father telling me to be quiet, to not write about him or my family, but instead to keep writing those papers that he hasn’t understood since my freshman year in high school, the ones that get good grades and send me to good schools far from home. Yet even these papers are an indication of the very real, albeit false, distinction between the academic and real worlds: papers written for no audience and with little purpose beyond earning a grade, papers that never move beyond the classroom in a meaningful way because they were never meant to, papers written in a way that my father could never understand because he was not meant to. But in my father’s eyes, and at times in my own, I have left his world of twelve-hour shifts and physical labor behind; in its place I have become part of another world and taken on a new academic family, one that for him and for me feels strangely like leaving something behind forever. But I know that I cannot let that feeling win, because his story and his voice are still mine.

Bridging the gap between private and professional spheres, and between the discourses that structure and support them, is a means of including others. It is a way that those like my father, who have been denied a voice by labor, life, economics, and war, can speak with those who possess greater rhetorical agency. And importantly, it is a means for speaking with those like my father, rather than at or for them. This is the sort of work that Zebroski, Gale, and Moss are engaged in, and it is the sort of work that I hope to do, but it is not an easy task, and it is not done without risking one’s place in both worlds. Laurel Johnson Black describes the inherent dangers in failing to bridge these worlds in “Stupid Rich Bastards.” Recounting the time that her little sister had been beaten by her boyfriend and phoned her for help, Black remembers offering advice about her sister’s housing situation and the Legal Aid Society. Hearing Black’s advice, her frustrated sister could only scream over the line, “Fuck you! Fuck you! Don’t talk to me like college, talk to me like sister” (23).

Zebroski and Gale have shown, however, that there are other sorts of encounters to be had. But to enable more productive encounters, ones that end with inclusion and understanding rather than conflict, those who are part of the academy must make room for the personal as well as the professional and allow themselves and their students ways to integrate the two.

Taking Time to Care: Personal, Professional, and Working Lives in a Writing Program—Amy E. Robillard

The years when I should have been writing, my hands and being were at other (inescapable) tasks.—Tillie Olsen, Silences

Maybe someday we will find that it wasn’t really wasted time.—The Eagles, “Wasted Time”

When I was 21 and had just graduated from college, I was hospitalized for three days after undergoing what was supposed to be a three-hour outpatient procedure. On that third day, when my mother came to bring me home, I remember the rage I felt at her as I sat in my wheelchair outside the hospital on that beautiful early summer day. She couldn’t remember where she’d parked the car. And then, once she’d found it, she couldn’t figure out how to get to the entrance of the hospital because of the maze of one-way signs. Rage and embarrassment and somewhere deep inside, probably pity.

Now the tables have turned and I’ll be the one taking my mother to the hospital on Monday. She’s having outpatient surgery on her leg. My oldest brother was going to drop her off; my other brother was going to pick her up. Playing the hero card, I’m driving four hours on Sunday so I can take her to the hospital and stay with her. The hero card only exists because I’m away at school, because I’m the only member of my family to go away to school. I’ve got the flexible schedule that comes with a life in academia. So I can take the moral high ground with my working-class brothers who can’t afford to take the day off from work.
The script that Bain speaks of, the script that has the working-class student leaving “family behind to seek an education” is a script I’ve already rehearsed, perfected, and now find myself attempting to revise. And like Bain, I find myself attracted to Jim Zebroski’s self-professed “obsession” with social class, his celebration of his own working-class background, his desire to escape his working-class culture. Zebroski’s dedication to understanding the effects of his pedagogy on working-class students has a calming effect on me. He would understand the hero card.

In a recent interview, Zebroski said he thinks the Writing Program sees him as “the pedagogy person.” I smiled when I heard that because I believe that I, too, have come to be known as “the pedagogy person,” at least among my own cohort. I wonder about the connection between a working-class past and an affinity for pedagogy. Perhaps such a connection is too simple. Or perhaps there’s a connection between a sense of family responsibility and an affinity for pedagogy. A sense that we cannot leave our families behind, a sense that we are responsible for two very different worlds, two very different ways of being.

Much has been made in our field of composition as “women’s work,” of cleansing the unwashed bodies of undergraduates, of nurturing through writing instruction. What about taking care of our personal lives, our personal relationships? In a recent seminar discussion of Tillie Olsen’s Silences, Zebroski writes in response to Olsen’s statement that opens my portion of this article, “Does taking care—I love that phrase taking care—of an elderly parent or a dying sister count? Taking care of graduate students and undergraduates?” Taking care—I hadn’t really thought much about that phrase before Zebroski called my attention to it. We’re not really taking but giving. Giving of ourselves, our time, our energy—dare I say it?—our feeling. Taking care takes time. Taking care gives time. That is so precious to our writing lives. And yet, how can we begrudge our families our time? How can we not recognize how lucky we are to have the time to give? Of Tillie Olsen’s work, a meditation on the time it takes to write, on the many, many voices that have been silenced because of time, Zebroski says, “It’s testament to her work that I, one of the luckiest and most privileged people on earth in all of human history—think of the truth of that on those dreary depressing mornings you find it hard to get up and out of bed—can still encounter her book in its form, content, in its heart.” As I reflect on Zebroski’s concern with care and on his ability to see his own privilege, I wonder if there’s really any kind of solution to the struggles we wage with time. We in academia all share the same concerns, don’t we? Balancing the professional and the personal. It’s a testament to Zebroski and to the rest of my mentors in the Writing Program that I have the time to care about this.

The time it takes to care.

I think of the time it took Xin Liu Gale to gather her students’ autobiographical essays into a book-length manuscript only to abandon the project more than two years later. I think of the time it took those students to trust Gale, to trust one another enough to write their stories. And I wonder about priorities. Of our field, of our students, of our professoriate. What comes first? What—who—needs the most care?

I’ll never forget my first impression of Xin Liu Gale. It was Community Day, a day in mid-August before classes begin, a day set aside for new CCR students to get to know one another, current students, and faculty in the program. Each of the faculty members introduced themselves and spoke for a few minutes about their work. When Gale spoke, I knew right away that our interests matched up. Some of the questions she asked in her work—What is “good writing”? What does it mean to “empower” students? How do we teach students what we consider “good writing”? Is there space in the academy for autobiography?—are questions I’ve been wrestling with since I began my work in composition. She told us about her book manuscript on autobiography and the teaching of writing, invited us to read and critique pieces of it if we were interested, and told us how much she hated it. I wish I had her exact words. But the way she spoke—so open, so frank, so personally yet so professionally—made me smile. Here’s a person who says it like it is. Here’s a person who’s not citing big names and theories I haven’t yet heard of. Here’s a person I can work with.

As I think about the time I spent with Gale working on her manuscript, I wonder now if there’s a danger in caring too much. I wonder if there’s not a script in our field—in academia at large—that tells us as teachers to maintain a critical distance from the work of our undergraduate students, to not get overly involved in their stories. Just as the script for the working-class student has us leaving our families behind, perhaps the script for the composition teacher has us leaving our students behind each semester, moving on. The time of the semester is not enough sometimes to care, to nourish life stories. As Gale and I worked to extend the time of that semester in which thirteen undergraduate students composed their autobiographies, we also worked on our own life stories, struggling to speak back to the largely unspoken rule that autobiography doesn’t belong in the academy. Now that
Gale has left the academy and is working full-time on her memoir in Florida, after having abandoned the book project. I can’t help but wonder at the truth of that unspoken rule. For Gale, there seemed to be no room in academia for her personal stories—nor for her students’ stories.

I contrast Gale’s experiences with Louise Wetherbee Phelps’, whose experiences with autobiography and time hold me in awe. For Phelps, “theory is autobiographical, if writers and field are in resonate they develop symbiotically, each dependent on the other for understanding and self-understanding” (xi-xii). Unlike those of us—Zebrowski, Gale, and me—who see a sharp distinction at times between the personal and the professional, Phelps sees the professional as personal. When I say her experiences of time hold me in awe, I’m thinking about the time she takes to care—the immense amount of time she spends preparing for class, reading and responding to our work in our methodology seminar, the evidence of time she spends outside of class reading both in and out of the field. She spends so much time thinking not only about her work, but about our—the graduate students’—work. Phelps stands out in my mind as a professor who takes our work as seriously as her own, as seriously as Gale took the work of her undergraduates. At any one time, Phelps has not one project in mind, but six or seven or eight. I think now with a kind of embarrassment about the intimidation, the nervousness I felt when Phelps telephoned me in the spring of 2000, before I arrived at Syracuse but after I’d been admitted.

To my mind then, I was speaking to a well-respected name, not to a person who cared about my work and my teaching. I remember thinking that if I said something that betrayed uncertainty about my understanding of the field or revealed my working-class background, I’d be compromising her first impression of me.

More than a year and a half later, in our methodology seminar, Phelps described for us her writing process—the different piles of notes she maintains, the intricate methods for sorting through them when it’s time to write—and I remember wondering how—if—Phelps finds time for the personal. But then I have to remind myself that, for Phelps, the professional is the personal. I understand my own reasons for hesitating before that way of thinking, for I’ve always worked while attending school; during my Master’s at UMass Boston, I held three jobs at once. There was—there had to be—a sharp distinction between my time and my employers’ time. Until now, at Syracuse University, where my time is no longer sharply divided between work and personal. There is no sharp distinction between on-the-clock and off-the-clock. But I cannot shake that way of thinking. I cannot help thinking that I need to reserve time away from school work for myself just to be. Or time to drive home to Massachusetts to drink and swear and shout and play card games with my family, my mother paying no attention to whose turn it is, always asking out of turn, “My turn yet?” I try to make this part of my life apparent while I’m here at Syracuse. I don’t want others to believe what I sometimes suspect: that I’ve left my family behind.

Forging Community through Loss—Paul Butler

As I sat next to Margaret Himley in Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University’s spacious nineteenth-century cathedral, I noticed the fading light in the photographs on the screen, the sun setting on the Grand Canyon, the Oregon Coast, Yosemite National Park. As James Taylor’s “Fire and Rain” played a haunting background to the PowerPoint slides, I thought of how quickly I had gotten to know Himley in the two weeks since I’d started her course on community literacy and joined the Writing Program community. Days earlier, Himley, a professor in the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric graduate program at Syracuse, had walked with me through the steel doors of the Onondaga County Justice Center, where we met the inmates I would tutor that semester for the essay portion of the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) exam. Himley had encouraged me to work at the justice center to fulfill the service learning requirement in her course, knowing that I had once been on the other side of the criminal justice system as a prosecutor. Tonight, however, Himley was more friend than mentor, and as I walked forward to the podium to address the crowded chapel, I thought of how easily the line can blur between personal and academic, between our roles as professionals and humans, teachers and students.

Looking out toward Himley and other Syracuse colleagues in the afternoon light of Hendricks Chapel, I reflected on the events that had created this sense of community in such a short period of time.

It was August 29, 2000, the first day of classes in the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric program at Syracuse, and no one had seen or heard from Alex Weirich, our colleague from Pennsylvania who had graduated from prestigious Swarthmore College and finished his master’s degree at Northern Arizona University. As I sat with the four other incoming students’ around a seminar table in Eileen Scheible’s “Introduction to Scholarship in Composition and Rhetoric” that afternoon, I wondered where Alex was. My first-year colleagues seemed confident as they discussed their interests in the field: Justin Rain talked about
writing centers and space, Amy Robillard about pedagogy and the personal narrative. Damian Baca addressed the exclusion of Mexican-American voices from conversations in composition, while Susan Adams explained her study of queer subjectivity in nineteenth century women’s rhetoric. As I listened to each of their stories—which all included tales of growing up in working-class families—I wondered what I would say when it was my turn. How would I explain my interest in coming to CCR after earning degrees in law, French, and English literature, a background that suddenly felt solidly middle class? More important, how could I say what was really on my mind: where was Alex, and why wasn’t he in class?

I didn’t ask that question then, however, possibly because I was concentrating on the situation at hand: my first day of CCR in a course taught by Eileen Schell, the program’s soon-to-be graduate director whom I had met the previous year at a professional conference. I had been impressed by Schell when she delivered the conference keynote address, based on her book Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers, in which she describes the plight of adjunct composition instructors who often work for low wages, no benefits, and little institutional respect. Facing an auditorium full of composition teachers, Schell clutched the microphone and leaned into the podium as she decried the problem of labor exploitation in the field and called for a rethinking of the discipline’s labor politics. As audience members started asking questions and telling their own stories of institutional neglect, I could sense the excitement building in the room. I thought of Schell as a model of someone who had discovered what mattered to her in composition and directed her scholarship toward changing injustice. She told composition colleagues that day, “I don’t believe that activism has to be separated from intellectual pursuits,” and I hoped to use that wisdom as I joined the field.

At Syracuse, however, I soon discovered another side to Schell’s activism. Even as she devoted herself to contingent faculty politics, Schell seemed to pay a high price for her own tenure-track efforts: working in her office late into the night while finishing a book, researching nineteenth-century feminist rhetors, responding to student work. When I congratulated Schell after she received tenure later that fall, she admitted that the process “sometimes felt like a lot of unremitting labor.” Schell had learned about difficult labor conditions firsthand as a community college instructor in Seattle, where she sometimes held office hours on the way to her car before heading down the freeway to her next job. In California, I had also been a “gypsy academic,” working at four different community colleges to support myself. Yet I wondered how far the parallels in our backgrounds extended. Even though Schell was now an associate professor and administrator in the Writing Program, her experience made me question the hidden costs of entering the field. Does composition and rhetoric’s relatively low status within the academy make it more difficult for those who aspire to join the field? Is it possible to have a personal life in composition, sometimes leaving the professional behind, and still earn recognition and tenure? Could anyone succeed in composition without being as ambitious and hard working as Schell?

During the break from Schell’s class, I asked my colleagues about Alex, who apparently had not attended an earlier class that day either. Since no one had heard from him, I called Alex’s house when I got home. When he didn’t answer, I decided to call his father, whose phone number Alex had given me in April when we visited Syracuse and talked about sharing a house together. Bob Weirich expressed concern because Alex had experienced some health problems that summer, and he asked me to call the Syracuse police to go check on his son. That began a long night in which I waited for the police, who came to the building but refused to help, and then the landlord, who had to drive in from his home 45 minutes away.

When the landlord finally arrived, he unfastened the chain that had been latched from the inside of the door. As I walked into the dark apartment, my eyes followed the light from the screen saver on Alex’s computer a few feet away, to the sliver of light coming from the bathroom, whose door, at the end of the hallway, was slightly ajar. As I walked toward the light, I called Alex’s name. hoping that somehow he would not be home, wondering if perhaps he had passed out or fallen asleep. But as I pushed the bathroom door open, I discovered a scene that I could never have predicted, and one I’ll never forget: Alex lay in the bathtub, his arms still cradling the shotgun he had pointed backward toward his head, which now tilted toward the wall. I gasped, my mouth opening without words, and I became almost an automaton. I barked orders at the landlord—“Call the police,” “Don’t let your sons go inside”—while I went upstairs to use the neighbor’s phone. I had promised Alex’s father I would call if I had any news about Alex, and when I reached him my words were halting, almost clinical. “Bob”—he had insisted that I call him Bob—“I’m sorry to have to call you with this news. Alex has committed suicide.” A night that had started with silence ended with activity: police, coroners, sirens, phone calls, and many unanswered questions.
The next morning, when Becky Howard, Margaret Himley, and Fred Gale walked into Gale’s modern rhetoric class, which was meeting for the first time that day, they tried to remain calm as they announced the news of Alex’s suicide. Fred Gale, whose passion for rhetoric had brought him into the field after a career in law and business, said, “Rhetoric just doesn’t seem all that important today” and canceled class. As we awaited grief counselors to talk to everyone in our program, Gale guided me outside onto the Syracuse University quad. As we walked around the grass-lined diamond, Gale tried to take my mind off the events of the previous night. Though I didn’t know Gale well, I was familiar with the parallels in our backgrounds. We had both been lawyers, though he had remained enthusiastic about the profession longer than I had. I had worked as a deputy district attorney, while Gale rose to a judgeship. We were both used to dealing with criminal law and felt acquainted with DUI, assault, and more serious crimes. But neither of us had any experience with suicide, which usually falls outside the purview of the legal system, a so-called “victimless” crime.

But at that moment, it was clear that suicide had many victims—and we were among them. I had read Gale’s book Political Literacy, in which he embraces the proposals of Critical Legal Studies, a movement advocating radical reform of the legal system. In his book, Gale tries to combat what he sees as citizens’ widespread ignorance of their Constitutional rights. He writes, “Legal language is the voice of the people. But the public is incapable of making reasoned choices because of its political illiteracy” (163). That day, it seemed clear that one of our illiteracies is our knowledge of suicide, its causes and impact on thousands of people. As a result of writing his book, Gale said that he had decided to “go into the classroom and talk to students about literacy in a different way and make the civic aspects of my courses more important.” I wonder if now Gale would also talk to students about suicide, a topic that has been taboo in our writing classrooms and often goes largely ignored in our discussions of the social aspects of composition.

I knew that Gale would not be afraid to discuss a subject that most people normally consider off limits. The former CEO of a Chase Manhattan subsidiary, Gale had given up both business and law when he started to see the two professions as inflexible—places where words and ideas became static, non-negotiable. Gale had the courage of his convictions, and I admired his disdain for corporate and legal thinking: “The world I came from, particularly the corporate world, is formalist in its approach to texts. It sees texts and words as being freestanding, fixed. It’s the antithesis of poststructural theory. So, I could never go back to being a lawyer—ever again.” At the same time, I wondered how much I was really a part of the communities Gale had belonged to. Gale had achieved prominence in every field he had entered, including composition, and next to him I felt like an underachiever. Yet somehow, in the community forged that day in the wake of Alex’s suicide, I felt I was in the same league as Gale—that we had an important bond that went beyond prestige, influence, or monetary status.

In the first week of a graduate program, students’ time is usually taken up adjusting to teaching schedules and new graduate seminars. At Syracuse, we spent most of our time planning a memorial service, supporting our colleagues, and trying to heal. For weeks, graduate students kept track of each other, knowing each other’s whereabouts minute by minute. As I stepped forward in Hendricks Chapel to deliver Alex’s eulogy, I thought of some of the qualities that made up that community—commitment, support, integrity. In her book Political Moments in the Classroom, Margaret Himley contends that, for composition, a better metaphor than community is the city, with all it suggests about openly negotiating differences and inequities. Yet as a relative newcomer to composition, I felt that the group of people I had come to know well in a few short weeks was the very definition of a community. Though we all had expectations of the professional future we hoped lay ahead for us, we paused at a personal loss, the unfulfilled promise of someone with whom we had hoped to enter the field. The suicide of Alex Weirich made our professional lives at Syracuse profoundly personal, and that event has made me see the intersection of the personal and the professional in a different way. Though we strive toward professional recognition and achievement in composition, the community around us not only celebrates our accomplishments, but also sustains us in times of tragedy and loss.

A Commitment to Questioning: Inquiry and Methodology in Composition Studies—Susan M. Adams

There ain’t any answer. There ain’t going to be any answer.
There never has been an answer. That’s the answer.—
Gertrude Stein

Stein’s words are pasted on the office door of my undergraduate mentor Nancy Simon, theatre professor at Whitman College. She
drew on this, along with a decade’s worth of pictures and cartoons and thoughts, to frame her advice to the incoming freshman class recently as she delivered the convocation address: “[T]rust Gertrude. There ain’t any answers. Only an ever-widening ripple and an ever-deepening plummet of questions. Our search here should be, not for certainty, but possibility.” Yet answers seem to be what our culture—what our education system—demands and strives for.

This resistance to final answers underscores my avoidance of anything labeling itself systematic or foundational. One professor commented in a written graduate school recommendation that “Susan possesses the ability to question even her most deeply held beliefs.” While some may consider this an ability born of privilege—the freedom to question—I see it as the heritage of my working-class family. My parents often spoke of “horse sense,” of that cynicism born of hard experience. Yet that family has also always embraced the arts: my mother, a textile artist, fought the false distinction between art and craft; my father, grandson of a Sousa-style band director, enjoys an eclectic range of musical styles. So I come to the field of composition with a tremendous appreciation for aesthetic and intellectual experience, yet with little trust for what I viewed as academic elitism and its accompanying self-assurance. Too often, the “experts” were wrong—physicians misdiagnosed, educators misinterpreted—and in avoiding such expertise I’ve ended up with little or no sense of rigorous methods or procedures.

Of course, throughout my eclectic humanities career, I imagined that those scholars over there—in biology or sociology or history or political science—were blessed with such rigor, with precise parameters for conducting inquiries. And while many disciplines do provide such built-in rigor, I’ve come to realize that the choice of research focus and method is a richly personal one. Louise Wetherbee Phelps describes method as reflecting temperament, what she refers to as “habit of mind.” Methods, then, those approaches for exploring the meanings of experience, could be considered a kind of autobiographical script. If such scripts are, as Hesford describes them, the “narrative templates that structure experiential history” (xxi), then attention to methodology means that we must, as Phelps suggests, consider the conceptual framework that informs particular procedures, the philosophical orientation and commitment behind the work.

For me, that commitment leads me to an optimistic skepticism, a confidence that difficult questions are worth asking, that strategic understandings (if not final answers) are possible. Here I find common ground with Phelps, who in her article “Cyrano’s Nose: Variations on the Theme of Response” turns her attention to instructor response to student writing, working to develop a “copious, rich, flexible understanding.” Phelps argues that methods flow from questions; that is, we should take our theoretic stance from the question “What do I need to know?” Since Phelps’s research often focuses on understanding a particular event or process (such as composing or evaluation), her methodology draws on phenomenology, or what she describes as “close skeptical observation.” Further, Phelps turns this skeptical observation on her own methods, on her own questions, teasing apart the threads of seemingly seamless inquiries. And while at times this process may seem endlessly introspective, these refined processes can yield interesting—if tentative—explanations. Such flexibility characterized the course on methods Phelps taught at the end of our second year, which challenged us to dig beneath our own and disciplinary assumptions about method. As teacher and student we may disagree on the merits of certain methodological choices, but she has encouraged me to tackle the larger philosophical issues surrounding those choices, issues such as truth, validity, and evidence.

While for Phelps research that starts from an individual’s observations gains validity as part of an ongoing conversation with researchers who share, contrast, and dispute those observations, Margaret Himley places such collaboration at the center of the method itself. Rich and flexible understandings developed through close observation are enacted through “deep talk,” which she describes in her book Shared Territory as “a process of collaboratively generated meaning” (84). This process entails a kind of communal reading in which readers “engage with and dwell in the materiality of that text”—whether that text is a student paper or an archival image (84). Together, observers focus on the construction and negotiation of meaning, encouraging each other to work together to open up, as she stated in an interview, “new angles, new slants, more words on top of words.” This approach seems incongruous with Himley’s role as Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Writing Program, yet that awareness of multiple perspectives is a hallmark of her administrative work, as she listens with equal gravity to the concerns of first-year students, first-time teaching assistants, and professional writing instructors. She models for me the juggling of institutional roles and personal perspectives demanded of administrators (a dilemma Baca tackles in this article) asking questions, listening to responses, and forging flexible, strategic choices. For Himley, that “ever-widening ripple and ever-deepening plummet of ques-
tions" described by Simon emerges as part of a shared process—a challenging and sometimes contentious process—but a communal venture nonetheless.

I see such collectivity informing my attitudes toward authorship and pedagogy, yet my questions always seem to return to me, to what I want to know or understand differently. My interest in subjectivity and identity arises out my own "need to know," my own profound awareness of difference and isolation. That separateness can be painful, and I confess that during Alex’s memorial service I was crying for me, for the loss of friendship and collegiality that had barely begun over an August beer, for the death of my mother only seven months earlier, for the insurmountable distance between Syracuse and Seattle. Yet the community we’ve created out of loss seeks to lessen such distances, to ease isolation through intersubjectivity, through a meeting of what Himley calls the public sides of subjectivity. Community is enacted by recognizing and seeking out others, as Butler describes our cohort in our first semester, always checking in, ready to listen and support.

As I begin to expand that community of scholars—those with whom I work collaboratively, as in this article, and those whose writings enrich and challenge me—my interest in alliances and communities of the past grows. Perhaps I seek a virtual community in the past, women like me. What was it like for a woman to negotiate mid-nineteenth century United States cultures, particularly those cultures generally viewed as antithetical to "true womanhood"? How did women learn and grow as artists and rhetoricians? Syracuse Assistant Professor Dana Harrington asks similar questions of educational institutions, investigating the relationship between ethics, rhetoric, and pedagogical practices. Her multifaceted methodology began to take shape in graduate school, as the study of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu as well as historians of rhetoric allowed Harrington "to look beyond a textual model and focus on practices." Again, the deeply personal "need to know" is at the core of the work: Concerned with the way students traditionally approach texts, Harrington looks to the past to better understand how such practices change over time and how contemporary writing practices are "informed and constrained by the specific institutions in which they are situated." Inquiry, in Harrington’s view, requires a healthy skepticism, similar to my family’s "horse sense," that tells us that the experts may not know best. "For me," Harrington explains, "reconstructing history has to do with letting go of some of the received notions of how we process language and how we process texts." As a graduate student I find this particularly daunting,

as I’m forced to gain knowledge of such "received notions" while simultaneously asking tough questions.

Challenging received notions includes challenging canonical methodologies. Associate Professor Catherine Smith discovered this when the tools she’d developed as a literary and composition scholar proved insufficient to the task of developing courses for government staffers on writing and delivering testimony. "I’d never done any field research, didn’t know about transcription methods, didn’t know how to capture any of the data then how to analyze it," Smith observes, and this "need to know" led her to read widely in discourse analysis. Her focus on writing as a situated activity and her observation of Congressional hearings resulted in her Web site entitled Ordinary Deliberation in America’s Legislature: Hearings in the US Congress. This analysis of institutional discourse focuses on Senate deliberation of a treaty between the US and the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, and Choctaw nations. While I once may have considered some of the practices labeled discourse analysis—coding text, classifying language use, counting words—as limiting and empirical, Smith’s ability to utilize methods without foreclosing or narrowing the inquiry process challenges me to re-envision my own scholarly pursuits. Specifically, in a Social Histories of Rhetoric seminar this past spring, Smith pushed me to instantiate my claims about nineteenth century women rhetoricians by focusing my objects of study and clarifying my analytical tools—challenges I continue to grapple with.

This group of professors and I do not all share a political agenda or even a pedagogical platform. We do share a commitment to questions, a commitment to learning always underscored by the limitations of our scholarship as much as its possibilities. Margaret Himley once observed that composition and rhetoric is a "porous field" more than a discipline. And perhaps such porosity provides the best atmosphere for continuous inquiry. Our scholarship has material implications: Certainty writes with a dark pen, "writing over" as Baca asserts the very lives of those we do not know, or worse, think we do know. Our questions must not stop; to demand final answers—to require certainty—is to risk erasure of unheard or unexplored stories, to end inquiry.
Reconstructing the Work of Administration: Leadership as Activism in a Changing America—Damian Baca

Raised in a multilingual family that endured shifting national and linguistic identities, I became sensitive to the politics of culture at an early age. As a child I secretly thrived on hearing about El Movimiento, the Chicano Movement of the 1960s that brought together women and men across communities to discover solutions to economic and social exploitation. One of the most intriguing themes of this enduring movement is Aztlan, the Aztec homeland narrative that directly confronts the North American biological and geopolitical ancestry of Mexican-origin peoples. But such legacies do not resonate with the dominant imaginary taught in U.S. school systems. Even today, nationalized historiographies and pedagogies constitute a writing over or covering over of entire civilizations that identify the Northern Hemisphere as their native soil. Sensing that Mexican cultures somehow had little to do with a proper American education I learned early on to keep my fascination with the movement to myself, rarely speaking about it, even with my parents. Despite its absence from virtually every level of education, I have grown to perceive El Movimiento and other intersections of discourse and leadership as potential agents of material transformation.

Now at Syracuse University, I find myself facing a collective of intellectuals who have challenged the way writing specialists understand and practice administration as scholarly activity. A felt tension accompanies my interviewing as I realize my graduate education provides me access to an academic world not constructed for my entry. Perhaps these activist administrators also faced similar odds as they first entered the academy. Carol Lipson, associate professor and former Graduate Studies Director, is a strong advocate of shared governance across academic boundaries. Her recent leadership efforts behind an ad hoc committee on part-time teaching led to a university-wide reassessment of part-time faculty salaries, benefits, and professional development issues: "I do tend to get engaged in doing things to help people. Maybe it has to do with the fact that I am the daughter of a former labor leader. My dad was a lifelong socialist and worked hard for the rights of workers and citizens. I’ve got that sense of responsibility in my blood—a responsibility to look at co-workers as members of our community, our family."

Lipson’s connection between the scholastic and personal resonates with my own desire for professional activism. While teaching and earning a master’s degree I actively campaigned for livable wages and affordable health coverage for graduate teachers. Through careful collaboration with the Graduate College, I helped design and implement the first campus-wide Graduate Student Caucus in the institution’s 100-year history. I’ve always been drawn to community-based work that challenges academic territories while applying pressure to the notion of “community” and its collective responsibilities. In this nation’s very near future, as imagined communities break down and as silenced ones grow in numbers and languages, I wonder how faculty and administrators—especially writing specialists—will respond.

In part because of my commitment to graduate education reform, I am drawn to a politically involved academic professoriate. A self-described “faculty-citizen,” Eileen Schell is an intellectual engaged in both academic and public communities: “I’ve always worked to connect what happens at the university to what happens in people’s lives.” Schell’s commitment to the lives of writing program communities is evidenced in her latest book, Moving a Mountain: Transforming the Role of Contingent Faculty in Composition Studies and Higher Education. Co-edited with Patricia Stock, the book features contributors who are working toward transforming labor conditions for part-time writing faculty. In addition, Schell currently works with the Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor, a group that brings together union activists, professional staff, and academic scholars to address the exploitation of contingent faculty. As a former Associate Writing Program Administrator and current Director of Graduate Studies, Schell is concerned with the increasing corporatization of higher education: “Post-fordist production models now make higher education into yet another service provider. Teachers, according to the popular corporate speak, have become ‘learning providers.’” These changes, Schell argues, are cause for concern and action: “How are we, in academia, part of a larger global shift toward a bottom-line production model? How are we to take up these issues so that the working conditions of teachers and the learning conditions of students are not compromised?” For Schell, unionization, coalition building, and efforts to bring these issues to the attention of the public are the places we must start.

I imagine the activist leadership of Schell and Lipson as somehow intertwined with the social movements I began to admire during childhood. In the 1960s, when Indo-Hispano/as defended their communities as valid cultural entities, the life scripts of diverse personalities converged. But because such movements are dependent upon developing and maintaining alliances among different individuals and
groups, this manner of innovative leadership has not historically coincided with traditional academic conceptions of faculty research. Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Writing Program founder, addressed the need for changing the way faculty work is interpreted in her contributions to the report of the MLA Commission on Professional Service. In Making Faculty Work Visible: Reinterpreting Professional Service, Teaching, and Research in the Fields of Language and Literature, the commission argues that “devaluations and omissions are most striking for the service leg of the triad, which encompasses any faculty work that falls outside teaching and research” (2). As departments reconsider expectations of faculty service, Phelps and her co-authors argue that the professoriate may more freely engage in innovative projects that demand leadership across and beyond traditional academic boundaries. Recalling the time when she came to Syracuse to design and implement the Writing Program, Phelps explains her philosophy on leadership as scholarly activity: “The profound identification of rhetoric with material power, and their mutual interdependence and feedback, are inscribed in our consciousness and historical experience” (“Turning” 178). I am drawn to Phelps’s connection between the labor of rhetoric and power as it relates to agency. As a graduate student who is committed to addressing political concerns through collective agency, it is empowering to see scholars administrators engage in leadership projects that eclipse institutional boundaries.

For Rebecca Moore Howard, current director of the Writing Program, blurring academic barriers has been an integral part of her career since her days in graduate school. While teaching writing, English as Second Language, and foreign languages, Howard also served as composition director and worked as an administrative intern in academic affairs. Howard’s diverse graduate student experiences helped her begin to understand the social and cultural formations of larger institutional power structures: “Maintaining the status quo can be an inherent function of administrative pursuits, but it doesn’t have to be.” In order to collapse particular existing foundations, Howard blends collaborative administrative practices with her teaching. Howard realizes that the liberation of students as writers won’t likely be fostered using traditional classroom pedagogies. “Writing administration and instruction are commonly normative,” Howard affirms. “They assume some kind of mythical notion that there are stable and identifiable levels that writers must reach. Such normative curricula often bring students into obedience. I want to bring students toward authorship.”

As I consider the workings of activism and administration woven within these narratives, I recall hearing about the leadership of César Chávez, his formation of the first successful American farm worker’s union in 1962, and how the work of Chávez and others propelled Mexican civil rights efforts. Although El Movimiento is a vital chapter of North American history, the movement is also a small glimpse of the larger social forces of Mestizaje. The Indo-Hispana/o, Mestiza/o people, or whatever name we choose for ourselves, have initiated and participated in centuries of resistance across various Afro-Latin American communities: the 1780 uprising of Túpac Amaru in Peru, the New Mexican Revolt of 1847 in Taos, and the Cuban Revolution of 1959, just to name a few. Additionally, these examples must be considered in context with numerous First Nations Peoples’ and African slave revolts against Western oppression. Despite the academic campaigns of U.S. education, the critical consciousness of Mestizaje endures in the experiential histories of the largest linguistic and ethnic “minority” group now living on the North American continent.

Today, in an age of increasing minority enrollments, globalization, and the corporatization of the university, effective leadership practices continue to be a growing concern. The next generation of proactive administrators is faced with the task of understanding and working with a diversity of American civilizations, many of which historically do not think or write from the imagined centrality of Western cultures. In an always-changing America, writing specialists may need to look far beyond the Greco-Roman horizon for other, more appropriate foundational models of cultural inheritance. El Movimiento, like many other agents of material transformation across the (Latin) Americas, exemplifies innovative collaboration in which activist leaders fought for equity. Is it possible for me to imagine that this same creative energy courses through the reformative administrative actions of the writing community now before me? Perhaps not unlike my ancestral home, my temporary academic residency—the space that many claim so quickly as their “second home”—also struggles toward social and material transformation. As I reflect on the faculty’s theories of leadership and administrative practice, I cultivate an awareness of the intersections of discourse and leadership that hopefully will lead to change.

Conclusion—Adams, Baca, Bain, Butler, and Robillard

In the Fall of 2001, a year after we took “Introduction to Scholarship in Composition and Rhetoric” with Eileen Schell, the five
of us sat across from each other again in Becky Howard's class on authorship. As part of her innovative approach to graduate teaching, Howard had asked us to write a book together on theories of authorship. While that may have been a tall order for a group of strangers, we were already a writing community, a group that had interacted in many different ways.

The previous fall, we had presented a panel together on mapping the field of composition when we hosted a conference with graduate students from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Penn State University. We had been to CCC in Denver and a host of smaller regional conferences. At Syracuse, we'd helped pilot the new Writing Program curriculum, attended fall and spring conferences, sat in many classes together, and socialized at one another's homes. In short, we were a community, a group that had worked closely together, disagreed over issues, gotten to know each other's writing, and laughed at each other's idiosyncrasies.

We had bonded over time, in the hours, days, and months that constituted important places and events for us. And with all uses of time there is an inherent value judgment—time well spent, time wasted, time on our hands. We can sit passively and let time pass us by or we can engage with our own work and with that of others, taking charge of time, making it our own. Most of us found that the time spent establishing our small community at Syracuse—in the Writing Program meeting rooms, in our basement TA offices, in each others' homes—was in fact, time well spent.

One of the key changes for us as a community has been from managed time to time management. We find there is no longer need for an external manager because that person is now part of us: We have internalized the structures of time to the extent that we are self-monitoring. That change began for us late in our first semester with a charge from Howard: In the next three weeks, identify your project; next semester, draft ready; second year, publishable version to journals; third year, article in print. Foucault was right—there is no need for the guard with the gun when guilt and desire will do his duty. Bain and Robillard could, after all, choose to spend more time with their families, just as Baca could decide to spend more time working with his home community, but we all hear the call of professionalization, telling us that those choices would be, indeed, the wrong ones.

The right choices seem to require, instead, merging the personal with the professional as we did in the chapters we wrote for the book on authorship theory. Based on the work done in Schell's "Introduction to Composition" course, Adams' interest in personal subjectivity led her to explore the erotics of authorship while Baca wrote about some of composition's disenfranchised voices. Likewise, Bain concentrated on authorship in writing centers, Robillard on the construction of student authors in the classroom, and Butler on copyright law and plagiarism. While the concept of community suggests unquestioned consensus, Himley's metaphor of the city—with its inherent disensus—might better describe the approaches we took to our collaboration on the authorship book. Adams saw the issues of authorship as a contest over sexual bodies, while some of us questioned the idea that authorship is sexualized in classrooms. Baca interrogated the Eurocentric (or canonical) version of authorship through theories of ethnicity and coloniality while others employed the lenses of feminism and queer theory to confront the notion of the solitary author. We were a community with fractures and schisms, with dynamic views of language and culture that continue to collide and intersect even as we compose this conclusion.

The discord we experienced while writing the authorship book has helped us to realize that the names on the covers of our seminar books are not just names but people with lives that matter, a realization that might have taken longer to learn from surveys than engaging intimately with scholars and with each other. We have learned that reasons must exist behind arguments, reasons that go beyond the professional and enter the realm of the personal—the realm from which our desires, resistances, and political/theoretical stances about life and community emerge. There needs to be a way to access this realm, a means of deeper engagement in texts in the field, presenting not only the theories and pedagogical implications of composition, but also the life scripts of the people writing these texts, the scripts that give them meaning. Engaging in dialogues such as the ones presented in this article, dialogues that attempt to articulate personal and professional stances across shifting times and spaces, is one way to become more conscious of the scripts of others, the scripts of family and community that inform their subjectivities. If we attempt to understand these perspectives, we might have more dialogues than arguments, more meaningful discussions in which we talk with rather than across each other.

As we prepare to come into the field, we are making our way into composition's communities, reshaping our public selves, gathering the courage to speak in our own voices while contesting other voices—individually and collectively—as authors and scholars. In the process,
we have all sought a common literacy: We need to think of ourselves as Authors, as experts with something valuable to say to the field. We speak a great deal in this article about the scripts available to us in our personal and scholarly lives, about the people we were taught to be and not to be. With the future of the professoriate uncertain, we proceed to invent and reinvent ourselves in these faculty narratives that mirror our preparation for future academic responsibilities. We remain committed, with that optimistic skepticism Adams describes, to the possibility of integration and alignment of all these roles—and to the revision of the roles themselves.

Appendix: Interview Questions

Note: Each of us selected from among these collaboratively generated questions in addition to adding questions appropriate to the faculty member being interviewed.

Background
How did you get here—to Syracuse University? What has your path been? What was your training originally in?
How did you "discover" the field of composition and rhetoric? What made you want to pursue work in this field?
How did you initially go about finding what you wanted to look at in depth—was it from theory, practice, a book or article, a professor, or a combination of these and other factors?
How did you decide on a dissertation topic? How did you narrow or focus your interests during graduate school and beyond?
How did or didn’t your dissertation set a research agenda for you that you followed into your faculty position(s)?
What sorts of barriers (institutional or personal) did you encounter in your graduate education and how did you negotiate or overcome them?
How did you keep track of what you read? Your method of notes?
Theories and Methodologies
What intellectual projects drive your work?
If you changed the primary focus of your research over the course of your career, what caused you to start down a new path?
What texts/thinkers have been the most influential for you? The top two or three?
Methodology in our field often seems like a bazaar or a buffet from which researchers pick according to their preferences. How did you go about choosing a method orology? Do you feel the need to justify the choice? If so, how?
How do you view the role of empirical and experimental evidence in your work? What, in your view, is the interaction between concepts and theory on the one hand and empirical observation on the other?
Can you describe the role that empirical observation plays in your work?
Do you or how do you connect the personal and the professional through your intellectual projects?

The Field/Interdisciplinarity/Publication
How do you see the "field"? What is the "field"? How do you "map" it? Where do you locate your work on that map?

Would you characterize your work as interdisciplinary, and, if so, with which fields or areas of study do you feel you are most closely allied?
From your perspective, what does interdisciplinary work look like in our field?
What has been your most important contribution to the field thus far?
If you had to choose one article that best represents the trajectory of your work, what would it be?
What are the most significant challenges you've faced in writing about your area(s) of inquiry?
How has your intellectual focus been influenced, shaped, or changed by the demands of publication and your sense of what it takes to get your work accepted for public action?
How would you characterize the reception your work has received in the field?
Has it generated heated debate, general acceptance, or something else?
In what way has your work been collaborative, and how do you view the practice of collaboration among scholars in our field?
What is the future of the field, from your perspective?
What advice do you have for those of us just entering the field?
Teaching
How would you characterize your philosophy of pedagogy? What thinkers have influenced that philosophy?
How would you characterize your relationship to undergraduate students and graduate education? Likewise with graduate education?
Have or how have you been able to integrate your teaching and your research? What challenges have that integration or lack thereof presented for you?
Administration
How has administrative work been part of your career? In what ways have you integrated your administrative interests with your teaching and intellectual interests? How have they competed with one another?
From your perspective, is administrative work a form of scholarship?
Institutional Life
What has been your biggest challenge in the academic departments where you have worked?

Notes

1 We five plus Alex Weirich formed the incoming doctoral cohort in 2000. We were also joined in this particular seminar by Stephen Paling, a doctoral student at Syracuse University's School of Information Studies, whose work enriches this article.
2 Deep talk is a methodological approach based on the reflective practices developed by Patricia Carini and her colleagues at Prospect School.

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Reviewed by Mary Ann Cain and Joseph Janangelo

Susan M. Adams was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. Her study of 19th century actresses grew out of her work in theatre and forms part of her overall interest in rhetorical analyses of public discourses.

Damiun Baca's research areas are in Latin American subaltern studies, Mexican legacies and technologies of writing, and higher education administration. In addition to his doctoral work, Baca also engages in heritage language preservation at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in northern New Mexico.

Justin J. Bain researches the postmodern turn in composition and its influence on writing center theory and administration and interdisciplinary theories of social space. He has worked as a consultant in writing centers in New York and California for the past eight years.

Paul Butler studies language and literacy theory and issues of style, form, and imitation at Syracuse, where he teaches in the Writing Program and works in curriculum development. He teaches a course on Gay Writing since Stonewall and enjoys teaching Writing 105, the introductory course for freshman at Syracuse.

Amy E. Robillard, originally from Chicopee, Massachusetts, studies working-class literacies and the role of narrative in composition pedagogy. Her most recent work focuses on the role of narrative in composition pedagogy and on the student as non-author in composition scholarship.
Just Off the Mark: 
A Story of Pedagogical Reflection

William P. Banks

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
—T. S. Eliot, “Little Gidding”

Sitting at my desk, plowing through artifacts from a research study I conducted in the fall of 1998, I find myself a bit embarrassed at what I’m reading. Did I really tell this student in my evaluation of his portfolio that he “demonstrates the talents of an average college student”? Or worse, did I really explain his grade only in terms of how his essays lacked transitions, contained tense shifts, and had some ailment I called “pronoun problems”?

I stare at myself in these comments, a past self, a teacher I no longer think I am, and I realize the power of having conducted teacher-research that year as part of the Georgia Southern Writing Project: quite simply, I’m not that teacher anymore, but I might still be if I had not spent the spring semester of 1999 processing the classroom artifacts from that fall, and more importantly, if I hadn’t realized, over the course of the next couple of years, the significance of being a reflective practitioner. My responses to students’ drafts and portfolios now are more generative (rather than gate-keeping) comments; I encourage revision rather than editing, and I look more carefully for what students are telling me in their writing projects and the reflective memos that accompany them. I am here because I was there—and because I was encouraged to reflect on what there meant to me and to my students, and to think of the possibilities of what a here might be.

But I also have to admit that I almost missed some of these points. My agenda at the start of the research project involved the question: “How do student reflections on the writing process influence the writing process itself?” (Obviously, I assumed a direct correlation existed, an assumption I later challenged.) After that fall semester of gathering artifacts, I settled on three student portfolios to examine in a research article. Because I assumed that the reflective work of one stu