We Are Not Alone:

Strategic Coalition Building Across (Contested) Spaces Serving Basic Writers

Overview

Access to higher education has rarely been more important or more contested. In fact, colleges and universities across the nation find themselves no less vulnerable in this fight for dwindling resources than the struggling masses knocking at their doors. In many cases, BW programs are the first to go (Soliday 2002, 2004: Greene & McAlexander 2008; Otte & Mlynarczyk 2010; Bernstein). Long committed to serving writers otherwise denied admittance, such programs draw their very existence from increasingly contested spaces.

We are not alone. In fact BW's very survival may depend on an ability to recognize and build strategic coalitions across the same programs and services with which a great many of us now compete--student support services; TRIO, adult literacy and ESL programs; and others across institutions and communities. These services often identify with core objectives shared by BW programs, including:

- serving the literacy needs of first-generation, minority and other underrepresented students and making campus environments more welcoming and supportive to those students;
- offering individual and small-group support designed to improve retention and graduation rates;
- offering instruction that both recognizes students' existing strengths and promotes intellectual and literate growth, helping students to meet linguistic "standards" while cultivating linguistic and literate diversity.

This workshop will explore "***all*** our relations." When establishing responses to what appears to be the systematic dismantling of basic writing programs across the nation, how can we build strategic coalitions with those we already think of as "our relations" and, perhaps, those we might currently think of as "beautiful enemies"?

CBW 2011 will be a working conference. Expert panelists will prompt participant conversation toward specific recommendations for the future of the Council on Basic Writing, specifically in response to BW's increasing vulnerability. Featured Speakers and "All Our Relations" Panels (presentations drawn from an open CFP, available at CBW website) will alternate with interactive roundtable discussions.

"All Our Relations" Panels will include work studying the building of strategic coalitions around BW, including those not currently associated with BW: WPAs; adult literacy and ELL educators; WAC programs; international and adult-oriented college degree programs; policy-makers and activists.

Interactive roundtable discussions will be designed to move the Council on Basic Writing toward greater focus on serving its current constituents as well as broadening those constituencies and helping those constituents cross institutional, communal and theoretical boundaries. Roundtables may explore: As a field, what are BW's core values and objectives? How can we work with others who may not share all or even some of our core values, and what might all partners involved gain from strategic coalition building? What resources might these coalitions productively target together, and how? What can we do in coalition with under-served communities to improve and sustain access to BW for those who have lost it, especially communities that have lost the most? In what ways can the conversations and innovations of our field engage stakeholders in higher education reform (from taxpayers to legislatures to foundations to the Department of Education)?

In other words, as we've learned in so many recent events across the globe, ***we are not alone.*** It is our hope that CBW 2011 will help us emerge together even stronger in our collective responses to these troubling times and contested spaces—for us, for our programs, for our profession, and—above all—for our students.

Schedule

I	9:00	Featured Presentations (Setting the Stage)	Mary Soliday, SFSU, Rebecca Mlynarczyk, CUNY
II	**9:45**	Panelists and Discussion	Melissa Ianetta and Joseph Turner, U of Delaware Wendy Olson, Washington State University Rachel Rigolino and Penny Freel, SUNY New Paltz
III	**11:00**	Workshop (Mission Statement)	Steve Lamos, University of Colorado-Boulder
IV	**1:00**	Panelists and Discussion	Lizbeth A. Bryant and Miranda Morley, Purdue U-C Michael D. Hill, Henry Ford CC Jessica Schryer, University of Dubuque
V	**2:00**	Featured Presentation (The Local Matters)	Kelly Ritter, U of North Carolina-Greensboro
VI	**3:00**	Roundtable Discussions (Recommendations)	Discussion leaders from above and CBW EB
VII	**4:30**	Group Discussion (CBW Recommendations)	Shannon Carter, A&M-C, and Liz Clark, CUNY

I. Featured Presentation on the History of Basic Writing *(Mary Soliday)*

The first Featured Presentation will outline the history of BW, especially as it played itself out at one of the most famous BW programs in the country.

Mary Soliday is a professor of English and the director of Writing across the Curriculum and in the Disciplines at San Francisco State University. She is author of *Politics of Remediation: Institutional and Student Needs in Higher Education*, which won the 2004 Outstanding Book Award.

Featured Presentation on the Future of Basic Writing *(Rebecca Mlynarczyk)*

In the second Featured Presentation, Rebecca Mlynarczyk will continue setting the stage for our conversations about BW by exploring BW's present and (possible) future.

Abstract: BW professionals are once again being asked to do more with less. Many BW programs have been shut down or forced into community colleges at the same time that colleges are flooded with unprecedented numbers of "non-traditional students." Data from BW students themselves--in this presentation, filmed interviews--starkly demonstrates the continuing need for BW programs despite widespread attacks on by state legislators and university administrators. However, by calling attention to some new models for providing more effective BW instruction within the college mainstream, the presentation will suggest what the future of basic writing may be.

Rebecca Mlynarczyk is co-editor of the *Journal of Basic Writing* and author of, most recently, the book *Basic Writing*, published in 2010 by Parlor Press. She recently retired as Professor of English at Kinsborough Community College, though she will continue work with at City College of New York's Graduate Center. Mlynarczyk's presentation will further situate the conversations to come.

The morning presentations offer us a robust examination of the workshop theme from various historical, activist, innovative and theoretical perspectives.

Questions to consider:
-Studies like Ritter's *Before Shaughnessy* and Soliday's *The Politics of Remediation* remind us BW didn't begin with Open Admissions. What can we learn by investigating different origin stories, perhaps those from which our own institution's BW programs originated?

Given increasingly scarce resources for all Americans, what might BW's future be?

II. Panelists and Discussion[1]

Panels presentations will be 8-12 minutes each, allowing for interactive discussions concerning the questions emerging from these real-world, contemporary contexts for BW.

"Strategic Collaboration Across Disciplinary and Institutional Cultures: Coalition Building, Strategic Instruction, and Grantsmanship" *(*Melissa Ianetta and Joseph Turner, University of Delaware)

[1] For the CBW 2011 conference, CBW developed an open CFP requesting submissions on conference theme. We

Abstract: Please see attached.

"Building Campus Coalitions: A Case Study" (Rachel Rigolino and Penny Freel, SUNY New Paltz)
Abstract: Please see attached

"Basic Writing and Community Colleges: Another Open Admissions Context" (Wendy Olson, Washington State University)

Drawing from data collected on basic writing programs in the state of Washington, this brief presentation provides an institutional critique of the ways in which basic writing is being reconfigured in the 21st-century community college. *Please see attached for full description*

"Building Campus Coalitions: A Case Study" (Rachel Rigolino and Penny Freel, SUNY New Paltz)
Abstract: Please see attached

III: Workshop: Mission Statement *(Steve Lamos)*

This session will overview the ways in which CBW must redefine its mission in the current milieu, while not losing sight of BW's core values, in order to acknowledge the multifaceted work of student support, retention, and diversity being performed by many contemporary BW programs. Facilitated discussion toward a new CBW mission statement will follow.

Steven J. Lamos is Assistant Professor of English, Associate Director of the Program for Writing, and Director of the Writing Center at the University of Colorado. His research interests include "basic writing" theory and praxis, ethnographic writing, scientific writing, and rhetorical theory. His work has appeared in *College Composition and Communication* (2010 and 2008), *College English* (2009), and the *Journal of Basic Writing* (2000), and he is currently at work on a book-length project entitled *In the Interest(s) of Opportunity: Race, Racism, and University-Level Writing Instruction in the Post-Civil Rights Era*.

IV. Panelists and Discussion[2]

Afternoon presentations continue our examination of BW's complexities, this time including including those that balance the (realistic) institution-specific constraints often place on BW programs and classroom practices with serious attention to the national context. ***Questions to consider might include:*** (1) What has already been lost, who has lost it and what can we do to make these losses visible to our colleagues and the general public? (2) What can we do to improve working conditions and opportunities for professional development for all BW and especially contingent faculty?

"Building Coalitions with Student Support Services" *(*Lizbeth A. Bryant and Miranda Morley, Purdue University-Calumet)

Abstract: Lizbeth Bryant and Miranda Morley from Purdue University Calumet, a regional campus, will describe the coalition they have built with Student Support Services and the Writing Center to support the basic writing program. They will describe the connections and how they have developed, lay out the benefits to both the consumers and producers of SI, and share plans for the future development of this coalition. *Please see attached for full description.*

"Basic Writing among the Natives, or How to ~~Change~~ Survive a Program from the Inside" (Michael D. Hill, Henry Ford CC)

Abstract: This presentation will ask how Council on Basic Writing members might seek to advance the mission of CBW within a departmental atmosphere that is apathetic, if not hostile, to progressive basic writing values. It will further ask how CBW members should be articulating and voicing our values both within departments and on local and national stages. Please see attached for full description.

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[2] For the CBW 2011 conference, CBW developed an open CFP requesting submissions on conference theme. We received many wonderful submissions. The presentations below were reviewed by a representative panel according to criteria including relevance to conference theme and overall quality.

Questions to consider (Hill)

1. How do faculty members protect their pedagogical positions within departmental structures wherein those positions hold little cache?
2. How might CBW provide support—emotional, material, pedagogical, information—for faculty members who seek to change their institution's approaches to basic writing?
3. Does CBW have a mission statement? Should CBW members espouse and practice pedagogy consistent with a CBW mission?
4. What practices might we use within our departments, colleges, localities, conference, and nation to advance our collective values?
5. How are pedagogical differences about basic writing pedagogy related to the larger and more current conflicts about the professionalism and authority of teachers? How might the CBW play a role in mediated these differences and conflicts?

"Empowering Basic Writing Faculty through Strategic Relationship Building" (Jessica Schreyer, University of Dubuque)

Abstract. This presentation will provide strategies used for implementing and sustaining positive relationships with contingent faculty to provide them a voice within the English Department and the university. It will cover ways that contingent faculty were encouraged to empower basic writing students within the classroom and throughout the university system through the development of a professional development program and connections to campus services. *Please see attached for full description.*

V. Featured Presentation: "The Local Matters: Defining 'Basic' in Local Contexts" *(Kelly Ritter)*

In the final Featured Presentation, Kelly Ritter will draw our attention to more local matters concerning BW, suggesting that, in fact, "the local matters."

Abstract: This talk will discuss the role of local curricula and learning conditions in the history and development of basic writing. The speaker will argue for an historical re-examination of "basic" writing as a local, rather than national, phenomenon.

Kelly Ritter is incoming editor of *College English* and author of *Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960* (Southern Illinois UP, 2009) and, more recently, *Who Owns School? Authority, Students, and Online Discourse* (Hampton Press, 2010). Her research interests include the history of composition as a discipline, basic writing studies, theory and practice of writing programs, and creative writing, and her work has appeared in *CCC* (2008 and 2005), *JAC, Rhetoric Review, College English*, and the *WPA Journal*. Ritter is Associate Professor of English at University of North Carolina-Greensboro and a member of the Council on Basic Writing Executive Board.

VI. Roundtable Discussions *(introduction by Shannon Carter)*

In addition to the many other purposes of CBW 2011 you most certainly gleaned from above, a major objective of today's activities and conversations is to make CBW as relevant and useful as possible—to you, to your work, and to BW's future. **Our concrete goals are these: (1) a solid, more relevant CBW mission statement and (2) a set of concrete recommendations to CBW Executive Board and membership.**

Roundtable discussion topics may include "Developing Regional CBWs," "Partnering with NADE," "Aggregating Online Resources for CBW," "Toward a CBW Mission Statement," and others that arise during the day. Each table will offer specific recommendations for CBW. We have also asked presenters to bring to the table additional, specific questions worth pursuing.

VII. Group Discussion: Recommendations for CBW (Shannon Carter and Liz Clark)

Reports from Roundtable Discussions (see above) regarding next steps for an increasingly responsive and relevant CBW, and action plans for CBW Executive Board and membership.

Discussion Facilitators[3]

[3] Additional discussion facilitators drawn from presenters listed above.

Shannon Carter	Texas A&M-Commerce	CBW Co-Chair, 2008-2011
Hannah Ashley	West Chester University	CBW Co-Chair, 2008-2012*
J. Elizabeth Clark	LaGuardia CC-CUNY	(incoming) CBW Co-Chair, 2011-2013
Greg Glau	Northern Arizona University	CBW Executive Board
Susan Bernstein	Queens, NY	CBW Executive Board
William Lalicker	West Chester University	CBW Executive Board
Barbara Gleason	City College of New York	CBW Executive Board, incoming *BWe* editor
Peter Adams	CC of Baltimore County	CBW Executive Board
Kathleen A. Baca	Dana Ana CC	CBW Executive Board
Sugie Goen-Salter	San Francisco State Univ	CBW Executive Board
Deborah Mutnick	Long Island Univ-Brooklyn	CBW Executive Board

Full Presentation Descriptions:

"Strategic Collaboration Across Disciplinary and Institutional Cultures: Coalition Building, Strategic Instruction, and Grantsmanship" *(*Melissa Ianetta and Joseph Turner, University of Delaware)

Among the questions you pose in this year's call for the CBW workshop, you ask:

How might CBW help build and sustain productive relations and coalitions across campuses, communities, and regions—especially as these "relations" share and build upon BW's core values?

In what ways can the conversations and innovations of our field engage current stakeholders in the higher education reform movement (such as state legislatures, private foundations, and the Department of Education)?"

This paper uses one example, a successful application to the DOE for an $880,000 Basic Writing curriculum improvement grant, to frame one response to these questions. By so doing, this presentation works to explore the relationship between successes in building coalition and in acquiring resources.

To these ends, the presenter takes a two-part approach to strategizing coalition building. In the first section, she describes how multiple stakeholders from a community college and a flagship research university joined together to create a successful large grant application. Grant participants necessarily drew from the differing disciplinary and institutional cultures they represented. Thus, this project has to navigate the frequently occurring divide between Schools of Education and Writing Programs as well as the disjunction of community colleges and research institutions. This portion of the paper, then, will describe the possible pitfalls of such work and the strategies that foster successful collaboration.

The second portion of this paper will describe the product of this coalition. A curriculum based in a strategy-based instructional pedagogy, draws together the grant participants' classroom experiences, perceived challenges and pedagogical goals. This paper thus concludes with a description of the grant's implementation and the success of the curriculum it is funding. At the end of this presentation then, audience members will have an improved understanding of both large grant development and strategy-based pedagogy.

"Building Campus Coalitions: A Case Study" (Rachel Rigolino and Penny Freel, SUNY New Paltz)

Declining state funds, in combination with higher demand by middle class students unwilling to incur private-college debt, have created what Scott Gelber calls "amoral market forces," which are currently shaping who we teach and what we do at state colleges. While external market forces are powerful engines of change, the internal forces that are re-engineering the State University may prove, in the end, to be even more influential. The Education Trust's 2010 study *Opportunity Adrift* summarizes what scholars such as Katharine C. Lyall and Kathleen R. Sell and James J. Duderstadt and Farris W. Womack have been saying over the past five years: access to many of our state universities is declining. And this is happening not only at flagship universities such as UNC, Raleigh and UMASS, Amherst, but also at smaller, regional colleges such as the one where the presenters teach, SUNY New Paltz.

The presenters will examine the impact of this increasing selectivity upon their campus' Basic Writing Program (called the Supplemental Writing Workshop Program) as well as analyze how their program's intercampus structure has helped to mitigate potential problems. The program's design brings together Composition faculty, tutors and Tutoring Center administrators, as well as administrators from the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). One result is shared costs. For example, a TRIO grant, which the Tutoring Center receives, funds in-class tutors who meet weekly with Basic Writing students. Other results of this collaboration have included the ability to monitor student progress closely without increasing faculty workload; the re-design of a potentially detrimental assessment rubric (summer 2009); and

the increased visibility of the program across the campus.

An important aspect of the presentation will be to suggest ways in which WPAs can garner support for their Basic Writing programs on their campuses, especially during these troubling economic times. Because faculty were careful to document student success since the SWW Program's inception in 1996, a quantitative history now exists of retention rates, student GPAs, and graduation rates. This record—supplemented by research, qualitative evidence, and special campus-wide events and publications—has formed the basis of several conference papers, publications, and workshops, which have, in turn, served to attract the attention of the SUNY New Paltz administration. This summer, the president has approached the Coordinator of the SWW Program about using the program's success as part of a fundraising appeal for private scholarship dollars.

Mina Shaughnessy once wrote, "I cannot imagine a group of teachers who have ever had more to say to one another." Certainly, this observation is as true today as it was in the late 1970s. In recognition of the need for continuing dialogue, the presenters will leave time at the end of their presentation for questions and discussion.
(Note: Presenters will be using PowerPoint as well as Animoto video from a student-reading, which students, faculty, and campus administrators attend each semester.)

Work Cited

Gelber, Scott. "Going Back: The Social Contract of the Public University." *History of Education Quarterly* (2007) 47.3: 368-376. Print.

Basic Writing and Community Colleges: Another Open Admissions Context" (Wendy Olson, Washington State University)

Though most research and scholarship on basic writing highlights programs in four-year institutions, most basic writing instruction occurs in two-year colleges. In light of this discrepancy, this brief presentation looks to map current configurations of basic writing in community colleges. Drawing from data collected on basic writing programs in WA state community colleges, I discuss how the complex relationships among a confluence of factors (institutional, political, material) define and shape basic writing in the contemporary two-year college setting. In particular, I'll speak to the ways in which basic writing pedagogies and programs are being reconfigured in the 21st century.

"Building Coalitions with Student Support Services"

Lizbeth A. Bryant, Associate Professor of English and former Director of Writing, Purdue University Calumet
Miranda Morley, Coordinator of English Supplemental Instruction Program, Purdue University Calumet

Overview:
We will examine how the Supplemental Instruction Program (SI) has been adapted and integrated with our BW program and Writing Center at Purdue Calumet. We will cover 4 areas:

1. Background Info on Purdue University Calumet, the abolition of the BW program, and SI
2. How the WPA connected English 100 with SI and began building this coalition
3. How this coalition has developed and grown to include the writing center
4. Benefits of these coalitions

Background:
Suddenly—our non-credit writing and reading classes that had been in place for over twenty years were cancelled by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Four years ago, he decided that "developmental non-credit classes" would not be taught at PUC; the community college should teach these classes. No one in the English Dept. was warned. The entrance requirements to the university were not changed, and all of the students going into those non-credit classes were "dumped" into 104, our first-semester composition course.

Before this decision, PUC was losing 33% of its students in the first and second semester writing classes to D's, F's, and W's; and putting all of these students in 104 would just decrease the retention. We needed a credit-bearing course for these students. Liz pulled a credit class, English 100, from the inactive course list and with the assistance of the dept. chair put this course up for the next semester. Engl 100 is a four credit class with five contact hours. The other colleges were not happy with this addition of another writing class that would slow down their students. It is possible for students to get two semesters of a first-semester comp course if they need it. We created a stretch class that we will explain in our presentation. Our dept. chair helped us to get the class through the curriculum committee and into place.

Through all of this, Liz had been working with Jackie Reason, the director of the Supplemental Instruction

Program. For six years Jackie has been building a university wide program that puts experienced, upper division students into classes with low retention rates. SIs are recommended by faculty for their writing abilities and their interest in working with peers. Jackie trains the SIs to work with students and teachers. The SI program is funded through University resources and not through the colleges. Liz's dean liked the idea of a support program that cost him nothing.

Before the 100 class, Liz and Jackie had decided to put SIs into English 104. SIs in 104 followed the established model for SIs at PUC. The SIs sat in on the 104 class and held workshops and office hours outside of class for students. Our 104 students didn't come to see the SIs outside of the class. So Liz approached Jackie about adapting the traditional model when the 100 classes came into play. Jackie agreed and also gave us a ¼ time graduate assistant to work with Liz and the SIs. This is the position that Miranda Morley currently holds. Miranda serves as a liaison between the writing program and Student Support Services. She trains and observes the SIs.

Under the new model, English SIs are more than just observers in the 100 class. They work in the classroom as a bridge between the instructor and the students, offering peer support. The SIs are responsible for three main tasks: facilitating in-class group work, offering mini lessons, and their primary task, tutoring writing. The new model has benefits for both 100 students and SIs. 100 students get the benefit of one-on-one interaction with knowledgeable peers. SIs reap a myriad of skills that will benefit them in their transition to career.

We have been collecting data that shows a benefit of English 100 and the SI Program to the retention and grades for our first-year students. Our loss of students to D's, F's, and W's in 104 dropped from 33% to 24% in 100. We're currently working on newer data to provide at the conferences.

Not only are our students more successful in the 100 class, we have built a partnership with other facets of the university. Our presentation will share this story and discuss the facets of building a successful coalition.

"Basic Writing among the Natives, or How to ~~Change~~ Survive a Program from the Inside" (Michael D. Hill, Henry Ford CC)

The infrastructure at Henry Ford Community College is decidedly old school. As a campus locked between the University of Michigan Dearborn on one side, a freeway on another, a river behind us, and Ford Motor Company in front of us, our physical plant is severely limited in its potential for growth and development. As a school, we steadfastly plod on accomplishing our mission—the education of the community—but we plod along constrained by the demands of higher education, the city that speeds beside us, the natural forces that sweep around us, and the needs of our industry. Such diverse, and at times contrary, demands dampen the ambition of our mission and the enthusiasm of those who would enact it. As an institution, we simply hope to meet some of our local demands, stay afloat, and get through the day.

This metaphor of our physical plant, then, applies directly to our policies and programs. Nowhere is this metaphor more clearly evidenced than in our Basic Writing program. Our curriculum, our placement practices, our tutoring, our faculty, and our divisional rhetoric are all held immobile by both the expectations of and our fears of the culture around us. While we have a dedicated full time and contingent faculty, most of the practices of our faculty are steeped in skill and drill and modal writing. Our placement is based on standardized testing of grammar and mechanics. Our help for students outside the classroom centers mostly on surface level issues. Our full time faculty frequently voice disdain at the ability of our students to write correctly and worry that our fellow faculty members in other divisions are finally going to hold us accountable for our students' writing. And, yet, most suggestions for changing policy or programs—from a suggestion to change the required textbook list at the committee level to a plan for creating a writing center at the administrative level—are met with resistance, warning, and rejection. We are, then, as locked into our program as we are into our campus.

Besides the working metaphor here, the issues detailed above are fairly common, particularly among two-year college faculty. As a not yet tenured teacher of writing at HFCC, I want to explore how teachers whose pedagogies and values are in line with the CBW mission can affect change (or not) within a faculty that is resistant to current Comp/Rhet theory. To do so, I will relate some of the efforts I have made to revise our program both within my own classroom and division wide and discuss the resistance these efforts have met. Rather than simply focusing on one instructor's struggles, though, the point of this presentation will be to detail the divisional and institutional context that surrounds the program. That is, I want to explore how long-time faculty members and non-Compositionists react to a new programs and instructors that challenge intrinsic departmental values. I further want to explore how newer faculty members might build coalitions and partnerships amongst more established faculty to develop progressive learning opportunities for at risk students. As such, this presentation will be mostly anecdotal and auto-ethnographic as it seeks answers for how CBW members might work within an atmosphere that is apathetic, if not hostile, toward the CBW mission. Ultimately, then, this presentation hopes to identify what steps are necessary to move the boundaries of a department that sees its values and programs as locked and inviolable.

Questions

1) How do faculty members protect their pedagogical positions within departmental structures wherein those positions hold little cache?

2) How might CBW provide support—emotional, material, pedagogical, information—for faculty members who seek to change their institution's approaches to basic writing?

3) Does CBW have a mission statement? Should CBW members espouse and practice pedagogy consistent with a CBW mission?

4) What practices might we use within our departments, colleges, localities, conference, and nation to advance our collective values?

5) How are pedagogical differences about basic writing pedagogy related to the larger and more current conflicts about the professionalism and authority of teachers? How might the CBW play a role in mediated these differences and conflicts?

Work Cited

Gelber, Scott. "Going Back: The Social Contract of the Public University." *History of Education Quarterly* (2007) 47.3: 368-376. Print.

"Empowering Basic Writing Faculty through Strategic Relationship Building" *(Jessica Schreyer, University of Dubuque)*

This 8-12 minute presentation will discuss strategies used for implementing and sustaining positive relationships with contingent faculty to provide them a voice within the English Department and the university. It will also cover ways that contingent faculty were encouraged to empower basic writing students within the classroom and throughout the university system through the development of a professional development program and connections to campus services.

Carter (2008) explored how basic writing classrooms are often constrained by demands by administration and other faculty to "fix" struggling writers, even though composition scholars understand that "real writing instruction is not about repair work" (2008). This problem has occurred since the inception of basic writing programs, usually to the detriment of student success. Because basic writing is often staffed by contingent faculty who have fewer resources and little voice on curriculum, this fix-it mentality may become pervasive. However, in an era where universities need to enhance retention of all students, and students have more demands to be productive writers, it is crucial that programs and resources are provided for students and teachers in basic writing programs to be successful. Therefore, the English Department should have a strategic investment in empowering adjunct faculty to teach composition in line with current research.

This presenter teaches at a small, private, Midwestern university with a large population of at-risk, minority, and first-generation students who are often placed in the basic writing program. Communication to students about what the program could offer them as college students lacked cohesiveness. Further, many faculty have held on to the view of composition as repair work. Therefore, the basic writing program needed stronger leadership, an improved system to cultivate student success in the program and to retain quality adjunct faculty, and a way to train administration and faculty about appropriate pedagogy for a composition program. This necessitated a move from skill and drill programs to a more sophisticated and research-based program. To effectively implement this program, it was crucial to help connect contingent faculty with campus resources. Training and professional development opportunities were created to help faculty understand the needs of basic writing students as they move through the curriculum. They were encouraged to discuss, share, and evaluate pedagogical strategies for the basic writing population. One important, and perhaps unique, feature of this program was that adjunct professors were often the presenters at the workshops; this helped to validate their crucial importance to the program and recognized their own areas of expertise.

The presenter will discuss the strengths and successes of this approach, as well as needs for improvement. Following the presentation, Writing Center and WAC administrators, and leaders of composition programs, may be able identify ways that they can enhance their outreach and support of contingent faculty to help cultivate student success in basic writing programs. In addition, contingent faculty may be able to identify ways that they could connect with campus resources to help improve their own working conditions and to enhance student success.