



Faculty Writing Support: Emerging Research from Rhetoric and Composition Studies

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*F*aculty Writing Support: Emerging Research from Rhetoric and Composition Studies, edited by Jaclyn Wells, Lars Söderlund, and Christine Tulley, is a recent contribution to the open-access *Perspectives on Writing* series. The series features diverse publications and collections on writing, teaching, research, and administration across contexts.

The collection expands the burgeoning subfield of *faculty writing* studies within Rhetoric and Composition. It adds to a growing body of work, such as Christine Tulley's *How Writing Faculty Write* (2018) and Anne Ellen Geller and Michele Eodice's *Working with Faculty Writers* (2013). With a strong disciplinary stance, its intention, as described in the introduction, is to move beyond anecdotal advice to present empirically grounded research on how faculty write and how their writing can be supported. Chapters feature

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diverse methodologies, mostly including surveys, interviews, case studies, and audio recordings of writing groups, providing "first looks" at research interventions with faculty and advanced graduate students.

Particularly for Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) scholars and administrators, this volume is valuable because it (1) synthesizes current research on how faculty write and (2) foregrounds how institutions can design equitable and sustainable infrastructures on a programmatic, institutional level to support that writing. Readers should note this is not a book about pedagogy in the classroom. Instead, it situates faculty writing as a programmatic and administrative concern, reminding us that faculty writing is central to maintaining the discipline itself.

The book consists of an Introduction, 11 chapters, and an Afterword, and it is structured into two main parts. "Part I: How Faculty Write," presents current research exploring factors that encourage faculty writing, including individual composing styles, the impact of social writing environments, and the nuances of digital publishing. "Part II: How to Support Faculty Writers" examines rhetoric and composition-based support strategies both within and outside of academic institutions.

In Part I, Dana Driscoll's Chapter 1 stands out for its innovative use of Google Draftback, a method that pushes writing research toward new empirical territory, to study composing in real time. The chapter also offers language for supporting graduate writers with three diverse composing orientations to the writing process: Planners, Discoverers, and Hybrid Composers. Written by two of the collection editors, Lars Söderlund and Jaclyn Wells, Chapter 4 highlights the lived experience of Writing Program Administrators, roles often held by TPC faculty, showing how administrative "interruptions" can erode productivity. Paul Muhlhauser and Jenna Sheffield critique the undervaluing of digital scholarship in Chapter 5, suggesting actionable shifts (course releases, inclusive tenure definitions) and advocating for "compositional equity" in evaluating digital and multimodal work, central to TPC scholarship.

In Part II, in Chapter 6, Laura Micciche and Batsheva Guy employ a participatory method to address the needs of faculty of color, highlighting the importance of affinity-based communities and systemic reforms. The authors' approach aligns with TPC's commitment to social justice and inclusive program design. Next, Beth Hewett shifts the lens to external academic writing coaching by studying an LLC in Chapter 7. The chapter's breakdown of clients' needs is relevant to TPC professionals for its blueprint and for a more "industry-focused" perspective on writing support. Charmian Lam, in Chapter 8, turns explicitly to institutional support for TPC genres like grant proposals and job materials, making the

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case for embedding professional writing training into doctoral programs to strengthen career readiness. Finally, Chapter 11, by Kristina Quynn and Carol Wilusz, addresses collaborative writing in STEMM fields, modeling co-authorship between faculty and graduate students to balance mentoring with productivity.

Even though authors foreground writing studies as their primary disciplinary contribution, faculty writing is explicitly conceptualized as interdisciplinary. Thus, this volume's findings and implications can be transferable for faculty developers and administrators across fields and different "hats" in higher education—such as faculty coaches, librarians, WPs, and more. Critically, many of the chapters, including the introduction and the afterword, advocate for change in academic culture, pushing for equitable evaluation of diverse scholarship and recognition of various forms of academic labor, i.e., what counts as publishing for high-stakes contexts. The consistent focus on identity development highlights writing as integral to professional growth and well-being in our field.

One compelling takeaway from reading the book is its meta-writing emphasis. Any writing studies or TPC scholar—at any career stage—will recognize some aspect of their own writing practices or realities reflected in the collection. Readers might identify with the "Planner, Hybrid, or Discoverer" composing identities, or recognize their struggles with aspects of publishing or managing their workload. This is an especially relevant read for PhD students and early career scholars who anticipate a long career in the field, as it leads to reflection on challenges and practices that shape the nature of our work.

For TPC faculty and administrators, the book offers actionable takeaways. First, faculty and students approach writing through different composing styles, and support structures should reflect this diversity rather than enforcing a single "ideal" process. Second, digital scholarship must be valued equitably; TPC programs are well-positioned to advocate for tenure and promotion policies that recognize multimodal, web-based scholarship as legitimate research, as those are often part of our research agendas, teaching, and service. Third, the collection makes visible the overload faced by admin roles, reminding us that administrative labor should be recognized and that institutions must provide structural protections to these roles. Fourth, encouraging community and collaboration, especially in the writing process, is shown to be central for sustaining productivity and well-being. That can happen through writing groups or structured co-authorship, directly informing TPC program design. Fifth, graduate student training should be intentional in preparing students for professional genres, embedding grant proposals, job materials, and administrative writing into curricula. Finally, the book highlights the necessity of committing to equity by supporting faculty of color and other marginalized groups,

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designing writing support with an ethic of care that questions competitive, neoliberal models of academia.

Despite its strengths, the collection acknowledges several limitations. Many studies within the book rely on small sample sizes or specific institutional contexts. This limits applicability across contexts, as it presents a recognized lack of diversity in most of the chapters. For readers who work with STEMM programs, such a lack of representation might be frustrating. Some reliance on self-reported data means that perceptions may not always align with observed behaviors. The book frequently describes its findings as "emerging" or "first looks," indicating that more extensive research is still needed to better understand faculty writing's complexities. Most studies predate GenAI, leaving open questions of resistance or adoption from faculty. Finally, as an interdisciplinary scholar, I was struck by the lack of reference to English for Research and Publication Purposes (ERPP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) traditions. These fields bring decades of data on multilingual and transnational graduate student and faculty writing that could have enriched these discussions. The disciplinary boundaries, in that sense (i.e., solely focusing on Rhetoric and Composition), might be a limitation.

Overall, *Faculty Writing Support* is a significant step in legitimizing faculty writing as an area of inquiry. Compared to the earlier literature, *Faculty Writing Support* broadens the methodological range and brings fresh takeaways, particularly in areas like digital scholarship. It holds significant relevance for TPC program administrators and instructors, encouraging reflection and bringing insights into scholarly writing practices.

References

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