



Living Rhetoric and Composition: Stories of the Discipline

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This collection--of the stories of scholars who have found a lifelong commitment to the teaching of writing--includes the professional histories of 19 rhetoricians and compositionists who explain how they came to fall in love with the written word and with teaching. Their stories are filled with personal anecdotes--some funny, some touching, some mundane. All of the stories are fascinating because they demonstrate how scholars' personal and professional lives intertwine.

These stories also help to situate the scholars, their work, and, importantly, the development of the profession. They reveal how the field of rhetoric and composition is shaped by the confluences of various disciplines such as literary studies, creative writing, philosophy, and education. Of note are the disparate paths and backgrounds that people have taken to achieve their professional stature. The narratives, however, are most revelatory in describing the forging of a discipline as it reasserts its value within the academy and to the students it serves.

Arranged in a loose chronological order, the essays reflect the progression of rhetoric and composition studies from the ad hoc scrambling of post-World War II teachers into a vibrant and growing discipline with more than 70 doctoral programs producing specialized scholars, researchers, and teachers of writing. The chapter authors represent the variety of camps that now comprise the diverse discipline of rhetoric and composition. Whether historian, researcher, theorist, or practitioner, however, what these contributors share in common is being teachers.

The narratives are collected from senior members of the profession so that their stories can be preserved for future generations of scholars and teachers in the field. This collection is not only a record of their contributions and some of the benchmarks in the field, but an opportunity for the writers to provide us with their reflections and retrospection. Keep in mind as you read their stories that they are narratives for the most part, and as such, are transient. They take us to a certain point in the writer's life, but stop while the writer goes on. Still, they provide an orientation to the profession while revealing the scholar behind the scholarship.



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