REVISING INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT, AND REVISION

As the previous chapter indicates, revisions to process model approaches to composition studies begin to open spaces for participation and contribution to become valued in composition studies. In this chapter, I will use one particular course as an example of how the concepts of invention, arrangement, and revision can help us center participation and contribution in composition classes. To make participation and contribution available subject positions for writing-class students, I assume that the move from mastery to analysis, the break between identification of and identification with, shared strategies for the analysis and generation of texts and positioning something other than analysis or critique as the end of composition studies are necessary activities. These revisions occur within a context that has favored limited subject positions for many members of writing classes. As Miller’s work has shown, these limitations are in large part responsible for the creation of a genre of writing (i.e., student writing) that has no structural relevance for the writers outside of its function as a product for classroom evaluation. In her introduction to Feminism and Composition Studies, Susan Jarrett reminds us that

in the 1970s, composition . . . discovered its subject in the students of the writing class and began asking them to tell their stories . . . and teachers began to shift the focus of reading away from literary texts and toward student texts, thus altering dramatically the canon of the writing class (5)

At the same time, however, composition studies continued to position students as “almost always outside the process of theorizing. [Therefore], the discourses of pedagogy speak themselves almost entirely in the absence of students . . .” (8). This theoretical subjugation rests in large part upon the specific ways that students are positioned (or not) in relation to the field itself through the pedagogies that inform their lives. Furthermore, as Stephen Parks
reminds us, and as I have discussed at length in my introduction, these constructions of student writing subjectivity were also part of the larger conservatism of our professional organizations, especially the Modern Language Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (125–153). In addition, Mariolina Salvatori identifies the following structural features of first-phase process movement pedagogies as key “streamlining interventions” that restricted the subject positions available to first-year writing students: “the separation of reading from writing, the proliferation of specialized programs within departments, the reduction of pedagogy from a philosophical science to a repertoire of ‘tips for teaching’” (WTS 174). As the revisions to first-phase process movement models show, these theoretical, political, and structural “streamlining interventions” become obstacles when we attempt to create more inclusive and empowering subject position for students in the field of composition studies.

The ways that the prewrite/write/rewrite model of composition studies creates and maintains these “streamlining interventions” and the restrictive subject positions of “student” in the systems they create must be challenged if we hope to make spaces for the voices of those traditionally excluded in the constructive activities that constitute the field. For within those restrictive approaches, students and teachers can consume and enact a model without any awareness of the disciplinary knowledge that led to its construction: neither teachers nor students read texts from the discipline, except, perhaps, texts that reduced writing pedagogy to “tips for teaching”; they didn’t have to know anything about the field except, perhaps, the assumptions behind the particular first-year writing program within which they taught. These conditions were understood as necessary for two reasons. First, because reading was devalued as a way to learn about writing and, second because it was assumed that the teachers of first-year writing classes often had little to no background in composition studies, no interest in developing a meaningful relationship to the discipline, and no glimpse of the discipline beyond that presented in the textbooks they used. Positioning the field of composition studies as relevant to first-year
writing classes would have been a ridiculous endeavor within this frame. Students and teachers are always already defined in relation to what they are assumed to lack: consciousness about and/or interest in composition studies, exposure to the discourses of the field, knowledge about the field more generally, and, ultimately the ability to participate in and contribute to the field in ways that challenge the positions that define and are defined by those lacks. Continuing to configure first-year writing courses as isolated spaces within which the need for the field simultaneously emerges and is repressed through the prewrite/write/rewrite model of process is questionable at best. Changing texts, or assignments, or writing practices in ways that do not alter basic assumptions about the literacy histories informing the lives of the people who constitute the field blocks approaches to composition studies that open spaces for participation and contribution. Stephen North has discussed this matter in relation to graduate studies in English, outlining the importance of graduate students in the construction of curriculum and the need for graduate studies to bridge the gaps between and among the territories of English Studies, and illustrating the ways discursive practices in graduate programs must change. But first-year writing students often face even more detached relationships with the discipline than do graduate students. This is the work that we have deferred, that we must now take up if we are to create a material reality within which our profession enacts many of the liberating and inclusive promises embedded in its history.

Creating introductions to writing that are based upon more realistic assumptions about first-year writing students’ and teachers’ positions as literate people who can participate in and contribute to, rather than merely consume or enact, composition studies is, I believe, vital to the profession and to the individuals whose lives are touched by the profession. For me, moving away from the prewrite/write/rewrite model as a teacher, scholar, and program administrator has been a vital part of beginning to open these spaces. I want to be clear that it was never my goal to move away from a commitment to exploring, researching, theorizing, and teaching writing as a process. Instead, my desire was, and is, to make composition studies more relevant to classroom pedagogies
and practices, and classroom pedagogies and practices more relevant to composition studies. As Salvatori reminds us, this is not merely the question of whether reading should or should not be used in the composition classroom. The issue is what kind of reading gets to be theorized and practiced. . . . (1) Which theories of reading are better suited to teaching reading and writing as interconnected activities? (2) What is the theoretical justification for privileging that interconnectedness? (3) How can one teach that interconnectedness? 

(165–66)

For me, creating an approach that bridges the gap between reading and writing without setting aside the idea of process is vital as we respond to questions about the places and functions of reading in first-year writing classrooms.

If our selection of texts and our theoretical justifications for those choices fail to center composition studies in the composition classroom in ways that allow members of those writing classes to see the interconnectedness of their work and the field, for example, how can we expect the interconnectedness of reading and writing to be explored in and learned through the study of composition? This is a serious issue. Like many compositionists, I spent a short time at the beginning of my career thinking that my professional responsibility required me to start from the assumption that most teachers in first-year writing programs did not know the theories, issues, and practices of composition studies. I thought my job was to create pedagogical guidelines/tools, curricula, and program goals that did not require them to explore any of the major concepts of the field. In an odd way, and without meaning to do so, I was closing down opportunities for collaborative explorations of the history of literacy, the history of writing studies, and composition studies in general to become a central activity in the teaching of first-year writing for faculty in the same ways textbook approaches that I have outlined in chapter two closed down these opportunities for students. In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on how I have opened the possibility of positioning students as something other than consumers of models. Chapter four will address the issue of opening the same possibilities for faculty of
first-year writing classes through collaborative curriculum design and faculty development activities.

FROM PREWRITE/WRITE/REWRITE TO INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT, AND REVISION

I would not have begun to understand and challenge the assumptions behind the ways I had been trained to think about my role as a compositionist within classroom structures had I not grappled with these issues as a teacher of writing who is committed to opening spaces for participation and contribution to her students. That commitment led me to create a frame within which participation and contribution could also drive curriculum and faculty development. The approach itself grew out of an experience I had when teaching a “Theories of Grammar and Composition” course to English secondary education majors. (I was back at my undergraduate institution teaching the same course that had led to my own introduction to the field and to that important invitation to attend my first CCCC.) In that class, students read Peter Elbow’s Writing With Power and Jonathan Kozol’s Illiterate America to begin our discussions about the connections between the teaching of writing and our assumptions about teaching and learning. It became clear through class discussions that many of the students sensed that there were major differences in the ideas behind these texts, but that they were unclear about exactly what those differences were and/or how they could be read backwards to the assumptions driving their ideas about literacy, students, and the creation of writing pedagogies. To facilitate our progress, I asked students to join me in analyzing the invention, arrangement, and revision activities and strategies informing the texts. This felt a bit like heresy at the time. After all, the idea that we could learn anything about writing, especially about writing processes, from an analysis of products was not exactly encouraged in my education. In addition, I had to move away from the prewrite/write/rewrite model to open the discussion of disciplinary issues more generally in the classroom. We could not get at these connections just learning about prewriting strategies that may or may not have informed the texts of our literacy lives—especially since prewriting
strategies were often prescribed in ways that favored activities that could not be discerned from the reading of products. I presented the following six questions and clarifications of them for our consideration:

- What is invention? (What did the writer have to do to create the text?)
- What’s being invented? (What ideas, beliefs, world-views, and actions does the text call up?)
- What is arrangement? (How are things being put in relationship with one another?)
- What’s being arranged? (What’s being put in relation to what?)
- What is revision? (What is/has to be done to accomplish those changes?)
- What’s being revised? (What changes is the author trying to inspire?)

What became clear to us right away was that the connections between what the author did to create the text and the activities proposed as solutions for writers and larger literacy problems were not always identical, or even necessarily compatible. But the most interesting thing that happened was that the exercise made it (painfully) clear that the notions of prewriting, writing, and rewriting presented in the composition materials we read represented only very limited versions of invention, arrangement, and revision informing the field of composition studies. For example, while it was easy to see how experience, reflection, a variety of kinds of primary and secondary research, and connection-making across areas of research were big parts of Kozol’s process, it was not clear that any of these activities informed Elbow’s process. In fact, it would be impossible to talk about Elbow’s process at all, except perhaps to guess which, if any, of the strategies he instructs others to use might be informing his own process or to assume that he had read the twelve books in the “select annotated bibliography on publishing,” and those from which he occasionally quotes (375). This got me thinking more generally about how dominant versions of “writing as a process” limited invention, arrangement and revision in the ways Richard Young, Janice Lauer, Sharon Crowley and others
discuss previous historical restrictions of the art of invention. That is, the ways that composition students were invited to participate in composition studies through construction of the prewrite/write/rewrite pedagogies of the first-phase process movement may have represented a new version of restricting students’ (and teachers’) access to the possibilities of participation and contribution in the same ways that previously critiqued models restricted their access to these functions of literacy. One of the most significant outcomes of the limitations we noticed was that student writing was restricted primarily to the revision of student texts, while both Elbow and Kozol could claim to be attempting to revise things like writers’ processes, our understanding of the causes of illiteracy in America, and so on. The students were, of course, shocked and angered by the idea that they had been so strongly educated to construct such a limited idea of themselves as writers, and many were deeply concerned about reproducing this “student writer” in the classrooms they would enter as teachers.

Throughout that semester, I grew increasingly aware of why reading, especially the kind of reading that focused on texts as things we could learn about writing processes from, became a dangerous activity in the first-phase scenario. Reading texts designed specifically for use in the composition classroom as texts that call up certain writers and certain kinds of writing had to be deferred for that writer and “student writing” to emerge. This deferral shuts down many of the opportunities for discussing the issues, concerns, methodologies, and ways of writing that constituted—and still constitute—composition studies. It, therefore, also defines teaching and learning more generally in very limited ways.

I am reminded of these students’ reactions and initial insights every semester when I present the six questions listed above to first-year writing students, who are understandably confused by the idea that we will use the same questions to think about reading and writing as we progress through the semester. In fact, a group of students in one of the honors sections of the first semester course recently asked me if I had made up the terms invention, arrangement, and revision to drive them all crazy, or if they had any connection to the other things they knew about writing (we
were discussing Resnick and Resnick’s “The Nature of Literacy,” and they had tried to respond to the six questions as part of their preparation for the second day of class. I asked them what they knew about prewriting and in unison they responded, “outlining and brainstorming.” A couple of students added clustering and journaling to the list. I asked them about organization, and again, in unison, they gave me the outline for a five-paragraph theme. I asked them about revision, and they were stumped until I asked them about editing and rewriting to meet audience expectations. As I explained that the prewriting strategies they named were small pieces of invention, that the organizational plan they named was one small slice of the larger issue of arrangement, that the rewriting strategies they named were a small slice of the larger picture of revision, they became somewhat agitated. At this point we had already been discussing the invention activities and arrangement patterns informing the essay we had read for that class; they did not want to discuss revision. They weren’t ready. They wanted to know why there were such big differences between the writing activities informing the essay we had read and those they had learned and assumed would serve them well throughout their college careers. They were honors students, after all, and their advanced placement course had claimed to be preparing them for college writing assignments.20 As we discussed the different things that “being prepared” might mean, for example—being able to do the same thing over and expect a successful outcome versus being ready to learn new ways of doing things—they became very quiet. One of the women in the class noted that the kinds of literacy discussed in the article included both of these ideas—literacy as a process of learning limited skills and literacy as the ability to function across lots of different situations—and she asked if that was why I had assigned the article. Another student wanted to know why “no one told us about this before,” (a common question when I use this approach in all kinds of first-year and upper-division writing courses). Another student asked if this was why the authors of the article were against the “back-to-basics” movement. Another student asked if the class would be expected to use some of the writing strategies informing the article when they wrote their own
papers, and we were off. Reading was no longer just about knowing what the article said and being able to represent that accurately, and writing was no longer about the reproduction of familiar ways of making meaning. Far from making things easy, the whole conversation had made things difficult. The students had asked me to prove the validity of the method in relation to their past experiences, future needs, and upon disciplinary grounds (they wanted to know how this method related to anything else they knew about writing and reading). At one point, a student had responded to one of the questions about arrangement by outlining the content of each section of the article, and when I asked her to tell us how each section was put in relationship with each other, she had become angry. She knew what the sections said and accused me of saying that her accurate repetition of that material was unimportant. As I repeated what I had said and apologized for making her feel that her comment was unimportant, other students began to realize the amount of distance the method put between them and the way of responding to readings they were used to, good at, and rewarded for in the past, and they began to worry about grades. Grades are a serious matter for our honors students, most of whom would not be able to attend the university without the financial support of the honors scholarships they receive and can keep only if their G.P.A. does not fall below 3.4. All of these issues arise in some form or another when invention, arrangement, and revision are the focus of the class.22

Equally important is the way that focusing on invention, arrangement, and revision invites students and faculty in first-year writing classes to read the discourses of composition studies. For example, the first formal writing assignment in my first-semester writing course is often a literacy autobiography. We read many literacy autobiographies and excerpts from literacy autobiographies as we think about the assignment. Examples of such readings include excerpts from Mike Rose’s Lives on the Boundary, Linda Brodkey’s “Writing on the Bias,” Richard Rodriguez’s “The Hunger of Memory”, Jennifer Lawler’s “The Screenwriter’s Tale,” and Suzanne Sowinska’s “Yer Own Motha Wouldna Reckanized Ya: Surviving an Apprenticeship in the ‘Knowledge Factory.’” Our analysis of the texts allows us to
identify some of the features of literacy autobiography without positioning mastery of those texts as the goal of our readings. Instead, our readings can lead to some observations about the ways literacy autobiographies are structured, the possibilities and limitations of those structures and the versions of the world they produce, and the ways that the invention, arrangement, and revision strategies therein might facilitate and/or obstruct our own processes. In the construction of their own individual literacy autobiographies students can practice some of the ways of making meaning we saw at work in others’ texts and/or engage other strategies and/or both. When we turn around to make student literacy autobiographies the text of the course later in the semester, then, we can use an analysis of invention, arrangement, and revision to generate a picture of the starting places, movements, and relevance of those narratives to composition teachers, students, theorists, indeed, to composition studies. We can also discuss the ways that certain invention strategies support some narratives better than others, what is invented through the narratives, and the ways that the work invents new meanings, ideas, visions, etc. We can also move to discussions about invention, arrangement, and revision that inform the discipline. Articles about invention as discovery, insight, creation, etc. can be introduced as these issues arise in the course of our discussions. Discussions about form, organization, and the form/content relationship also become relevant, as do discussions about audience and revision. The texts of the discipline enter into the discussion as parts of a conversation rather than as prescriptions for practice. Students can enter into those conversations as writers and learners who have ways to understand, respond to, and contribute to those conversations. As the field becomes relevant to the classroom, the discourses created by those who constitute the class become relevant to the field.

Because students are tutoring people in general education diploma (GED) classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and adult basic education (ABE) classes run by a local community literacy agency (more about this in the next chapter), they also see how the literacy histories of others construct and are constructed upon notions of literacy, access to literacy education,
and other issues that deeply affect the reading and writing activities available to a variety of people. As a result, these students can tell us much about the local literacy context of the city where the university is located, and this knowledge gives them a variety of ways to contribute to conversations about university/community relationships, the role of activist-based work in the academy, the implications of using university resources (including their own time) to support untraditional teaching and learning activities, etc. They can contribute much, and many of my students have, by presenting at conferences, at academic and non-academic writing workshops, contributing overtly to my own writing processes and products in significant ways, and participating in discussions about curricular reform of the first-year writing program at the university. That they have limited access to the professional conferences, print and electronic environments that constitute the profession is a problem that limits their ability to communicate with members of the profession, but this does not limit the relevance of what they have to say to the profession. Even though we explore and confront the ways that student discourse has been, and largely still is, configured by the profession as something to talk about rather than as something to listen to, and even though we can see how the construction of the student as a writer and reader whose texts and literate activities live outside of the discourses that define the material realities of their literacy educations, and even though it becomes clear that this positioning of student writers and student writing contradicts much of what we have been told writing will give people access to, we do not, in general, come to believe that our texts are irrelevant to the profession. Again, this is partly because we do not need to identify with these restricted notions of student literacy to be successful. If some of our potential audiences (e.g., composition scholars) create a professional scenario within which constructing theoretical, practical, and pedagogical models that valorize teaching students in ways that make them the audience of composition studies without making the profession an audience for the student work it calls into existence, we need not reproduce this scenario through our own work and lives. Indeed, part of what we learn about is who gets opportunities to participate
and contribute, who does not, and why. Neither the field of composition studies nor education in general is bracketed from these conversations. In the remainder of this chapter, I will present some student responses to questions about invention, arrangement, and revision to illustrate more fully the ways that such analysis invites transitions that help make composition studies the subject of composition classes while maintaining the process movement’s focus on student discourse and diminishing the great divide between student discourses and the field of composition studies.

FROM PREWRITING TO INVENTION

Obviously, what materials we choose to use in our writing classes affect how near to or far from composition studies we situate the members of those writing classes. And while my own definition of the field is broad and flexible, including the study of literacy more generally, I do believe that we must challenge the notion that all discourse has an equal place in the first-year writing classroom. This challenge must be based, in part, on the fact that many of the teachers of those courses themselves have little or no background in the field and, therefore, must be considered learners and readers within the contexts of composition studies. Selecting materials that make the field available to the faculty, students, curricula, and other structures of higher education will, I believe, open spaces for participation and contribution to become central to our work. As Janice Lauer notes in “Rhetorical Invention: The Diaspora,” “one of the long-standing conversations in composition studies has been the relationship between the creative and interpretive acts, between heuristics and hermeneutics” (10). Within contemporary critiques of composition studies, this conversation has taken decidedly divisive turns, often pitting rhetoric against composition and theory against discourses about teaching. In “Rhetoric and Composition as a Coherent Intellectual Discipline: A Meditation,” C. Jan Swearingen proposes that within these recent divisions “as institutions, and institutional practices, rhetoric and composition seem poised for segregation, or divorce” (21). But this “segregation” is possible only when invention is conflated within pedagogical approaches that replace it with prewriting. Many students come to
us with this limited notion of invention, one that positions them primarily as student writers who are consuming and adapting to a concept of “writer” that, like prewriting, offers only a limited view of the possibilities for invention, partly by positioning reading as a process through which we cannot expand our ideas of what it means to be a writer. These restrictions become apparent when we raise the issue of invention in classroom contexts. Here, for example, are the responses to questions about invention in Resnick and Resnick’s “The Nature of Literacy” that one group of students constructed together on the second day of class:

**What Is Invention?**
Read and review previous scholarship on the issue from relevant sources.
Develop a knowledge of things (e.g. French history, etc.) in the article.
Put literacy artifacts and history and politics in relation to each other in each time period (also arrangement).
Develop a working knowledge of contemporary practices (e.g., “back to basics” movement).
Define what literacy means/is in each historical context.

**What is being invented?**
A picture of the differences among literacy practices and definitions across cultures and time periods.
The necessity to update the ways in which literacy is taught moving from elite to general public.
An educated argument using facts to persuade the audience.
An argument to both keep high literacy standards and educate all citizens.
The idea that even though U.S. has come a long way, many are still not literate.
A picture/scene in which “back to basics” movement is not appropriate for current U.S. context.

These responses allow us to begin a discussion of literacy and writing that makes what might otherwise seem like distant material close to our own experiences as writers and readers. As one
student noted, the article talks about how certain kinds of literacy are kept away from “people like us” (i.e., those not from the upper classes) and the analysis of invention shows in more concrete ways what exactly is being kept away from us—certain ways of creating understanding, ways of making arguments about our own literacy experiences and what they do and do not allow us to “get practice doing.” Another student made the comment that this seemed somehow like a bad thing to be doing—like “sneaking into writing.” These are not unusual comments for the second day of class when I use this approach. Students begin to feel both afraid of what this might mean in relation to the ways of reading and writing they have become comfortable with and intrigued by the possibility that they may have cracked open some big literacy mystery. The fact that they have done the analysis themselves often becomes an issue. What if they aren’t “right”? What if there are negative consequences to having the insights that result from the analysis? For example, what if they try these methods as writers and teachers punish them for trying to write like “real writers”? These are issues we will deal with all semester, inventing ways to understand different writing contexts and situations, others’ expectations of us in those situations, and a wide variety of literate ways to construct our responses to those expectations (e.g., acceptance, rejection, redefinition, etc.). As Jarrett notes, “in the move from classical invention to composition’s brainstorming, freewriting, and so on, there is a persistence of the assumption that knowledge is in the mind of the writer—we just have more ‘inventive’ ways of getting it out” (“Disposition” 70). But as we know, and as our work with students illustrates, confining writers to the knowledge in their minds—even though that may be what students expect of writing classes—restricts their ability to learn about writing (and about the knowledge in their minds more generally) from the texts they read, and it maintains a form of student writing that cannot hope to participate in and contribute to composition studies in meaningful ways.

FROM ORGANIZATION TO ARRANGEMENT

If we restrict our understanding of arrangement to the order of things within the text and/or to perfecting the forms of student
writing, we restrict knowledge about arrangement in the same ways that process-model configurations of prewriting restrict invention.\textsuperscript{23} In “New Dispositions for Historical Studies in Rhetoric,” Jarrett “proposes using the term [disposition] in an analogical and imaginative way to inquire into the arrangement not only of ideas and language in texts but also of people and images in public spaces” (70) to “extend the inquiry beyond the immediate rhetorical situation to social relations more generally” (71). If, however, we focus on literacy in the composition classroom and ask questions about arrangement, we make the relationship between and among literacy, lived lives, and the structures that inform those lives the content of the composition classroom. If we double the question so that both what is being arranged and the methods of arrangement become clear, we can explore these relationships without losing a focus on writing. Such exploration is vital if we and our students are to understand the ways in which literacy refers to more than words on a page. Here are the students’ responses to the arrangement questions about the Resnick and Resnick article (remember, this is only the second day of class and the first time students had practiced the method).

**What is Arrangement?**
Chronological historical periods
how the literacy program worked
how it was not successful for general population and won’t work now
Put literacy standards in relation to personal accounts of individuals’ literacy levels
Put each past practice in relationship to today’s standards and needs.

**What’s being arranged?**
Literacy criteria and social needs of the time are being put in relationship with one another.
Current literacy standards are being put in relationship with current practices.
Past influences of church, government, and military are being put in relationship with current influence of these organizations.
Class standing is being put in relationship with literacy levels.
Past literacy models are being compared to current literacy models.
Current elementary literacy level is being compared to level at the end of the 19th century.
Teaching methods are being put in relationship with consequent literacy levels.
Quality of education is being put in relationship to capacity for individual growth.
Current ideas about literacy are being put in relationship with expectations for future needs.
Literacy levels are being put in relationship to standards/objective for literacy.

As students noticed, the relationships under discussion in the first part of our inquiry into arrangement do not always give information or a picture of reality with which they can or wish to identify. Their reactions revolved around one woman’s comment that the analysis had revealed “the big black dark secret of why we think what we think.” Students could relate the class-based restrictions they were reading about to their own experiences as student writers, even though they did not all necessarily identify as members of the economic classes being discussed in the article as having limited access to literacy education. This opened the door for discussions about the ways literacy could be used both to create and to close down opportunities for meaning-making (especially making meaning about one’s own experiences), could operate both as an empowering and as an oppressive practice in any given historical moment, and could invite reactions other than unidimensional identification. In fact, the article itself is an exercise in identification of that does not call for identification with everything it presents, especially the historical practices and the ideologies upon which they rest. Our discussions of revision more clearly reveal how this break between identification of and identification with becomes relevant to writing.

FROM REWRITING TO REVISION

Even during our first discussions of the Resnick and Resnick article, students see that what the authors are supporting and what they are challenging are in dialogue with one another. They can see that
the text invites us to revise our ideas about some of the main issues under discussion, and that revising those ideas implies other changes that must take place outside of the text. In addition, students begin to rethink their own literacy lives, often asking for time to discuss and identify the standards and expectations informing their own experiences. Such discussions often lead students to reflect directly upon the kind of analysis they are being asked to do for the class, especially as that activity relates to standards and expectations for their work. We can then begin to revise assumptions about what reading and writing instruction is/should/can be and to create a shared understanding of the goals for this stage of their literacy development. In fact, we can use the questions about arrangement to explore these issues and to discuss and practice the recursive and dialectical nature of the process of making meaning more generally. What kinds of things—criteria for evaluation, standardized tests, texts, etc.—did your literacy education put you in relationship with in the past and how were these relationships constructed (for example, through reading and writing assignments)? These conversations position students as people with information important to the course. They allow students and teachers to talk together about the study of reading and writing in ways that develop knowledge about the similarities and differences between and among their past ideas of themselves as literate human beings and other possible ways to think about the relationship between literacy and their own lives as individuals and members of larger social structures (educational, disciplinary, etc.). As student responses indicate, exploring issues of revision outside of their relationship to the rewriting of student texts opens many issues. Here are the student responses to questions about revision.

**What is revision?**

They wrote said article
Presentation of historical methods that aren’t like ours
Used lots of different ways to present info (prose, charts, statistics)
Creating/presenting techniques in relation to how much they help us reach stated goals.
What is being revised?
Our idea of literacy—that lots of people are not literate when really our standards are just extremely high now
The idea that the back to basics movement is sufficient for educating towards literacy in our society today.
The idea that “functional” literacy can’t get us where we want to be
The idea that any single historical definition of literacy is better or more appropriate for the current situation

As this one set of responses suggests, this approach to reading also calls for discussion of the connections between and among invention, arrangement, and revision. The focus on historical materials, for example, plays a role in invention, arrangement, and revision. The following chart makes these connections clear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is invention?</th>
<th>What is Arrangement?</th>
<th>What is revision?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and review previous scholarship on the issue from relevant sources.</td>
<td>Chronological historical periods</td>
<td>They wrote said article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a knowledge of things (e.g. French history, etc.) in the article.</td>
<td>how the literacy program worked</td>
<td>Presentation of historical methods that aren’t like ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put literacy artifacts and history and politics in relation to each other in each time period (also arrangement)</td>
<td>how it was not successful for general population and won’t work now</td>
<td>Used lots of different ways to present info (prose, charts, statistics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a working knowledge of contemporary practices (i.e., “back to basics” movement)</td>
<td>Put literacy standards in relation to personal accounts of individuals’ literacy levels.</td>
<td>Creating/presenting techniques in relation to how much they help us reach stated goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what literacy means/is in each historical context.</td>
<td>Put each past practice in relationship to today’s standards and needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current elementary literacy level is being compared to level at the end of the 19th century.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching methods are being put in relationship with consequent literacy levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality of education is being put in relationship to capacity for individual growth.

Current ideas about literacy are being put in relationship with expectations for future needs.

Literacy levels are being put in relationship with literacy standards/objective for literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s being invented?</th>
<th>What’s being arranged?</th>
<th>What’s being revised?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A picture of the differences among literacy practices and definitions across cultures and time periods.</td>
<td>Literacy criteria and social needs of the time are being put in relationship with one another.</td>
<td>Our idea of literacy—that lots of people are not literate when really our standards are just extremely high now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The necessity to update the ways in which literacy is taught moving from elite to general public.</td>
<td>Current literacy standards are being put in relationship with current practices</td>
<td>The idea that the back to basics movement is sufficient for educating towards literacy in our society today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An educated argument using facts to persuade the audience.</td>
<td>Past influences of church, government, and military are being put in relationship with current influence of these organizations. Class standing is being put in relationship with literacy levels.</td>
<td>The idea that “functional” literacy can’t get us where we want to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An argument to both keep high literacy standards and educate all citizens.</td>
<td>Past literacy models are being compared to current literacy models.</td>
<td>The idea that any single historical definition of literacy is better or more appropriate for the current situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idea that even though U.S. has come a long way, many are still not literate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A picture/scene in which the back-to-basics movement is not appropriate in current U.S. context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When students and teachers explore the connections between and among the implied activities behind texts, the relationships created by texts, and the revisionary purposes of texts, they begin to see process and product as connected endeavors. Rather than pretend that any process can lead to any kind of text, or that any one process can lead to any kind of product, or that any product is not the result of serious decisions one makes about process, students and teachers can make the exploration of such issues the content of their writing classes. In addition, many of the issues theorized as important to composition studies come to the foreground when texts are read as instances of process: purpose, purpose/reader relationships, methods of exploration, organization, history, known/new relationships, and different ways to present information to name a few. Obviously, different texts will foreground different concerns just as different assignments will offer (or disengage) opportunities to explore and practice different ways of writing. When we move from prewrite/write/rewrite models to invention, arrangement, and revision, we can select texts that raise the concerns of composition studies in composition classrooms according to the contextual needs of those classrooms without effacing the field. Again, this approach does not assume that the field is fenced in and that only certain parties and their discourses have the key to the gate. Instead, it begins from the assumption that all members of the class can participate in the field and have the potential to contribute in meaningful ways. This is, perhaps, the most important reason for moving away from the prewrite/write/rewrite model of process and toward approaches to composition studies that focus instead on invention, arrangement, and revision. Whereas the first set of terms present composition studies as settled by the time it gets to the level of classroom practice, the latter set centers composition studies as the area for exploration in the composition classroom. Within the larger context of our literacy histories, prewriting emerges as a very small representation of invention, writing emerges as a very limited notion of the issues surrounding matters of arrangement, and rewriting emerges as a constricted notion of revision.
This is not a traditional construction of disciplinarity or of the terrain of a field. In such scenarios, turf wars always already leave out the voices of many whose literacy lives are and will be affected by the environments created by the conflicts, partly as a way to claim rights to defining what the relevant conflicts will be. The contradictions and conflicts between our own writing practices and those we hold up as vital components of the teaching of composition are buried within our restricted constructions of students (and teachers) as writing subjects with little to contribute even though they constitute the majority if we count first-year writing as part of the field. Even a cursory look at the professional discourses of the field and at popular writing textbooks will illustrate this point. If we rethink the relationship between the discourses of composition classrooms and the discourses of the field, we will be able to include the discourses of the field in composition classrooms, and, consequently, to understand the relevance of classroom discourses to the field in new ways. (Re)positioning invention, arrangement, and revision of discourses about literacy as we continue to focus on writing as central to our endeavors is a transitional act; it begins to create the possibility of active agency for members of writing classes who have previously been constructed as concerned about—and in need of—a deferral of the discipline as readers and writers.

Because invention, arrangement, and revision were restricted in prewrite/write/rewrite models of composition that dominated the dissemination of writing as a process in first-phase movements, a more inclusive notion of these major terms, and of the discourses of the field more generally, must now come to inform our practices. By creating such transitions, we are positioning nearly all of the work of the field as important to our understanding of the assumptions, histories, habits, traditions, rebellions, conflicts and common grounds that inform the literacy lives of the people who constitute the field. Consequently, the work that occurs in the field can contribute in both broad and specific ways as we struggle to make spaces for new forms of participations and contribution. For example, within this frame the literacy histories of our students, the similarities and differences of those histories within and across our classes, the cultural, historic, economic, and political factors
informing their constructions, the narrative patterns they create, and their place in the discipline are as important to our work as are the histories, ideologies, pedagogies of the field that we have tended to create outside of those histories. At the same time, and in a parallel way, the focus on literacy makes the history of writing broadly conceived relevant to the discourses of our students, and it invites them to help us all understand our literate lives within these disciplinary contexts. Imagine composition studies at the heart of the composition classroom; imagine the composition classroom at the heart of composition studies. The effects would be so dramatic that perhaps, in time, most teachers of first-year writing could base their courses on the knowledge of the field; and, perhaps their own knowledge of the field would at least match their knowledge of Madonna, or horror films, or TV shows or whatever other topic they choose to define as the content of their writing classes. In addition, many of the issues we argue are important—personal narrative, the history of literacy, the previous education of our students and its relationship to our teaching and learning goals, writer/reader relationships, document design, style—emerge from our discussions if we make composition studies the focus of the course. These possibilities are enriched by the selection of texts from across genres. If we analyze one or two academic texts about literacy and then turn to some literacy autobiographies as students prepare to write their own literacy autobiographies, we begin discussions about the variety of approaches, texts, and literacy experiences that inform our literate lives. Looking back at the texts of our literacy educations—children’s books, student work from elementary and high school years, report cards, family scrapbooks—we begin to see the texture of our lives as literate individuals. Understanding these things in the context of our own pasts, one another’s histories, the institutional criteria that define our abilities in school, and larger cultural contexts can become the focus of our explorations when the work of the field informs the composition classroom. Looking at the present and our futures as literate individuals as unlimited by those histories opens spaces for us to participate as we revise our ideas of ourselves as literate people. Far from decentering student writing, this work emphasizes
the ways that different invention, arrangement, and revision strategies generate constructions of literacy in ways that invite us to do something other than identify with the status-quo literacy expectations for ourselves and one another. As I will illustrate in the next chapter, an approach that focuses on literacy and invention, arrangement, and revision also creates transitional spaces for teachers of composition who have literacy histories that are not informed by significant involvement in the discourses of the field.

**TURNING TO WRITING**

Because invention, arrangement, and revision can be used as generative as well as analytic heuristics, this kind of approach helps us move between reading and writing as people who have knowledge about the relevance of our experiences with literacy. In this way, no member of the class is positioned as an empty or flawed literate subject who must start at step one despite years of life as a literate individual. This brings the relationship between known and new knowledge and expectations to the front of interactions between and among members of writing classes. Moreover, it does so in ways that deconstruct the assumption that identification can, does, or should define the major route to literacy. As the readings and exploration of the histories of literacy informing our lives will have illustrated, individuals and groups will have some experiences that call up some other form of subjectivity (e.g., resistance, false assumptions). In this way, we move away from analysis as the end of composition studies, especially for student writing, and toward generative analytics that take revision as their primary concern.

The first writing assignment, then, is a literacy history that invites exploration of the invention, arrangement, and revision activities that have informed students’ attempts at personal narrative and a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between those strategies and the strategies at work in the histories and literacy autobiographies we have read. Some students will decide that they must do memory work to begin the process of writing, others may have a clear idea of what they wish to revise, and others may decide that there is a specific relationship they wish to begin from. For example, students who have lots of artifacts
from their literacy pasts (e.g., children’s books, photographs, past successful and/or unsuccessful pieces of writing, etc.) often wish to begin by remembering the significance of those artifacts in their lives as readers and writers. Some students begin with the desire to revise their image of themselves as unsuccessful readers and writers or as individuals whose literacy skills are fine the way they are and should not require further attention. Still others will want to begin by exploring the relationship between the books they have identified with in the past and their literacy lives, or between their positive experiences in English classes and their assumptions about their potential as readers and writers. In each case, we can explore which kinds of invention strategies from our pasts, our current study of literacy, and from other sources in our literate lives might help each of us to invent in relation to our generative purpose(s). In addition, we have some ground for understanding our generative activities in relation to the larger discussions and assumptions about reading and writing that we have come in contact with. We can, therefore, begin to understand the relevance of our own discussions within those larger contexts; this is often a significant event for first-year writing students who tend to think that course readings can illuminate their own experiences, but that their own experiences cannot illuminate those discussions. Opening spaces that allow us all to see the larger relevance of what students have to tell us about their lives as literate individuals who come to our classrooms must precede theorists’ and teachers’ attempts to construct ourselves as audiences of student discourses. We cannot sidestep this issue by requiring students to take audiences other than their writing teachers as their pretend or real readers (especially real readers who do not evaluate the text for a grade if the text will be graded). Paradoxically, deferring teachers and the discipline as audiences for student writing operates partly to make student writing irrelevant to the field.

Of course, and as I have said earlier, this means that students and teachers face the realities of the profession—that it is not likely to become an audience for student discourse in the immediate future in the same ways it has agreed to become an audience for Rose or Rodriguez or Brodkey or Parks or Flower or hooks or
Woolf. But we do not have to interpret this fact as rendering the discourses of our classes irrelevant to the field. We can, instead, center that fact as a vital part of our understanding of literacy. That is, we need not simply identify with our position in this system; we can, instead, explore its implications and, if we desire, find ways to make our discourses participate in and contribute to composition studies in broader ways. This theme of the problems and promises of participatory literacy reverberates throughout our time together in a variety of ways, some of which help us to understand ourselves as able to use literacy to participate and contribute more than others. Community literacy tutoring, for example, allows us to participate in helping others meet their literacy goals as adult learners even as our own study of literacy finds its way into that work and as the students we tutor and their texts contribute to our understanding of literacy. Because this relationship is much more dialectical than is our relationship with the field, it gives us the opportunity to see that literacy can rest upon different kinds of relationships than those that position learners as consumers who do not need to participate and/or contribute to be part of the systems of learning informing their educations. Because we are tutoring, we face the realities that replicate those conditions for others and the challenges of not replicating these limited options for literacy with the learners we assist, and so we come to understand the nature of the struggle from multiple angles.

We turn to writing then, within the larger context of our lives as literate people whose individual and collective histories can be explored and understood in relationship to a variety of conditions. How we process that knowledge and the products of our processes can also be understood in a variety of ways and can begin to clarify the possibilities, obstacles, and opportunities encouraged and discouraged by those conditions. Furthermore, we begin to be more conscious about how our responses to these conditions can engage other routes to subjectivity—resistance, participation, and a desire for inclusion and contribution, for example—than those we are in the habit of assuming and/or believing appropriate. It is within this frame that we turn to writing, that new contexts for the activities of writing classes can emerge as transitional moments that do
not require us to claim transformative power for ourselves and/or our pedagogies while leaving the structures that define a majority of our population in less empowered positions as members of the writing classes.

In the next chapter, I will describe a curriculum that both opens the possibilities for participation and contribution to become features of the first-semester writing classroom while attempting to maintain some recognizable relationship to the types of first-year writing pedagogies that are familiar to many people who teach and learn in those classes. I present detailed descriptions of individual writing assignments, activities, and faculty and community collaborations that create a context within which the shared and complementary knowledge of teachers and students centers participation and contribution in composition studies.