As I am finishing this book, I am also working with five colleagues to create a sequence of assignments for our first-semester “Critical Writing, Reading, and Research” course. To support our work, we wrote a proposal for an institutional grant, and we were awarded compensation to meet together for one week. To prepare, each of us read about some aspect of literacy to present to the group. Carmella J. Braniger has just finished her first year of teaching at Millikin University; she chose to explore orality as her literacy issue. Michael W. George has been on the faculty at Millikin for two years; he chose to explore technological literacy. Paul Haspel has just finished his first year of teaching at Millikin; he chose to explore visual literacy. Greg Sullivan has also just finished his first year at Millikin; he chose reading as his focus for our work together.

Each of us chose a literacy issue that both connected to previous areas of interest and needed to be thought through in relation to first-year writing. I prepared and presented about recent discussions of the relationship between assignment writing and assessment. Focusing on literacy issues of interest to individuals allowed each of us to pick an area we were really interested in, and to explore it in relation to reading and writing. The bibliographies that people created from their research included texts by scholars in composition studies as a matter of course. No one prompted others to look specifically for work by scholars in the field, but one can’t really get too deep into any literacy issue without encountering that work. Often, one of us would find a source that related to another person’s focus area, and we would share that information. This collaborative sharing of scholarly work helped people see the connections between and among the areas of literacy we were focused on. As we were working, I realized that this is why I had chosen the topic of literacy some eight years ago when I decided that bringing composition studies into my composition classrooms was a vital step in my life as a teacher, learner, and administrator.
in the field. Focusing on literacy in development activities with first-year writing faculty puts people from across English studies in relationship with the discourses of composition studies. The process had not so much directed people to texts in the field as it had illustrated the importance of those texts in explorations of a variety of literacy issues. We can have confidence about this matter as we revise composition studies to include the discourses of the field.

After each person in the group presented her or his research, we began to create a sequence of assignments that would allow critical writing, reading, and, to a lesser extent, critical research to become the subject matter of our first-semester composition classrooms. We developed an outline for a sequence of assignments that we will use to create drafts of each of the assignments. Our goal is to create formal assignments that are flexible enough to accommodate shared and complementary readings that enrich cross-class activities. The first assignment will be a literacy history. Students will read and think about a variety of ways people write about the history of literacy, and they will compose their own literacy history. The second assignment will invite students to read, think, and write about some form of literacy they are unfamiliar with; it is my belief that there should be some historical component to the study of literacy connected to this assignment. The issue of the importance of historical work has caused the most resistance from members of the group. The third assignment will focus on the exploration of some everyday artifact not previously considered by the author in a critical way. Here we will introduce critical analytic and generative strategies for dealing with popular artifacts. The fourth assignment will invite students to read, think, and write about the constructions of themselves as literate human beings in articles about first-year writers and writing. They will write papers that add to the conversations about themselves that inform composition studies. The fifth paper will be a revised literacy history. These are general outlines for the assignments, literally being constructed as I write this epilogue. Each major assignment of the semester will introduce some scholarship from composition studies into the course. Our work has already helped me to clarify the ways that the personal, historical, cultural, disciplinary, and
reflective can be discussed in faculty development forums as vital components of critical literacy that open spaces for participation and contribution to teachers and students. We have not yet decided upon exact readings for each section (remember some will be shared readings across sections and other will be complementary so students can write across sections to one another about different readings about the same issue), but our grant work has clearly illustrated the importance of composition studies to the lives of teachers and students in the field.

We have decided that all faculty will use the invention, arrangement, and revision concepts I have discussed throughout this book as analytic activities and generative practices throughout the semester. Students and faculty will be talking and writing together about the ways that literacy, and the study of literacy, enriches the knowledge bases they can draw from as they make decisions about invention, arrangement, and revision as writers. And they will be actively engaged in moving to practice as writers, teachers, and learners from those new knowledge bases. In this way, composition studies is informed by the richness of the literacy histories of all of its members, and it can, therefore take the enrichment of the literacy lives of the members of the disciple as its purpose in new ways.