

Research Statement (2012 – 2017)

On page 5, the Indiana University Kokomo School of Humanities and Social Sciences Promotion and Tenure Criteria state the following guidelines concerning research for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor if an evaluation of satisfactory is being sought in the category of research. Minimum accepted standards in scholarship for faculty producing scholarly works for purposes of Tenure and Promotion are:

Having at least two, but typically three, refereed publications (can be in press) since the last appointment in rank at IU Kokomo; and, other evidence of or dedication to research as noted in [section 3.1.2 of the Department of Humanities Annual Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure Guidelines](#).

My diverse research interests and background in rhetoric and composition studies have given me the tools to research and publish in a variety of academic areas, from articles on Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines issues and writing pedagogy to analyses of neoliberal economic rationality and academic labor. I exceed the minimum criteria for satisfactory in research as I have

- 3 peer-reviewed publications (in addition to the SoTL article discussed in the Teaching Section of this dossier)
- [1 review essay](#) in [a highly-regarded journal in my discipline](#);
- 1 article manuscript currently under review at [Communication Law Review](#) (revise and resubmit as of late August 2017);
- 8 conference presentations (in addition to the 5 SoTL presentations listed in the Teaching Section of this dossier);
- 2 articles and numerous multi-modal book reviews for which I have served as a reviewer;
- 1 republished, edited version of one of my publications on [InsideHigherEd.com](#) (forthcoming in Fall 2017);
- 2 well-received Special Topics Sessions on “Politics and Pedagogy” at the [Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association \(RMMLA\)](#); and
- [2 Grant-in-Aid awards for scholarly research \(awarded on the basis of merit\)](#).

Peer-Reviewed Publications

[Cook, Paul. “First-year Composition Should Be Skipped.” *Bad Ideas about Writing*. Eds. Drew M. Loewe and Cheryl Ball. Morgantown, WV: Digital Publishing Institute, 2017. Print and Web. \(In press: forthcoming in 2017.\)](#)

[Cook, Paul. “Notes from the Margins: WAC/WID and the Institutional Politics of Place\(ment\).” *Across the Disciplines: A Journal of Language, Learning, and Academic Writing* 11 \(2014\): n. pag. Web.](#)

[Cook Paul. "Survival Guide Advice and the Spirit of Academic Entrepreneurship: Why Graduate Students Will Never Just Take Your Word for It." *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor* 21 \(2013\): 25-39. Web.](#)

Review Essay

[Cook, Paul. Rev. of "Composition in the Age of Austerity," pres. by Tom Fox, Tony Scott, and Nancy Welch. Chair. Lil Brannon. Conference on College Composition and Communication Annual Convention. JW Marriott, Indianapolis, IN. 20 Mar. 2014. Conference presentation. *Kairos* 19.1 \(2014\): n. pag., Web.](#)

Peer-Reviewed Manuscripts under Review

[Darr, Chris and Paul Cook. "Rhetoric, Politics, and the Ideological State Apparatus in U.S. Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings." \(Currently under review at *Communication Law Review*.\)](#)

Research Presentations

(*Note: This list does not include teaching presentations and pedagogical research presentations)

["Assessing Information Literacy in General Education on a Regional Campus." IU Kokomo Faculty Research Symposium. Kokomo, IN: 2017. \(Co-researchers: Yan He, Polly Boruff-Jones, and Dr. Chris Darr.\)](#)

["Serial: What a Podcast Can Tell Us about How We Live Now." IU Kokomo Faculty Research Symposium. Kokomo, IN: 2015.](#)

"Survival Guide Advice and the Spirit of Academic Entrepreneurship: Why Graduate Students Will Never Just Take Your Word for It." [Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association](#). Boise, ID: 2014.

"Notes from the Margins: WAC/WID and the Institutional Politics of Place(ment)." [Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association](#). San Diego, CA: 2013.

"Pedagogue or Provocateur? Walking the Line in the Neoliberal U." [Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association](#). Vancouver, WA: 2013.

"Altered Politics: The Other in Big-Budget Hollywood Action Films of the Cold War Era." [New England American Studies Association Annual Conference](#). Mashantucket, CT: 2013.

"Jobs, Networks, and the Democratization of Information." [Networked Humanities: From Within and Without the University](#). Lexington, KY: 2013.

"Passivity, Scandal, and Teaching: The Rhetoric of Passive Voice." [Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association](#). Boulder, CO: 2012.

Reviewer of Articles for Journals

Reviewer for [*The SoJo Journal: Educational Foundations and Social Justice Education*](#)

Reviewer for [*Composition Studies*](#)

Editorial Board Member, [*Burningword*](#)

Former Book Review Editor for *Itineration: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Rhetoric, Media, and Culture* (now defunct)

Research Overview and Narrative

For the last five years, my research agenda has been nothing if not eclectic in its targets and interventions. From my first article as an IU Kokomo professor on academic labor and the discourse on academic “advice-knowledge” (the latter a term of my own coinage) to my most recent submission, an essay in a forthcoming anthology of rhetoric and writing studies experts called *Bad Ideas about Writing*, I consider both good fortune—one might even say *kairos*—and eclecticism to be the current themes of my research interests and scholarly output. My purpose in this narrative is to briefly discuss each publication, its scope and significance, and how it fits into the larger ambitions of my future research itineraries.

[Writing a dissertation](#) that traverses several disciplinary sites has given me the tools to embark on an eclectic and wide-ranging research itinerary. Rhetoric and composition’s ongoing disciplinary crisis was the nominal target of the project, but my extensive research for this project also led me to explore such extra-disciplinary areas as philosophy, new media, the political-economic-social doctrine of neoliberalism, contemporary political theory, and academic labor and the future of collective action within (and outside of) the university. I credit the dissertation-writing process for providing me with not only a sharp sense of where my future research trajectories might take me, but also the necessary tools and experience to realize these research plans.

My first publication after arriving at IU Kokomo was entitled “Survival Guide Advice and the Spirit of Entrepreneurship.” In this article, which was published in *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor* in 2013, I suggest that even with all of the advice offered up to graduate students about navigating the increasingly unlikely transition from graduate school to full-time academic employment, few scholars have scrutinized the nature and function of this advice, particularly in terms of how it influences individual jobseekers and students. The bulk of the article examines the largely heretofore unexamined nature of academic advice, or what I coin academic “advice-knowledge.” Taking a theoretical perspective informed by the later works of Michel Foucault and more recent critiques of neoliberalism and US employment culture, this article explores how advice-knowledge constructs, constrains, narrows, and normalizes the way graduate students understand themselves as individuals constantly in need of introspective self-work in order to remain, if not employed, then at least employable.

In 2014, drawing on my previous job experience as Director of Writing and [WAC/WID coordinator](#) at Cottey College, I published a manuscript in a special issue of *Across the Disciplines: A Journal of Language, Learning, and Academic Writing* on writing instruction at rural, regional, and satellite campuses. In this institutional autoethnography (IAE), I explore the dynamics of WPA and WAC/WID work within an exceedingly small, resolutely single-sex, and assuredly rural liberal arts campus ecology. Working within a theoretical framework informed by WAC/WID's historical commitment to increasing literacy in students from diverse educational backgrounds and recent studies of “aspirational” colleges and universities, my goal in this piece is to reflect on my own experiences and connect these to larger concerns about WAC/WID's vulnerability in rural SLACs.

The larger exploration in this IAE is structured around an interrogation of what happens when a rural college's historical mission and lofty aspirations run up against (1) the philosophical constraints (self-) imposed by institutional identity; (2) the material limitations of location, institutional ecology, and faculty labor and expertise; and (3) the pedagogical realities of the underprepared students it serves. In short, this article explores how the very things that make Cottey unique—its historical commitment to women's education, its diverse student population, and the inherent flexibility that comes with having an unusually small student body—are challenged by the dynamics of institutional identity and the intensifying scramble within higher education for resources, students, and prestige.

Also in 2014, I published a review essay of a fascinating panel I attended at that year's Conference on College Composition and Communication in Indianapolis, Indiana—the largest single gathering of rhetoric and composition studies scholars in the US (and world). The panel, which was entitled “Composition in the Age of Austerity,” appealed to me in part because of my position as Director of Writing and my work with adjunct faculty, but also because of my previous research on academic labor issues. In this review essay, I run down the major points of all three panelists' presentations, and then I suggest how central these broader economic and institutional concerns are to the work that faculty and researchers do and often take for granted.

Most recently, at the end of 2015, I submitted a manuscript to an exciting new anthology entitled *Bad Ideas about Writing*. My contribution, which is called “First-year composition (FYC) Should Be Skipped,” attempts to demolish the widespread idea that first-year writing is a course that lacks intellectual value or rigor. This particular collection, which includes some high-profile scholars in rhet-comp, is directed at a popular/general audience—parents, students, high school teachers and administrators—so I was especially gratified that my article was chosen for inclusion in this collection, which appeared in August 2017. My selection was also chosen to be reprinted on the national higher education website [Insidehighered.com](#); this version will be published online in Fall 2017

My ongoing research is always connected to my teaching—sometimes in unexpected ways. For example, I am scheduled to teach a course on Issues in Teaching Writing (ENG-W 400 / LBST-D

511) again in the next semester or two. Not only will my work with graduate student writers in hybrid-enrolled courses give me a critical perspective on this course, but my ongoing scholarly interests in the training of writing teachers also gives me the chance to help students engage this complex terrain from several angles. For several semesters now, I have been revising Chapter 5 of my dissertation, an essay entitled “The Terrain of TA Training: Re-encountering Theory and Practice.” In this essay, I argue that even though the discourse on TA training in rhetoric and composition studies is rife with calls to balance, bridge, or unite theory and practice in the training of writing teachers, we seem to have a difficult time articulating what such a project might do.

Largely because we lack a robust conception of practice (or praxis), I suggest, the tendency is to draw the line between theory and practice as boldly as possible, privilege theory over a vaguely-defined notion of practice, and then argue that reuniting the two is a fundamental prerequisite for administering a successful teacher-preparation program. Like the other elements of my research portfolio, my work in this area hearkens back to my dissertation project, and it continues to inform my day-to-day work as Director of Writing and as a frequent teacher of first-year writing (ENG-W 131/132).

Collaborations with Colleagues

My research agenda continues to unfold in new and exciting ways, which is due to another strength in terms of how I engage the research process. Since 2012, when I started at IU Kokomo, we have made several strong new hires in areas such as American Literature and Philosophy/Ethics; working in close proximity these new hires has injected a new sense of excitement and possibility into my own research agenda. Josh Mugg and I are currently developing a proposal to an interdisciplinary online journal entitled *Fast Capitalism*, and we hope to submit our piece soon. Working with yet another colleague in the School of Education, Tara Kingsley, I pursued a project on the impact of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) on Indiana K-12 public school policy. Our proposal was not accepted, unfortunately, but the experience was quite valuable in that it gave me yet another opportunity to work with a colleague in a different academic discipline and learn how scholars in education and educational theory develop ideas for research. This experience was also valuable because it gave me the background and the confidence to present a version of my *Workplace* article at the highly-competitive [American Educational Research Association \(AERA\) conference](#) in 2014.

I have also worked closely with Dr. Chris Darr, my colleague in Communication Arts, over the last several months to write, revise, and submit an article entitled “Rhetoric, Politics, and the Ideological State Apparatus in U.S. Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings,” which is currently under review at [Communication Law Review](#). In this piece, Dr. Darr and I suggest that because ideology permeates and is reproduced in all Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), including (and perhaps especially) the hearing processes of potential Supreme Court Justices, it also necessarily pervades confirmation rhetoric, even as some communication and legal scholars seek to deny or ameliorate its influence. We heard back about the status of this manuscript in late August and were pleased to receive a revise and resubmit request with some very positive and promising feedback.

Collaborations with Students

I also routinely teach Research Methods and Materials (ENG-W 368); without fail, every time I teach this course and work with students on their projects (both undergraduate and graduate), I find a new interest or area to explore on my own.

As a final example of both my indebtedness to the growing research culture here on campus and my own contributions to that culture, I would like to briefly mention my work over the last several years with some of our finest students—those in our MALS (Master of Arts in Liberal Studies) program. I have directed three MALS thesis projects to their completion (Navi Vernon, Chad Wagoner, and Mary Kennelly). In addition to directing these three projects, which I am told is an unprecedented amount, I have also served on three other committees: those of Greg Ogle, Scott Manthe, and Jesse Sopher.

Working on these projects allowed me to stretch and extend the boundaries of my own knowledge—working with one of my former graduate students, Chad Wagoner, on a subcultural analysis of the rise of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) in the US, for example—and they have helped me to solidify and concretize my own previous research through the process of being a co-discoverer with the student. For an example of the latter, I would refer to my work with Navi Vernon on the emotional and affective dimensions of the writing process and its relations to therapy, my work with Greg Ogle on Second Life (a highly-interactive, online virtual world/simulation), and my work with Mary Kennelly on grading, evaluation, and pedagogy in the first-year writing classroom. Each of these projects could be seen as extensions of my own explorations as a graduate student and early-career academic: as a graduate student I worked with affective writing pedagogy, for instance, and I have always been fascinated by the theory and practice of evaluating student writing. Both of these projects appeared on my radar at times that helped inform and further my own teaching in these areas, such as when I taught a grad-level course on Issues in Teaching Writing (ENG-W 400 / LBST-D 511) for the first time in the fall of 2013.

As for Greg's thesis project, he was just finishing it up right around the same time that I was teaching an Honors Symposium on digital culture, so working so closely with Greg allowed me to interlace elements from what I was teaching with some of the truly meaningful explorations Greg was following out in his work with identity-formation and Second Life. Greg also continues to visit my courses to talk about his research when appropriate, such as in Spring 2016 in my New Media Theory course (NMAT-G 411). My point, ultimately, is that I believe research is the product of social interaction and the fundamental collaborative interactivity of all knowledge, which is also a key element of my overall teaching philosophy. I will continue to pursue what I consider to be a collaborate research agenda, and I use that word "collaborative" in both a traditional sense and a more capacious one.

Finally, and on a broader note, I would like to add that my work has undoubtedly benefited from the growing research culture on campus and the concerted efforts that various students, faculty, and administrators have made to foster such an environment. I was honored to be

recognized at the first and second Faculty Research Awards Ceremonies, I presented my own work at the Faculty Research Symposium in April 2015, and for every year that I have been at IU Kokomo, I have been a strong advocate for and participant in the Undergraduate Research Symposium, formerly run by Netty Provost and now headed up by Erin F. Doss. Most years I send several students to this conference, which I think is a vitally important experience for both undergraduates and graduate students, and I suspect that this year will be no different. (Indeed, when I taught the Senior Capstone course in New Media Theory in 2016, I required these students to submit a proposal/abstract to the conference.) Finally, the Research Support Group for faculty, which was started by Stephanie Medley-Rath, has also helped to develop this research culture at IU Kokomo; as a matter of fact, I contributed an early draft of my recently-published manuscript for *Bad Ideas about Writing* to the group late in 2015, and the feedback I received was timely, substantive, and supportive.

As I look ahead, I hope that collaboration is the theme that continues to emerge from my research agenda. As I mentioned previously, I am already working with three other faculty members on two projects, and I hope to identify other areas where such overlap between research agendas and abilities might occur with other faculty, staff, and students.