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1

INTRODUCTION

Studying the Writing Practices of Our Student-Athletes

491,930 student-athletes competed in NCAA sponsored sports in 2016–2017.

—2016–2017 NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report

As origin stories are critical to how we understand and undertake our work, I start with two origin stories fueling my inquiry into the writing practices of our student-athletes.

Origin story 1: It is my first summer as an MA student at Auburn University, and I am responsible for supervising mandatory study hours for incoming first-year student-athletes. We are in the first floor of the library. Outside, it is a hot, sticky Alabama summer; inside, it is cold, quiet. A handful of student-athletes work on a paper for their success-strategies class, which I am coteaching with a counseling psychology professor. I am walking around checking on progress. I walk up to a highly recruited wide receiver I will call Trey. The success-strategies paper is his first college paper. He is writing it on Notepad, a clunky, plain-text editor included in all versions of Windows since the initial launch of Windows in 1985. I suggest using Word. Trey's face shows confusion. Talking with him, I learn about his lack of access to technology in his high school and home; I learn about his struggles with writing; I learn about his excitement over being able to start the computer, log on with his new student ID, locate Notepad, and write; I learn of his decorated high-school football career. I leave Trey to Notepad and his writing. My head spins over the palpable disconnect between Trey's academic and athletic preparedness. Trey leaves Auburn for academic reasons less than a year later.

Origin story 2: Again, the setting is Auburn during my time as an MA student. Researching student-athlete literate practices for my thesis, I gain access to a group of first-year football players, the wide receiver in origin story 1 among this group. They are all taking a first-year writing

course I am coteaching with a more experienced PhD student. Once the Institutional Review Board approves my research, I sit down to interview a first-year defensive lineman. Let's call him Jason. I ask Jason how he learns the team's complex plays. He tells me a story about being in the locker room early in the season when he voiced frustration aloud with the amount and complexity of the plays. An upperclassman walked over to him. The upperclassman took the cushions off the locker-room sofa and arranged them on the floor in the pattern of a common play Auburn runs. Moving the cushions around the floor, the upperclassman walked Jason through the play's nuances. Jason learned the play and contributed to Auburn's success on the field that season.

Two years later, I graduated and began progress toward a PhD at the University of Oklahoma. In my living room in Norman, Oklahoma, with my one-month-old son in my arms, I watched Auburn win the national championship by defeating the University of Oregon under the lights in Glendale, Arizona. Another student-athlete I cotaught in that first-year writing course kicked the game-winning nineteen-yard field goal. I watched him celebrate, my former student. He ran around, his arms held high, his mouth spread in jubilation, his gold necklace dancing against his shoulder pads. Jason, too, celebrated with his teammates. But Trey, Jason's former teammate and my former student, wasn't there to celebrate. He had left the school before the season started.

These two origin stories propelled my teaching, research, and service over the past decade at two Division I schools and one Division II school. One a story of struggle, one a story of success. At the time, I knew there was something deeper to these stories. One student-athlete struggled to connect his bodily literacy to the academic classroom, while another leveraged his bodily literacy in unique ways to solve a complex cognitive problem: how do I learn hundreds and hundreds of plays? Bodily literacy and knowing through the body is at the heart of these two origin stories. Unfortunately, since bodily literacy does not often figure into traditional conceptions of academic literacy, composition instructors and the programs and people under which they labor do not often privilege bodily literacy in writing-intensive spaces like an FYC classroom or a writing center. This local dismissal of bodily literacies gives rise to global dismissal in that higher education stakeholders often understand the one-half million student-athletes, student-athletes like Trey and Jason, through a cognitive-deficit model: here is what they *cannot* do, here is what they *don't* know. This misleading model drives mainstream media headlines, provides fodder for campus conversations, social media posts, and listserv threads. I understand I take a quick leap of logic from the classroom to mainstream

media headlines decrying student-athlete academic performance, but in the following pages, I argue compositionists can better work with student-athlete writers by understanding their prior knowledge, a prior knowledge honed through bodily engagement with text and through writing practices that privilege the body as a central mode of meaning making.

I don't naively believe better pedagogical practices of working with student-athlete writers will wash away over a hundred years of stains in the relationship between athletics and academics—stains most clearly visible in the fabric of Division I schools. I soon map this century-long relationship between school and sport but do believe, naively or not, that composition studies has always looked for how to work better with the many unique student populations we are trained and committed to serve. I do believe that despite all the challenges our field endures and has endured, we stay committed to whoever is in our classrooms. I do believe Adam Banks's (2015) words during a powerful moment in his chair's address at the 2015 Conference on College Composition and Communication gathering in Tampa—possibly the most powerful speech I have heard in person. With a rising crescendo, he stressed that we—composition teacher-scholars—"served anyhow" (271). No matter the budget deficits, marginalization, and ostracization by and from other disciplines, we "took care of our students anyhow" (271). I do believe engaging with a unique population in a manner of being slow to speak and quick to listen yields reciprocal benefits. The immediate results of knowing our student-athlete writers better may be negligible in term of the national landscape of NCAA athletics. But compositionists play the long game; we serve anyhow.

One year after these two origin stories, I was in New Orleans and walking the halls of my first Conference on College Composition and Communication. Overwhelmed by the sheer size of the conference, my eyes caught the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives booth. Volunteers working the booth capture brief video literacy narratives from conference attendees. These narratives populate an open-access digital archive for instructional and research purposes. A volunteer approached me and invited me to provide one. Into my head popped the origin stories that had altered my view of literacy, learning, higher education, access, college sports. But I couldn't talk about them just yet. I couldn't give voice to how my view of literacy specifically changed. Again, I knew there was something there. Something I couldn't quite put my finger on. All I could have talked about for the video narrative was what I had witnessed and that what I had witnessed made me say *hmmm*. I declined and walked on.

A decade later, I am ready to give voice to what I learned that hot, sticky Alabama summer night in the library and during my interview with the defensive lineman Jason.

I am ready to talk about the writing practices of our student-athletes.

To ground this book, I focus specifically on football and men's basketball because, as I argue throughout these pages, the student-athletes competing in these sports operate within a highly discursive space most evident in how they engage with scripted plays. I define *scripted plays* in the next chapter; however, to start, I understand scripted plays as multimodal texts created, implemented, and even curated with the public performing body as the central mode of meaning making. Other sports use scripted plays, but for football and men's basketball, most, if not all, of the bodily public action is undergirded by scripted plays. In articulating the writing practices of our student-athletes, then, I begin with a focus on plays. Plays are textual gateways into understanding how student-athletes know.

Starting with this premise, my proceeding inquiry is threefold: What are plays and what do they do? How do student-athletes learn plays? And, finally, how can we better teach student-athletes based on these findings? These three questions constitute the aims of the following chapters and culminate in a single query that has dogged me since my time working with first-year student-athletes at Auburn: how do student-athletes know?

In *The Embodied Playbook: Writing Practices of Student-Athletes*, I seek to understand better the Treys and Jasons many of us teach. According to the *NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report* (National Collegiate Athletic Association 2017b), 491,930 student-athletes competed in NCAA-sponsored sports during the 2016–2017 academic year. The total student-athlete population has grown 19 percent over the last decade. I can only imagine the numbers will continue rising. The close to one-half million student-athletes have a unique story to tell. Their story will illuminate not only how we approach literacy instruction and theory but also how we approach the most lucrative extracurricular appendage of US higher education: college sports. First, however, we need to look behind the headlines and the ESPN news blips about the wonders and worries of college sports to listen and learn. I can't help but wonder whether Trey, like Jason, might have stayed at Auburn, might have celebrated the national championship with his teammates if I, or the larger composition studies community, knew more about how student-athletes know. . More important, he might have graduated. Certainly many factors drive retention—still, what if?

THE ANTAGONISTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATHLETICS AND ACADEMICS

In this book, I take this nagging personal question and broaden it to speak to the many institutional and community stakeholders who work with our student-athletes. My personal *what if* question then becomes *how do student-athletes know?* And how can we better support their writing development based on what they know? Though my focus is on student-athletes' writing practices, I am aware that when I step into the waters of student-athletes and academics, I am also stepping into rolling waves of frustration at college athletics for soaring expenditures, countless scandals, and what many perceive to be either a blatant disregard for or an insouciant approach to academic standards. I acknowledge these soaring financial expenditures and scandals and touch on the historically antagonistic relationship between school and sport later in this section.

According to *Forbes*, the five most lucrative college football teams are all worth more than \$100 million each, with the University of Texas at Austin leading the way at \$131 million (Smith 2014). I spent four years working in athletic academic services at the University of Oklahoma. The athletics department operates with a roughly \$100 million self-sustaining annual budget. Other sports are financially viable because of the revenue generated by football. According to 2012–2013 records, the Oklahoma football team brought in 34 percent of the revenue, with an expense of roughly 25 percent of the budget (University of Oklahoma 2013). At the Division I level, men's basketball programs also commonly operate in the black even though the sport does not generate such high dollars. *Forbes* reports that the University of Louisville has the most valuable team at just under \$40 million, with the University of Kansas coming in second. Kansas generated \$14.5 million alone from ticket sales (Smith 2015).

Broadcast rights also drive the revenue for football and men's basketball though administrators are often hesitant to disclose specific numbers. The SEC—a conference that claimed seven straight football national championships between 2006 and 2012—partnered with ESPN in 2014 to launch the SEC Network. One year after the launch, the SEC announced a record distribution of \$455.8 million divided among the fourteen conference schools. Then-commissioner of the SEC, Mike Slive, would not say how much of that revenue stemmed from the ESPN partnership; however, the previous year, the SEC distributed just \$292.8 million. The SEC isn't the first to nuzzle up to a network in hopes of a richer payday. Notre Dame has long worked with NBC, which holds broadcast rights for Notre Dame football. This deal brings in around \$20 million

annually (the exact number is hard to locate because Notre Dame, a private school, does not always disclose financial records). Texas launched the Longhorn Network with ESPN in 2011; the Big Ten started the Big Ten Network. The NCAA, too, generates the majority of its revenue from television deals. According to a 2015 independent consolidated financial report disclosed by the NCAA, the NCAA generated over \$776 million from “television and marketing rights fees,” the majority coming from the Division I men’s basketball tournament under contract with CBS/Turner (*National Collegiate Athletics Association and Subsidiaries* 2015). These are the numbers that jump out at us and that we remember when talk turns to college athletics even though more student-athletes compete in Division II and III—not high-dollar and high-profile Division I sports—and even though more athletics programs have modest budgets and operate in the black than have budgets near \$100 million and operate in the red. In this book, I move from big-time Division I athletics at the University of Oklahoma to small-scale Division II athletics at the University of North Georgia. I move from an athletics program with an annual self-sustaining budget of roughly \$100 million to an athletics program with a budget of roughly \$3 million supported, in part, by mandatory student fees. College athletics takes on many forms across US higher education, and I want to be sensitive to the nuances of each program while also seeking to understand better how our student-athlete writers know and engage with text. However, I will say the soaring expenditures of sustaining a successful athletics program are realities affecting the everyday work of all stakeholders in US higher education. Like many, I am disheartened to read of mandatory student fees used to sustain floundering athletics departments, as is the case at Rutgers and other schools.

But I don’t wade into a debate regarding the presence of college sports on our campuses. That debate is currently underway by scholars across various disciplines and is one certainly worth following. I tell a different story. I want to focus on the student-athletes who are already on our campuses, in our classrooms. I embrace Patricia Bizzell’s (2014) powerful assertion that at the heart of composition studies is a desire to know who our students are (442). I want us to know our student-athletes. To know our student-athletes, we need to know their writing practices and broader literate practices.

I write aware of the task before me. Through nearly a decade of talking about my ideas at conferences, in journals, during hallway conversations, over coffee and other drinks, I’m aware many readers are indifferent to or outright hostile toward the uniquely US idea that an institution of higher education would funnel millions of dollars toward a game for

students to play and fans to watch. I'm right there with those readers.¹ Faculty are largely frustrated, baffled, incensed with, or ignorant of the presence and even need for college sports in higher education. These mixed but generally negative reactions to college sports on the part of faculty are steeped in historical tradition. Though Isocrates (1929) in his fourth-century BCE text *Antidosis* argued for the inclusion of a liberal arts education because it would fuse the mind and the body, historian of ancient Western education H. I. Marrou (1982) points out that when the Romans adopted Greek education, they jettisoned athletics (and music, oddly enough) from the curriculum. We see the remnants of such a decision today as public schools in times of tightening budgets are more inclined to drop PE and music than math and social studies. Yet sport bubbled up again in US higher education during the middle of the nineteenth century at the same time the abstract ideals of bettering oneself through education were codified into the rapid proliferation of brick-and-mortar colleges and universities. The presence and need for college sports on our campuses is strange indeed and, yes, may even vitiate the foundation of US higher education, which is and should be academics. Though I direct attention to how student-athletes engage with plays and do not descend into arguments for or against the presence of college sports on our campuses, sliding into activity theory just for a moment helps remind us that the objectives/motives of college sports (to generate income, to win games, to brand a university) cannot be separated from the tools (the plays, the players, the stadium, the coaches) used to reach these objectives/motives. So, yes, in a sense, when I talk about the tools of basketball and football, when I talk about the text in which these student-athletes engage, I am indirectly talking about the larger motives of college sports and the larger issues giving rise and continuing to give rise to the prominence of college sports on our campuses, sometimes to the detriment of learning. In this section, then, I offer a brief overview of our turbulent history with college sports, not to accuse or excuse college sports but to erect the complex stage on which the writing practices of our student-athletes are performed.

Historian of education John R. Thelin (2004) writes that college sports were initially student-run extracurricular endeavors (178) free from the shackles of presidents, administrators, and boosters. Students organized the first football game between Rutgers and Princeton in 1869. Students at Michigan in 1881 coordinated road games in New England, and the team squared off against Harvard, Princeton, and Yale in the span of a week. In 1883, five years before Yale hired an official head coach and eight years before Princeton did, New York City was caught up in the

thrill of a Thanksgiving match-up between Yale and Princeton. College-sports fervor engulfed the eastern half of the United States.

Just seven years after the Yale-Princeton match-up, two important decades began in the history of US higher education. Thelin points to the period between 1890 and 1910 as the time when the “American public became fascinated with undergraduate collegiate life” (Thelin 2004, 157), which in turn led to a growing awareness of and interest in college sports.² One result of the public’s growing interest was what Thelin describes as the “transformation” of “the prototypical athletic association” through hiring athletic directors and coaching staffs (178). No longer coached by players, football hired official head coaches: Michigan in 1891, Chicago in 1892, Rutgers in 1895, and Princeton in 1901. The move toward professionalization dramatically altered the landscape of higher education. In his chapter titled “The Rise of Football,” historian of education Frederick Rudolph contends, “Therefore, when the apparatus of athletics grew too large and complex for student management; when the expenditure of much time and much money was required in the recruiting, coaching, feeding, and care of athletic heroes; when, indeed, all these things demanded a more efficient and perhaps more subtle touch, the alumni jumped to the opportunity which student ineffectiveness and faculty indifference gave them” (Rudolph 1968, 382–83). Out of the hands of the students and of faculty disinterested in the extracurricular activities of their students, athletics blossomed, aiding in the marketing, branding, and financial bolstering of a university. Universities adopted colors proudly worn by supporters. Mascots, some of which were fearful (the Lions of Columbia, the Wolverines of Michigan) and some of which were humorous (the Purple Cow of Williams College, the Sagehen of Pomona College), were enlisted to personify the schools.³ Fans displayed the orange and black of Princeton and the blue and white of Yale during the annual Yale-Princeton football game. The writer of a December 1893 *New York Times* article “The Orange above the Blue” estimated the crowd that year to be twenty-three thousand, larger than an average crowd at a typical NHL or NBA game today.

Powerful men reigned over the newly transformed college-sports enterprise. Walter Camp, Yale head coach from 1888 to 1892, diverted monies from smaller-revenue sports, such as swimming and gymnastics, to football. Through these clever—some might say devious—tactics, Camp deployed an “entrepreneurial strategy that allowed a coach and athletics director to gain leverage over both student groups and academic officials” (Thelin 2004, 179).⁴ At the University of Chicago, Amos

Alonzo Stagg, a disciple of Camp's, became athletic director in 1892. Stagg procured himself a tenured faculty position, an administrative appointment as athletics director as well as football coach, a departmental budget exempted from customary internal review, and a direct line of reporting to the president (Thelin 2004,179).⁵ On a more innocuous level, in 1893, Harvard created a salaried graduate manager of athletics in charge of the entire athletics program, leading Rudolph to assert that "this widely copied university office institutionalized alumni voice in athletic affairs and added an important new dimension, and problem, to college and university administration" (384).

Shady decisions by people like Stagg unsettled university presidents. President Harry Garfield of Williams College said in 1908, "Here [at Williams College] . . . there is grave danger of departure from the essential idea of a college as distinguished from an institute of physical culture" (Lucas 1994, 178). Administration at Cornell looked for ways to rein in college sports by "insist[ing] that games be played on college grounds and that players be bona fide students in good standing" (Bragdon 1967, 212). Harvard's president, Charles Eliot, however, pushed for banishment of football perhaps more for the sheer brutality of the sport than its impact on academics.⁶ In 1892, he decried the "foolish and pernicious expenditures on sports" (Lucas 1994, 178). Eliot did not support self-regulated athletics programs. "It is childish," he declared, "to suppose that athletic authorities which have permitted football to become a brutal, cheating, demoralizing game can be trusted to reform it" (Smith 1990, 206). Nevertheless, football stayed.⁷ Eliot could not bolster enough support.

University presidents sounded warning bells regarding athletics. Yet, many people in the United States believed a university's mission was to field a football team (Rudolph 1968, 387), a sentiment many share today. Pastors cut sermons short on Sunday to make time for the "big-game" (Lucas 1994, 177). Athletics departments witnessed rising profit margins. As president of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson said, "Princeton is noted in this wide world for three things: football, baseball, and collegiate instruction" (Zimbalist 1990, 7). The popularity of college sports, particularly football, led to rising profit margins for athletics departments. In 1928, Yale's athletic association reported a gross revenue of \$1,119,000, with a net profit of \$384,500 (Rudolph 1968, 389).⁸

Muckraker journalism of the early twentieth century drove the progressive era and social reform. The meatpacking industry underwent substantial reform following the publication of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* in 1906 (interestingly, the same year the NCAA formed), and

John Dewey reimagined a child's psychological development. The growing big-business practices of college sports were susceptible to these waves of reform. In 1929, the Carnegie Foundation released one of the first comprehensive accounts of intercollegiate athletics. Titled *American College Athletics* and prepared by Howard J. Savage, the detailed 347-page report became "the canon . . . for reform proposals and policy analyses about the place of intercollegiate sports in American colleges and universities" (Thelin 1994, 13). The report focused largely on players' safety, hygiene, and conduct and rules on the playing field, with only "some attention . . . paid to the bearings of college athletics upon the principles and practice of education" (3). The report garnered widespread media attention, but even though Savage worked for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, he did not focus on ensuring athletics would fall under the academic purview of a university. Rather, he focused on, among other things, the size of a playing field.

Now, in the early years of the twenty-first century, college sports are a dominant force on many college campuses. The NCAA governs college sports from its headquarters in Indianapolis. This powerful organization is wealthy. According to an independent auditor's consolidated financial report, the NCAA maintains over \$900 million in total assets. Here's a disturbing recipe being prepared right now: mix the academic scandals ripping across the college-sports landscape with these gratuitous NCAA monetary resources, then stir in an era of intense financial austerity experienced by academic units in which the idea of a public—that is, a *publicly funded*—university is almost laughable, and we have a recipe for a tension-filled relationship between school and sport, which is reaching a boiling point. A December 2011 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* screamed the following headline across the front page: "What the Hell Has Happened to College Sports? And What Should We Do About It?" Though the *Chronicle* is not hesitant to promulgate a rhetoric of excess through shocking headlines or images on its covers, the headline denounced the growing chasm between athletics and academics, the increase of scandals in college sports, and the general unrest among academics regarding the place of college sports on campuses of higher education.

Up to this point, the *Chronicle* generally spoke on the financial aspects of athletics programs. This December 2011 issue is different. It speaks to a deeper, more pressing challenge: the mercurial relationship between school and sport, which causes a divide at once rhetorical and material. This *Chronicle* issue signals a pivotal shift in the relationship between

athletics and academics through a bold headline, with close to one-fourth of the issue devoted to the topic and with commentary by writers such as Frank Deford, basketball Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson, and the late president emeritus of the University of North Carolina system William C. Friday. Faculty, the stewards of a university, are not only concerned with pointing out what many perceive to be a gross level of revenue and expenditures in times of financial austerity. Faculty also often position athletics as a cancer rapidly metastasizing through the body of a school as evidenced by myriad recent incidents: a former assistant football coach at Penn State accused of sexual assault, the FBI's probing a point-shaving scandal at Auburn, a freshman basketball player at the University of Oklahoma taking money from a financial advisor, several TCU football players arrested in a police sting for drug possession with intent to distribute, and Louisville basketball coaches hiring escorts for recruits.. All these incidents took place after 2010 and at prominent schools, schools with a tradition of athletic success.

The scholastic side of college sports is just as bleak: football player Dexter Manley, who graduated from Oklahoma State, admitted in 1989 to the US Senate Subcommittee on Education that he was illiterate until his thirties; former Auburn football player James Brooks and former Creighton basketball player Kevin Ross give similar narratives. On December 28, 2008, Mike Knobler of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* wrote a front-page article detailing the discrepancy between the SAT scores of student-athletes at fifty-four public universities and non-sports students at the same universities. In 2012, Brad Wolverton of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* published a front-page piece on Memphis football player Dasmine Cathey. The piece comes complete with a powerful pull quote: “[Cathey] could barely read three years ago. How is this U. of Memphis student just three classes away from a degree?” (Wolverton 2012). Taken together, such a sampling illustrates the common disturbing narrative when considering college sports, particularly high-profile and high-dollar college sports, and higher education.

Yet all these student-athletes were matriculated at large Division I institutions. Aware of the rampant cognitive-deficit model surrounding student-athletes' academic ability, the NCAA has conjured up and implemented a host of formulas designed to track a student-athlete's academic progress. The Academic Progress Report, Graduation Success Report, Degree-Complete Award Program, Academic Success Rate, Eligibility Center, Path to Graduation, and many other initiatives and matrices work to illustrate to all stakeholders in US higher education that the NCAA is foremost invested in educating student-athletes.

Recently, the NCAA announced postseason bans for teams with poor APR scores and, as it proudly touts on its website, directs over \$2.7 billion annually toward athletic scholarships. Through this money and through initiatives and matrices, student-athlete graduation rates are rising across divisions. Nevertheless, the NCAA cannot escape the shadow of Dexter Manley, James Brooks, Kevin Ross, and Dasmine Cathey because it is hard to understand why college sports (a fully professionalized, entrepreneurial, big-business, and uniquely US endeavor) are a component of higher education. Historically and contemporarily, the two are strange bedfellows, indeed.

Fields such as education and sociology have spoken to the tension between school and sport often and with passion. Bearing eye-catching titles about the scandal-ridden endeavor that is college sports, these analyses generally depict college sports as a sinful enterprise, anathema to the academic mission of higher education.⁹ And groups such as the Knight Commission, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Drake Group have authored concrete proposals for needed academic reform. But the constant theme since the mid-nineteenth century is that individual and collective drumbeats fail to marshal substantial change.

As I reflect on this brief overview of college sports from the first football game in 1869 to the 2012 *Chronicle* feature story on Memphis football player Dasmine Cathey, I understand why readers may approach *The Embodied Playbook: Writing Practices of Student-Athletes* with reticence or hostility. College sports and academics, more times than not, it seems, struggle to coexist, and academic departments often pay the penalty. Yet, I also can't help but notice a thread woven into the early part of this history influencing the challenges we face today and coloring how readers may approach my argument: overall faculty indifference to the crystallization of college sports. In his autobiography, Amos Alonzo Stagg pointed toward faculty indifference as a contributing factor to the "evils that have beset the game" (Stagg and Stout 1927, 176): "Most of the evils that have beset the game from time to time have been the direct result of student and alumni management, but a large portion of the blame belongs on the faculty doorstep. The students and alumni ran athletics because the faculty members had been too superior to concern themselves with such juvenilia. Their indifference was described, without overstatement at the time, as 'the crime of the faculties'" (Stagg and Stout 1927, 175, 176). Stagg's perspective is intriguing because of his ethos. Hired to run the athletics department at the newly formed University of Chicago in 1892, Stagg facilitated not only

the growth of college football across the country from a motley assembly of male student groups into a coalition of teams, but, at Chicago, he also coached the baseball and basketball team, taught classes, and led campus construction efforts. A quick scan of his biography reveals a startling number of innovations and contributions across the sporting world: he invented the indoor batting cage and the headfirst slide in baseball. He was a member of the Olympic committee from 1906 to 1932 and designed troughs for overflow water in swimming pools. Edwin Pope (1955) provides a bulleted list of Stagg innovations such as the huddle, the lateral pass, awarding letters to players, adding numbers to players' jerseys, and, most related to the study of this book, writing the first book on football with diagrams with Minnesota's Dr. Henry Williams in 1893, after only one year at Chicago (232). Today, Stagg's legacy lives on in the Division III football championship game named the Stagg Bowl.

Serendipitous timing spurred Stagg's innovations and contributions. He worked at Chicago, a university founded in 1890 through the work of the American Baptist Education Society coupled with a magnanimous \$35 million donation by John D. Rockefeller. Chicago undertook a novel approach to higher education. In embracing characteristics of the German and English university model, the university divided itself into colleges, engaged the community through lectures and evening and summer classes, and operated on a twelve-month calendar. Chicago began in an era of increasing academic specialization, which often resulted in faculty assuming a more insular perspective and focusing solely on disciplinary concerns. Such is the perspective at many schools today. Yet, Chicago faculty were involved in the lives of their students outside the classroom and committed to ensuring the proper role of athletics in the ecology of higher education. As Stagg wrote of Chicago, "There is no danger at Chicago of athletics getting out of bounds; that was taken care of at the outset by providing rigid faculty control and direction" (173). True to Stagg's declaration, Chicago dropped football in 1939—less than fifty years after the school's founding. As Stagg argued, "A college with brains and courage, however small, does not need to hire a squad of mercenaries to wear its uniform" (174). Chicago found other ways beyond sports to market the university and, in the face of the rising success of its athletics program—football won two national championships, and halfback Jay Berwanger was the first recipient of the Downtown Athletic Club trophy (now known as the Heisman Trophy) given to the best college football player—football was eliminated.¹⁰

Chicago is an isolated case of faculty and administrator involvement in early college sports. My reading of histories of college sports and higher education leads me to believe faculty across disciplines were disinterested in what students did outside the classroom. Such disinterest is understandable. As Robert Connors offers, professor/student relationships were discordant at best prior to 1850: "For students of most colleges before 1850, the faculty had one clear definition. It was the enemy" (Connors 1997 47). Connors reports that between 1800 and 1875, students rebelled against faculty at many prominent universities: "Stonings of faculty houses and other minor acts of violence were too common to catalogue" (47). Rudolph writes that the president of Oakland College was stabbed to death (Rudolph 1968, 97–98). Against such a backdrop, it is understandable that faculty would show indifference toward students' extracurricular activities. Through coeducation and other changes to higher education, the faculty/student animosity soon eased. However, even when presidents and the public did begin to consider the dangers of college sports, faculty did not become involved in crafting the 1929 Carnegie report, the first comprehensive report calling for the reform of college sports.

In the latter part of the twenty-first century, faculty groups such as the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics formed in hopes of reforming college sports. Established in 2002 by James W. Earl at the University of Oregon, the faculty-led COIA started as a grass-roots campaign among faculty senates in what was known then as the Pac-10 conference in hopes of giving faculty a voice in college sports. Earl connected with Bob Eno at the University of Indiana, and the COIA grew nationally. Partnering with other governing bodies, such as the Faculty Athletics Representative Association, the Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics, and the American Association of University Professors, the COIA positioned itself at the center of the debate surrounding intercollegiate athletic reform through policy papers, speeches at national conventions, and a presence in publications such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*. The COIA is a recent faculty response to what many perceive to be an ever-growing chasm between athletics and academics. Faculty voice in college sports has been sorely absent in previous reform undertakings, but faculty need a voice if there is to be lasting change. Unfortunately, faculty indifference toward college sports morphed into faculty cynicism. I found strained relationships between the athletics department and many academic units at the two Division I schools where I worked. Athletics departments grow distrustful of academic departments; academic departments grow distrustful of

athletics departments. Internecine squabbles arise. This cyclical reaction and infighting scholastically and socially harms the student-athletes and results in separate services for student-athletes at many schools, particularly Division I schools. Unsure of how best to implement vague NCAA mandates directed toward academics, and distrustful of academic departments, many athletics departments isolate themselves and their student-athletes from the academic side of a campus. But such vague mandates, though baffling and frustrating, are in the best interests of those committed to offering quality student-athlete writing support.

On January 22, 2015, two former student-athletes sued the NCAA and UNC for failing to provide quality education. In the one hundred-page class-action complaint (*McCants, Rashanda, and Devon Ramsay v. The National Collegiate Athletic Association and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* 2015), Rashanda McCants, a former women's basketball player, and Devon Ramsay, a former football player, allege that "this case arises out of the NCAA and UNC's abject failure to safeguard and provide meaningful education to scholarship athletes who agree to attend UNC—and take the field—in exchange for academically sound instruction. This latest lapse, however profound, is regrettably just one of many such episodes in the history of college sports."¹¹ The incensed rhetoric of the complaint continues at the end of the opening section titled "Nature of the Action":

This academic debacle, at one of the nation's finest public universities, could not have come as a surprise to the NCAA. . . . Instead, the NCAA sat idly by, permitting college sports programs to operate as diploma mills that compromise educational opportunities and the future job prospects of student-athletes for the sake of wins and revenues. . . . UNC's bogus classes once again reveal the great hypocrisy of college athletics in America. The NCAA and its member schools insist that their mission and purpose is to educate and to prevent the exploitation of college athletes. Yet it is the schools, the conferences, and the NCAA that are engaging in exploitation, subverting the educational mission in the service of the big business of college athletics—and then washing their hands of college athletes once they have served their purpose. (2, 3)

At the core of this lawsuit is an October 2014 report, which revealed some university employees directed roughly fifteen hundred student-athletes to sham classes. According to the report spearheaded by Kenneth Wainstein, a former official with the US Department of Justice, these cases of academic misconduct stretched over a twenty-year period, included 188 classes in the African and Afro-American studies department, and involved more than thirty-one hundred students—about half of which were student-athletes (Wainstein, Jay, and Kukowski 2014).

In the wake of the scandal, UNC's Chancellor, Carol Folt, fired or disciplined nine employees. One cannot draw a direct line of causality between sham classes, which inflate low GPAs to ensure athletic eligibility, and winning national championships. It takes more than strong GPAs to win a national championship; however, it is worth noting that during this twenty-year period, UNC athletics notched twenty national championships. One a year. Again, specific student-athletes or sports are not mentioned in this report, so it is unfair to accuse all sports at UNC from 1994 to 2014 of committing academic fraud. But, when an athletics program is found guilty of systematic cheating and academic fraud, a black cloud hangs over on all sports.

Though the NCAA was initially founded with the mission of protecting students' health, the NCAA has slowly morphed into passionately—and some would include *naively*—fighting to protect the amateurism and education of student-athletes. The NCAA has long repeated its mantra of “student first and athlete second.” It also correctly argues that the majority of the one-half million student-athletes find professional careers outside their sports. Nevertheless, in its response to the lawsuit, the NCAA said it has no legal responsibility “to ensure the academic integrity of the courses offered to student-athletes at its member institutions” (quoted in Ganim, 2015; NCAA 2015). Donald Remy, NCAA chief legal officer, provided an additional view on the NCAA's response: “This case is troubling for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that the law does not and has never required the NCAA to ensure that every student-athlete is actually taking full advantage of the academic and athletic opportunities provided them” (quoted in Ganim, 2015).

Unfortunately, Remy and the NCAA are right here; McCants and Ramsay don't have a case. The governing of college sports is an overwhelming enterprise. Though I take issue with the NCAA over a number of its recent and historical decisions, I sympathize with an organization undertaking the Sisyphean task of monitoring over twelve hundred member institutions and the academic and physical well-being of close to one-half million student-athletes. Think about the other four major sports-governing bodies in the United States: the NFL includes thirty-two football teams; the MLB, NHL, and NBA each include thirty teams each. The NCAA not only oversees more teams and more players but also oversees more in general. The four major sports don't need to worry about protecting amateurism and making sure their players do not receive extra benefits. They don't have to worry about charting academics through a dizzying array of statistics, matrices, and initiatives. They

just have worry about managing a profit and making sure their players stay out of handcuffs and make periodic public-service appearances.

Faced with the unenviable task of regulating almost all levels of collegiate sports, the NCAA, understandably, began delegating. This delegation allows voluntary institute members—remember, NCAA membership is voluntary—to set their own dictums for academic standards and enforcement. United States higher education embraces autonomy, and the NCAA has granted it through the NCAA Constitution, Article 2, Section 2.5, The Principle of Sound Academic Standards (National Collegiate Athletic Association 2017a): “Intercollegiate athletics programs shall be maintained as a vital component of the educational program, and student-athletes shall be an integral part of the student body. The admission, academic standing and academic progress of student-athletes shall be consistent with the policies and standards adopted by the institution for the student body in general.” The NCAA does follow up Article 2, Section 2.5, in Section 16.3 “Academic Counseling/Support Services,” but this section seems to repeat content previously covered in Section 2.5 and still leaves the issue of *how* up to individual schools:

16.3.1.1 Academic Counseling/Support Services. Member institutions shall make general academic counseling and tutoring services available to all student-athletes. Such counseling and tutoring services may be provided by the department of athletics or the institution’s nonathletics student support services. In addition, an institution, conference or the NCAA may finance other academic support, career counseling or personal development services that support the success of student-athletes.

Many high-profile and high-revenue Division I schools provide this academic support only through their athletics department, which may also include a wide variety of separate student-life services: career centers, dining halls, workout rooms, psychological and counseling centers, academic tutors and advisors, and writing centers. The Rankin M. Smith, Sr., Student-Athlete Academic Center at the University of Georgia, the Committed to an Athlete’s Total Success program at the University of Arizona, and the Drew and Brittany Brees Student-Athlete Academic Center at Purdue, among others, direct resources to separate academic services for their highly valued student-athletes.

These separate academic services are the outcome of the multibillion-dollar industry of college sports growing alongside yet distinct from the general academic mission of US higher education. Moreover, these separate services seem more interested in protecting the big business that is college sports by ensuring student-athletes are always under the watch of the athletics department. Though there may be social and scholastic

benefits to allocating resources to support only student-athletes, William Broussard (2004), who received a doctorate in rhetoric, composition, and the teaching of English from the University of Arizona and formerly the athletics department at Southern University, suggests this practice leads to “[student-athletes’] geographical . . . balkanization” (12). Such balkanization can be countered, Broussard holds, through “opening . . . channels of communication” between athletics departments and [writing program administrators] in hopes of “develop[ing] ways to help student-athletes develop critical consciousness . . . [and] pride in . . . their academic work” (12). I agree with Broussard, and in chapter 4, I illustrate the unfortunate outcome of student-athlete balkanization in regards to writing support but also the positive outcome of Broussard’s suggestion of opening communication channels between (often) insular athletics departments and campus writing program administrators (WPAs).

Despite a history of faculty indifference, current insular athletics departments, and the many moments marking college sports’ turbulent history, college sports and the many student-athletes are worthy of our attention. This is not to say composition studies scholars have not turned their attention to athletics. Debra Hawhee (2004), herself a former student-athlete, reminds us of the connections between early ancient Western rhetorics and athletics.¹² In *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece*, Hawhee (2004) offers the “sophist-athlete” (65) as one who conceptually and *physically* refined rhetoric and rhetorical practices through public performances and contests. Julie Cheville (2001), in probably the most well-known text on student-athletes from within composition studies, spent two years studying the women’s basketball team at the University of Iowa. Cheville’s *Minding the Body: What Student Athletes Know about Learning* pulls from theories of embodied cognition, geography, situated cognition, and performance to illustrate the “conceptual disjunctures” (Cheville 2001, 8) between the classroom and the court in the hope that such an illustration “will encourage the integration of institutional structures and the revision of policies that have traditionally splintered athletic and academic programming in many institutions” (12). Though she does not use the term *transfer*, opting instead to think about “schematic portability” (Cheville 2001, 80) between learning contexts, issues of transfer animate her argument. She is concerned with “identifying the conceptual structures students face as they traverse multiple sites of learning within a single institution” (80). Cheville’s prescient concern foreshadowed research coming about a decade later on how student-writers transfer knowledge and practice of writing across contexts, specifically the award-winning *Writing across Contexts*:

Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing by Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak (2014).

Continuing in the tradition of Hawhee and Cheville, I look to the (material) relationship between athletics and rhetoric. More specifically, I follow Cheville by turning attention to student-athletes competing within the NCAA. Like Cheville, I want to know our student-athletes and better understand the work we undertake with them. But I oscillate my focus differently than Cheville does. Cheville moves from broad to specific: her broad case of student-athletes' learning bounded spatially at a specific single institution. I move from specific to broad: the specific reading and writing practices of student-athletes across a wide range of NCAA member institutions. I want to get to know our student-athletes, not just our basketball players. And I believe our student-athletes are remarkably representative of our larger student population in ways we often do not consider. My implications do not just speak to athletic reform but to larger issues, namely how we can better work with our student-writers.

In *A Teaching Subject*, Joseph Harris (2012) famously describes composition—in all its iterations—as a teaching subject in that it “defines itself through an interest in the works students and teachers do together” (xv). The classroom is the heart of the work we undertake, the work we theorize, research, practice, and teach. Our discipline formed out of the classroom, no matter whether we locate this date back when Corax and Tisias were kicking around Sicily in the fifth century BCE or with the advent of FYC at Harvard in the late nineteenth century or with the founding of CCCC in 1949.¹³ Unlike other disciplines, which moved from research to classroom practice, composition studies developed a research strand and its many journals and conferences from classroom practice. We are a student-centered discipline—so focused on our students that Kelly Ritter's (2013) chapter “Who Are Students?” opens Rita Malenczyk's (2013) edited collection *A Rhetoric for Writing Program Administrators*, a collection that positions itself as a primer for novice (and even experienced) WPAs. In *The Embodied Playbook: Writing Practices of Student-Athletes*, I focus on student-athletes as a subset of our student population.

The close to one-half million NCAA student-athletes know best through their bodies and use their bodies to engage with scripted plays. This engagement signals a unique form of literacy holding great promise for researchers invested in extracurricular forms of literacy and teachers invested in working with student-athlete writers. Over the past decade, I coached high-school soccer and basketball and worked with

and in two prominent Division I athletics departments and one Division II athletics department. I supervised mandatory study hours for football players, developed curricula for a student-athlete writing center, hired and trained student-athlete writing tutors, and worked one on one with student-athletes who struggled mightily in the classroom and clung to eligibility. Through my many experiences across a range of institutions, I found myself constantly struck by the incongruity arising between the classroom and the court or field. I listened in on basketball film sessions and practices where coaches and players rapidly moved through complex sets of text. They teased apart slight bodily movement in a film clip, rewrote a play based on intuition, and collaboratively added a wrinkle to a play based on previous experience. I sat with a first-year football player who wrote out and explained the nuances of a wide-receiver route to me. These moments illustrate cognitive activities necessary to compete at a high level of sport, specifically metacognition and attention to audience, both of which inform textual revision. Aren't these cognitive activities necessary in a writing-intensive space?

Yet these student-athletes who unpacked their athletic knowledge and experience for me often struggled to slide words across the screen for their FYC assignments. I watched student-athletes struggle to connect how they know for their sport and how instructors ask them to know in a classroom. Without pointing an accusatory finger at the student-athletes, the NCAA, athletics departments, or even myself and my many colleagues who work with student-athlete writers, in this book I look hard at disconnects between the classroom and the court. I do this by listening to our student-athletes. When the NCAA and athletics departments periodically get serious about academic reform and implement a new conglomeration of matrices to track academic success (or failure), the voice of the student-athlete is often drowned in a cascading sea of press releases, data points, and Excel spreadsheets. Through giving voice to our student-athletes and their embodied writing practices, we can begin to get to know all of our students, not just those with traditional literacies.

THE BODY IN WRITING

In thinking about the writing practices of our student-athletes, I pair research from two growing areas: (1) work charting the constellation of extracurricular literate practices and activities students bring into the classroom and (2) work on the ineluctable relationship between the mind and body during cognitive activity. For the first, literacy

researchers over the past two decades focus on charting instantiations of extracurricular literacy in a wide variety of locations and with a wide variety of artifacts. Theoretically, such work helps researchers arrive at new constructs of literacy and more robust theories for conceptualizing literacy and its place in school. Specifically, Kevin Roozen (2008) strengthens literacy researchers' understanding of activity theory and the interconnectedness of extracurricular and curricular composing through longitudinal ethnographic studies of writers. In his study of Charles, an African American undergraduate enrolled in a basic writing class and also a published writer, stand-up comedian, and spoken-word poet, Roozen focuses on Charles's opportunities to display publicly his literate development and how these opportunities informed his academic course work. Reading his original poems during the African American Cultural Center's weekly readings and performing jokes at his university's open mic night "enhanced [Charles's] speeches" (Roozen 2008, 24) for Speech Communication 101. Charles was failing the course midway through the semester, but in large part because of his extracurricular literacy work, he managed a passing grade. Roozen argues that "extracurricular and curricular literate activities . . . are so profoundly interconnected that it becomes difficult to see where one ends and others begin" (27). However, Roozen and other researchers investigating synergies and disconnects between school and nonschool literate practices miss two pieces to the literacy-development puzzle. I don't see much focus on how people take up literate practices as embodied literate practices or on the centrality of the body during meaning making practices. Both of these processes are central to how our student-athletes develop as writers, specifically, and literate persons, generally.

I find these missing pieces particularly curious when reading Mark Dressman, Sarah McCarthey, and Paul Prior's argument in their editor's introduction to an issue of *Research in the Teaching of English*. They assert, "Literate practices necessarily involve people's embodied acts and words" (Dressman, McCarthey, and Prior 2012, 5). We see this interdependent relationship between literate practices and the body in Roozen's (2008) exploration of Charles's literacy. Charles's involvement in stand-up comedy performances and public poetry recitations illuminated for Roozen how Charles's literate practices necessitated bodily interaction with text. Charles practiced how to "use written materials during an oral presentation, maintain[ing] eye contact with his audience, avoid[ing] using 'um' and 'uh,' and control[ing] his nerves" (22). Through honing these embodied literate practices, Charles passed Speech Comm, which, in turn, encouraged print-journalist aspirations.

Though I find myself nodding along with Roozen's narrative of and argument about Charles, what gives me pause is how Roozen casts Charles's engagement with embodied literate practices as subservient to his written (i.e., traditional) literate practices even though embodied practices appear central to his literate development. I am not diminishing the importance of written forms of literacy, but I am hesitant to place embodied forms of literacy, such as stand-up comedy and poetry recitations, as a steppingstone to more traditional engagements with literacy. Bodily engagement with text is an important piece of the larger puzzle of literate development.

The work of Jenn Fishman, Andrea Lunsford, Beth McGregor, and Mark Otuteye directly points toward the body's centrality during literate practices. Culling data from the Stanford Study of Writing, Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, and Otuteye (2005) draw on curricular and extracurricular writing of 189 undergraduates at Stanford to report on synergies and disconnects between extracurricular writing—what the coauthors refer to as “live, scripted, and embodied activities . . . stage[d] outside the classroom” (226)—and the students' growth as academic writers. As is the case with Roozen's rich description of Charles, the coauthors' focus on embodiment is subservient to a focus on performance and how theories and practices of embodiment aid in the students' literate practices.

In the past two decades, we have seen work dedicated to constructing composition pedagogies grounded in bodily learning (see, for example, Barry Kroll's [2013] *The Open Hand: Arguing as the Art of Peace*). This work comes in the wake of the New London Group's nesting “bodily physicality” under “gestural design” (New London Group 1996, 83), and, only a few years later, Kristie Fleckenstein's (1999) succinctly and astutely asserting, “We are writing bodies” (297). However, many advances in understanding the body's role in cognition in general, let alone in writing, have come from outside composition studies. For one, philosopher Mark Johnson (1987) reminded us over three decades ago, “Our embodiment is essential to who we are” (13). Cognitive anthropologist Lambros Malafouris (2013) takes Johnson's statement further when he considers how the mind and body interact with material objects to undertake cognitive action. In *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement*, Malafouris seeks to “map a cognitive landscape in which brains, bodies, and things play equal roles in the drama of human cognitive becoming” (Malafouris 2013, 2). Advances in philosophy, computer science, and anthropology inform discussions within composition studies aimed at understanding the larger external and internal forces

giving rise to the act of composing. I provide a more in-depth discussion of issues related to embodiment and writing in chapter 2 but here argue composition research should more clearly link literate practices, generally, and writing practices, specifically, with embodiment. We need to understand better how bodies intersect and interact with text during meaning making. In chapter 3, I illustrate how student-athletes know and become through bodily engagement with text. They understand the strengths and limitations of their rhetorical situation (to borrow rhetorical terms, they understand the *constraints*) through embodying the text and performing the text in a competitive space. As interest in extracurricular literate practices and embodied approaches to composing increases, we would do well to listen to our many student-athletes.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Earlier in this chapter, I used a film metaphor to describe my focus in this book. Here I continue such a metaphor and offer my book in two sections sans an intermission. I title section 1 “Knowing Our Student-Athletes.” Chapter 2 opens the curtain on this section, and I cast scripted plays as the lead performer. I look at how coaches and players construct plays, for whom plays are constructed, and to what end. Inspired by Charles Bazerman and Paul Prior’s *What Writing Does and How It Does It* (Bazerman and Prior 2004), I ask what are plays and what do they do? To answer the first half of this query—what are plays?—I point to four contemporary basketball and football plays and one historical football play collected through digital and physical archival research. I define plays as multimodal texts, dialectically constructed, historically situated, and anticipative of competitive bodily enactment. In sum, plays respond to rhetorical situations affecting their composition. Often drawn by hand or digitally by coaches, plays reflect the offensive and defensive strengths of a team and represent a team’s unification. For the second question—what do plays do?—I trace a play’s creation and implementation. Using images of Auburn’s and West Virginia’s football team-signaling plays, I consider how plays as text interact with players. Early pioneers of football and basketball, such as Walter Camp at Chicago and James Naismith at Kansas, described clandestine methods for relaying plays to their players during a game. Following this tradition, the University of Oklahoma Sooners, and many other current football programs, use an amalgamation of images, gestures, and vocal cues to signal plays, and the basketball coaching staff at the University of North Georgia uses a similar combination of hand signals and vocal cues to relay a play quickly

and secretly during a game situation. Relayed plays undergo resemiotization, a term I borrow from semiotician Rick Iedema (2001; 2003). He uses the term to describe the process by which meaning transfers across various semiotic resources. After resemiotization, plays are embodied by players. What do plays do? Plays, I contend, *do* competitive bodily action. Understanding what plays are and what they do erects a stage for watching how student-athletes learn plays, as I do in chapter 3.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide concrete evidence for my claim regarding the body's centrality during writing. Chapter 3 asks student-athletes to take center stage. I report on a year-long case study into the men's basketball team at the University of North Georgia, a Division II school competing in the Peach Belt Conference with a roughly \$3 million annual budget. Through attending practices, sitting in on locker-room pregame, postgame, and halftime talks, interviewing players and coaches, and collecting textual artifacts such as plays and scouting reports, I offer a narrative of the 2014–2015 season and illustrate how coaches teach plays and how players learn plays. Framing my argument with work on material rhetorics by Laura Micciche (2014), locations of writing by Nedra Reynolds (2004), and scaffolding by Isabelle Thompson (2009), I argue players learn plays through three cognitive processes: spatial orientation, haptic communication, and scaffolded situations. Like my description of how players engage with plays, this three-step process is predicated on knowing and learning through the body. Moreover, this three-step process speaks to the larger question driving this book: how do student-athletes know?

Chapter 4 opens the second section: "Teaching Our Student-Athletes." In this chapter, I turn the spotlight to the material institutional context in which student-athletes write by offering an account of a Division I athletics writing center at the University of Oklahoma (OU), a prominent Division I school with nineteen varsity sports and separate academic and student-life services for its student-athletes. For four years, I worked as a program-development coordinator in this space and experienced the material challenges of working with high-profile student-athlete writers under the intense gaze of the athletics department, the NCAA, and the public. Pulling from interviews with athletics-department personnel—including the director of athletics—and textual analysis of policy documents, I account for how stakeholders at various levels perceive and enact student-athlete writing tutoring. Tutoring practices resulted from the NCAA's Section 2.5 found in the NCAA manual for Division I Athletics. Fearful of violating this principle, the athletics writing center handcuffed itself to unproductive methods

of working with student-athlete writers. Yet the center productively jettisoned these methods through forming intra-institutional alliances with campus WPAs, particularly WPAs at OU's campus-wide writing center. Compositionists and WPAs can use the collective capacity of those invested in writing to improve writing-related services for student-athletes while adhering to an NCAA academic principle. The act of teaching student-athlete writers, like teaching any writer, is caught in a matrix of material circumstances affecting how writing instruction may manifest itself. This chapter suggests methods for working with and against these material circumstances, which are unique for student-athlete writers. Once we better the conditions of teaching student-athletes, we can move into implementing pedagogies based on how they know. I do this in the final chapter.

My work with student-athletes at Auburn, Oklahoma, and the University of North Georgia culminates in chapter 5. I return to the three cognitive processes discussed in chapter 3 (spatial orientation, haptic communication, and scaffolded situations) that undergird the learning of scripted plays. I assert that the enactment of these plays, the embodied action of these plays, is analogous to another creative, collaborative activity reliant upon bodily reaction to an unfolding text: jazz improvisation. Recent work across fields such as business, ethnomusicology, and writing center studies has looked toward the learning practices of jazz improvisation as a model for other creative learning organizations. I specifically draw upon the work of Frank Barrett (1998), and of Elizabeth Boquet and Michele Eodice (2008), who extend Barrett's work to the writing center. I argue the learning of scripted plays looks a whole lot like the creative and collaborative model of learning extended from jazz to other learning organizations. Specifically, I argue for a pedagogy based on three of Barrett's characteristics of jazz improvisation:

- Shared orientation toward minimal structures that allow maximum flexibility;
- Distributed task: or continual negotiation and dialogue toward dynamic synchronization;
- Taking turns soloing and supporting (Barrett 1998, 606).

I return to the basketball players at UNG to show how these characteristics align with student-athletes' three cognitive processes for learning scripted plays. At the close, instead of provided specific pedagogical dictums based on these characteristics—doing so would counter the free-flowing spirit of jazz and sports—I give questions to consider

when working with student-athlete writers. These questions capture the essence of a jazzy, creative, and collaborative learning, a way of learning founded on shared principles but manifesting its sonic and embodied experience in countless ways.

My argument throughout this book unfolds against the background of US higher education and its curiously cozy relationship with multibillion-dollar college sports. I aim to oxygenate nearly lifeless and impotent screeds directed at toppling the uniquely US phenomenon that is college sports by attending to how student-athletes produce and engage with text and providing curricular questions we can consider when working with this student population.

Finally, I am aware college sports, specifically, and the notion of scholarships for athletes, generally, are reserved for a select number of institutions across the United States. For example, Division III schools do not offer athletics scholarships. Many of my colleagues teach at schools without grant-in-aid scholarships for athletes or even an athletics department. Nevertheless, it's critical for college educators, particularly those of us teaching writing-intensive courses like FYC, to cultivate an awareness of how learners know through their bodies. I make this argument because recent advances in learning theories such as threshold concepts and the importance of writing transfer often rest on tapping into a learner's prior knowledge, not only curricular knowledge but also extracurricular, as Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak (2014) argue in *Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*. Our students' extracurricular prior knowledge is critical to the work we ask them to undertake in our classrooms, and understanding our student-athletes provides a foothold for understanding a much larger student population: those engaging with writing through their bodies. I suggest a large portion of *all* our students' extracurricular prior knowledge rests on a bodily literacy foundation. According to the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement, 41 percent ($n = 27,681$) of students reported they were "very much" involved with "Athletic Teams" during their high-school years (Indiana University Bloomington Center for Postsecondary Research 2015). During the 2014–2015 school year, 7.8 million students competed in high-school sports, with over 2.1 million boys participating in football and/or basketball (the two most high-dollar athletic programs at the college level) (National Federation of High School Associations 2015). These high numbers continue into college even though a tiny percentage of students compete as student-athletes. In conjunction with the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association, Scott Forrester (2014), a

professor of recreation and leisure studies, surveyed over thirty-three thousand students. His data reveal 75 percent of students use on-campus recreation-center facilities or play intramurals, and 80 percent do so at least once a week. Only 21 percent never participate. Our students, not just our student-athletes, are physically active, though we often only see students' scholastic side. Students other than just student-athletes learn and make meaning through their bodies. These are the learners we need to consider—players of big-time college sports are just the ones grabbing the headlines. Through learning about our student-athletes, through learning how they understand text through their bodies, we learn about a great number of our students.

As we continue to chart our students' "funds of knowledge" (Moll and González 2001, 160) and understand how difference, manifested in myriad ways, impacts an individual's writing and entrance into curricular writing spaces, as we advocate on behalf of our students and those in our community, as we continue to explore how extracurricular instantiations of literacy impact curricular writing practices, we would do well to turn our gaze toward student-athletes and the athletic culture ingrained in many of our schools. When we open up new possibilities for what counts as literacy and how these new possibilities affect classroom practice, our eyes and ears should be sensitive to what our student-athletes are showing us and telling us. Let's stop thinking that what occurs on the athletic field does not affect the writing classroom. Let's consider the Treys and Jasons many of us teach and examine the writing practices of our student-athletes.

Notes

1. As I mentioned, college sports are a uniquely United States fixture. I remember sitting on a patio in Vernazza, Italy, with my wife. We were nibbling on octopus and talking with a group from New Zealand. Talk soon turned to sports, and the Kiwis drew a blank when I started on about college sports. The idea was completely foreign—literally and figuratively—to them.
2. Princeton, one of the oldest football programs in the nation, had a player-coach until 1901, the year prior to Woodrow Wilson's assuming the presidency of the school. One of the more humorous side notes regarding Princeton's football captaincy is that the captain in 1889 and 1890 was Edgar Allan Poe, grandnephew of the poet. Winthrop M. Daniels relays seeing then-professor Woodrow Wilson "come striding out upon the field, take his place behind the eleven with Captain Poe, and proceed to whip the team up and down the field" (Baker 1927, 14). Through this humorous anecdote, Daniels illustrates the seriousness with which the future university and US president approached football.
3. See John R. Thelin's (2004) *A History of American Higher Education* pages 159–60 for a more detailed account of the rise of mascots and pageantry in collegiate athletics.

4. Camp is an engaging figure. Often described as the “Father of American Football” (Smith 1990, 63), Camp wrote prolifically, penning articles for periodicals such as *Harper’s Weekly*, as well as publishing a book of tactics for the card game bridge titled *Condensed Auction for the Busy Man*. Harford Powel’s 1926 biography of Camp, while more of a panegyric of Camp than a critical examination of his life, examines how Camp helped usher football into being a major US sport governed by rules and overseen by the NCAA.
5. For additional reading on Stagg, see Robin Lester’s (1999) *Stagg’s University: The Rise, Decline, and Fall of Big-Time Football at Chicago*. Not only does Lester describe how Stagg consolidated power at an academically prestigious school, he also charts football’s eventual abolishment at Chicago in 1939.
6. The student newspaper the *Wesleyan Argus* argued in 1888 that Wesleyan University should abandon football, but it appears the poor record of the team influenced the suggestion and not concerns over player safety or the possibility of athletics trespassing on academic turf. That year Woodrow Wilson, then a faculty member at Wesleyan, is said to have delivered an inspirational “blackboard talk” (Bragdon 1967, 172) before the Princeton-Wesleyan game, a game Wilson followed closely as a Princeton alum. During this talk, Wilson stressed “speed in running off plays” (Bragdon 1967, 172) over a century before a hurry-up style of offense would characterize the offensive attack of many college football teams. Unfortunately, Wesleyan would go on to lose to Princeton 44–0.
7. One reason for Eliot’s losing the battle against football at Harvard was that he ran into then-president Theodore Roosevelt, a staunch proponent of the game. While Roosevelt admired the jingoistic tendencies of the game, he pushed hard for the game to be “played on a thoroughly clean basis” (Brands 1997, 553), especially after his son sustained an injury playing the game as an undergraduate at Harvard. When leading voices, including Eliot, pushed for abolishing the game because “its violence could not be curbed” (Dalton 2002, 290), Roosevelt invited representatives from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton to the White House in hopes of “minim[izing] the danger” without making the game “too ladylike” (Dalton 2002, 290). Walter Camp’s biographer, Harford Powel, writes, “Nothing of great importance came from this meeting” (Powel 2008, 81); however, many historians point to this meeting as the first step toward the eventual formation of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (later renamed the National Collegiate Athletic Association). For more information regarding Roosevelt’s role in the formation of the NCAA, see John J. Miller’s (2011) *The Big Scrum: How Teddy Roosevelt Saved Football*.
8. The financial numbers reported by Yale are a far cry from the record high \$112.9 million reported in athletic expenditures at the University of Texas at Austin in 2009 (beating out the number-two school, The Ohio State University, by close to \$10 million [Clotfelter 2011, 18]). These numbers speak to the dramatic growth of football and, since football often funds other college sports, college sports in general.
9. See Murray Sperber’s (2000) *Beer and Circus: How Big-Time College Sports Is Crippling Undergraduate Education* and *College Sports, Inc.* (Sperber 1990); Mark Yost’s (2010) *Varsity Green: A Behind the Scenes Look at Culture and Corruption in College Athletics*; Andrew Zimbalist’s (1990) *Unpaid Professionals*; and Patricia Adler and Peter Adler’s *Blackboards and Blackboards: College Athletes and Role Engulfment* (Adler and Adler 1991).
10. Chicago reinstated its football program in 1973 but at the Division III level, at which student-athletes do not receive scholarships. Such a decision is a testament to Chicago’s focus on academics over athletics.
11. Former football player Michael McAdoo also sued UNC over these fraudulent classes in November of 2014, just one month after Wainstein released the report. But

- the lawsuit filed by Hausfeld LLP in Durham County (North Carolina) Superior Court on behalf of McCants and Ramsay is the first to point an accusatory finger at the NCAA.
12. Hawhee played basketball at the University of Tennessee from 1988 to 1992 under legendary coach Pat Summitt. The Lady Vols won two national championships during the four years Hawhee was on the team.
 13. Composition studies, or whichever discipline-encompassing term we use, is certainly a diverse and growing field. Following the lead of Edward M. White, Norbert Elliot, and Irvin Peckham (2015), my use of *our discipline* and *we* refers to the Classification of Instructional Programs 23.13 (Rhetoric and Composition/Writing Studies; National Center for Education Statistics 2010). Within this specific classification is a host of program titles illustrating the capaciousness of our discipline: “writing, general; creative writing; professional, technical, business, and scientific writing, rhetoric and composition; rhetoric and composition/writing studies, other.”

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