the WAC Journal

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Submissions

The WAC Journal invites article submissions. The longest-running national peer-reviewed journal dedicated to writing across the curriculum, *The WAC Journal* seeks scholarly work at the intersection of writing with teaching, curriculum, learning, and research. Our review board welcomes inquiries, proposals, and articles from 3,000 to 6,000 words. We are especially interested in contributions that creatively approach a diverse range of anti-racist pedagogies, feminist rhetorics across the curriculum, intersectional contexts of feminism, and international WAC initiatives. Articles focusing on the ways WAC can be fostered in online courses are welcome as well. *The WAC Journal* supports a variety of diverse approaches to, and discussions of, writing across the curriculum. We welcome submissions from all WAC scholars that focus on writing across the curriculum, including topics on WAC program strategies, techniques and applications; emergent technologies and digital literacies across the curriculum; and WID. *The WAC Journal* is an open-access journal published annually by Clemson University, Parlor Press, and the WAC Clearinghouse. It is available by subscription in print through Parlor Press at https://parlorpress.com/products/wac-journal and online in open-access format at the WAC Clearinghouse via https://wac.colostate.edu/journal/. Articles are accepted throughout the year on a rolling basis. The peer review process is double-blind, which means all identifying information must be removed from the submission. Any submission notes must be included in the field provided for them, not in a separate cover letter or attachment. Submissions that aren't ready for double-blind review will be returned.

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A Middle Way for WAC: Writing to Engage

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Writing across the curriculum (WAC) activities and assignments have typically been characterized as fitting into one of two categories: *writing to learn* (WTL) or *writing in the disciplines* (WID, sometimes referred to as "writing to communicate"). This article suggests that WTL and WID are better viewed as the ends of a spectrum of WAC activities and assignments. Between WTL and WID, a third set of activities and assignments, writing-to-engage (WTE), offers a promising means of extending the critical thinking involved in WTL, engaging students in critical thinking about disciplinary knowledge and processes, and laying additional groundwork for writing to communicate within a discipline or profession. Drawing on Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills as modified by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), this article argues that WTE activities and assignments offer additional precision and nuance for understanding how writing can be used to support learning in courses that employ WAC pedagogies.

Keywords: Writing Across the Curriculum, WAC, Critical Thinking, Writing to Learn, Writing in the Disciplines, Writing to Engage

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For nearly two decades, I've been troubled by the limited vocabulary I've been able to draw on as I discuss writing across the curriculum (WAC) activities and assignments with colleagues inside and outside my discipline.[1] When I began learning about WAC in the 1980s, I was presented with and readily accepted a clear dichotomy: WAC activities and assignments could fall into one of two categories, either writing-to-learn (WTL) or writing in the disciplines (WID). WTL focused on exploring key concepts, processes, and interpretive frameworks in a given discipline, while WID (sometimes referred to as writing to communicate) focused on preparing students to carry out the communication tasks typical of a given discipline or profession.

While I was still relatively new to WAC, it seemed as though the boundary between writing to learn and writing in the disciplines was clear and well understood.[2]

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2. In some cases, that boundary extended to how best to characterize WAC programs in general, with some colleagues referring to "WAC/WID programs" in a nod to the idea that some

Later in my career, however, a few years after I began directing my university's institute for learning and teaching, I found myself questioning it. I had learned quickly as director of the institute that, while improving teaching and learning seemed to be universally viewed by faculty members as a worthwhile endeavor, it did not elicit the same level of enthusiasm (translation: participation) that accompanied initiatives designed to enhance student critical thinking. As a result, by the end of 2007, about fifteen months after I began directing the institute, nearly all of our professional development workshops, discussion groups, retreats, and conferences included attention to improving students' critical thinking.[3]

In 2008, with this focus on critical thinking in mind (and with an eye toward strengthening our local WAC initiative), I began to explore the connections between critical thinking and WAC. I considered the implications for our WAC initiative of a range of cognitive, affective, and developmental frameworks, including those developed by Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, et al., 1956; Krathwohl et al., 1956), Lev Vigotsky and other Soviet-era psychologists (Leontiev, 2005; Leontiev & Luria, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987), Jean Piaget (1936, 1970), William Perry (1970, 1981), and Patricia King and Karen Kitchener (1994, 2004). Linking WAC and critical thinking was, of course, far from a novel idea. I benefited from the efforts of numerous colleagues in the WAC community, among them Sue McLeod (2000/1988; McLeod & Maimon, 2000; McLeod et al., 2001), John Bean (1996, 2011), Elaine Maimon (2001), David Russell (1990, 1991, 2002), Judith Langer and Arthur Applebee (2007/1987), Marty Townsend and Terry Myers Zawacki (Townsend, 2001; Townsend & Zawacki, 2013), Jacqueline Jones Royster (1992), Art Young (A. Young, 2011/2006; Reiss & Young, 2001), Christine Farris (Farris et al., 1990), Chris Anson (Anderson et al., 2015, 2016; Anson, 2017; Rutz, 2004), Teresa Redd (2018), and Bill Condon (Condon, 2001; Condon &

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programs focus primarily on writing to learn while others focus primarily on writing to communicate in disciplines and professions (see, for example, Robert Ochsner and Judy Fowler's 2004 review of WAC and WID scholarship and, more recently, the 2020 call for a special issue of *Across the Disciplines* on "STEM and WAC/WID" at https://wac.colostate.edu/atd/calls/stem-and-wac-wid-co-navigating-our-shifting-currents/). For a useful corrective, see Sue McLeod and Elaine Maimon's (2004) article, "Clearing the Air: WAC Myths and Realities."

3. From one perspective, this might seem as though it were primarily a marketing decision, since enhancing students' critical thinking skills requires improved teaching and learning. And, to some extent, marketing considerations played a role in the decision. But a focus on critical thinking can encourage broader discussions of how to improve teaching and learning, such as shifting our focus from an emphasis on technique (how to teach, for example, and how to encourage learning) to an emphasis on aligning what we do in our courses with our overall teaching and learning goals (what we teach and what students learn). My conclusion, then and now, is that a focus on critical thinking deepens the discussions of curricular goals, teaching strategies, and the conditions that lead to learning.

Kelly-Riley, 2004; Condon & Rutz, 2012).[4] The work I was reading helped me begin to define the problem in a way that would lead me to rethink my understanding of WAC.

Defining the Problem

My efforts to design professional development activities that linked critical thinking to WAC led me to experience what John Dewey called a "felt difficulty" (1910, p. 72), a concept my mentor and friend Richard Young introduced me to in one of his graduate seminars. Dewey described the idea as a sense of "undefined uneasiness and shock," which can productively lead to a more defined understanding of a problem (1910, p. 72). My sense of unease with the WTL/WID dichotomy arose as I began using a technique that had proven effective as I'd worked with faculty members from across the disciplines—analyzing their assignments, quizzes, and examinations to identify the kinds of critical thinking they were asking students to carry out. I'd found it helpful, for example, to draw on Bloom's taxonomy (as modified by Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl, and which I've modified further to include reflecting) to point out that a midterm examination in an upper-division course involved, for the most part, only two of the cognitive skills identified by Bloom and his colleagues, such as remembering and understanding, rather than the larger set of skills they had hoped students would also use, such as reflecting, applying, analyzing, and evaluating (see Figure 1).
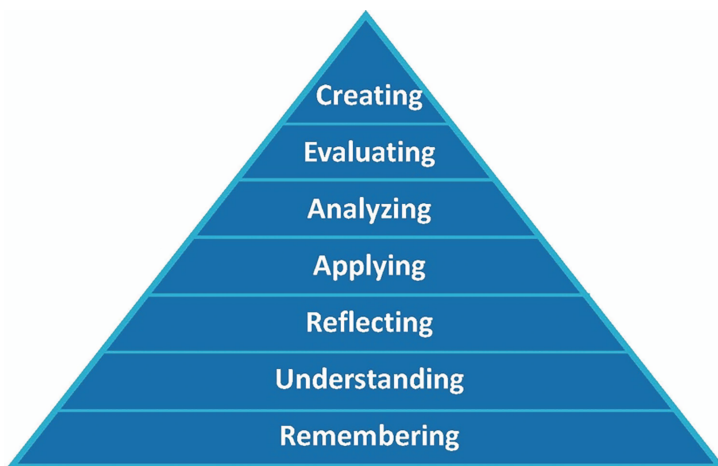

Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy as modified by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) and modified further to add reflecting as a distinct cognitive skill.

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4. Bill served as the keynote speaker for our institute's first conference on teaching, learning, and critical thinking in May 2007.

As I looked more carefully at the kind of work encouraged by many write-to-learn activities and writing-in-the-disciplines assignments, I realized that I was looking at a bimodal distribution. WTL activities focused more often than not on what are now commonly (if perhaps inaccurately) called lower-order thinking skills (in Bloom's modified taxonomy, remembering and understanding), while WID activities and writing assignments tended to focus on what have been characterized as higher-order thinking skills (which build on and encompass all of the other critical thinking skills in the taxonomy). There appeared to be, however, less explicit attention to the middle ground, the kinds of critical thinking that are often encouraged in sophomore- and junior-level courses.

This concerned me, particularly given the recognition that students often experience difficulty during their second and third years (Ennis-McMillan et al., 2011; Sterling, 2018), when many faculty members in their major area of study are expecting students to shift from an emphasis on recalling and demonstrating an understanding of key concepts and processes to beginning to apply that knowledge to key issues in their discipline and to engage in exploration, analysis, and evaluation of complex sets of information, ideas, and arguments. If WAC activities and assignments are to contribute to success at this point—and there is no doubt that they can—it seemed as though we would benefit from an expanded vocabulary for explaining how they could be used to help our students succeed.

I want to emphasize again that the key issue I was wrestling with was one of emphasis and definition rather than an argument that WTL cannot involve the full range of critical thinking skills. As my colleagues Marty Townsend and Terry Myers Zawacki have told me (personal communication, December 2018), it's inaccurate to characterize WTL activities and assignments as involving only remembering, understanding, and reflecting. Although far from a majority, many WTL activities and assignments engage students in applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. This is the case with a number of the assignments described in John Bean's book *Engaging Ideas*. It is true of others as well. Robert Irish (1999), for example, describes WTL assignments that engage engineering students in application, analysis, and in some cases evaluation. "Carefully designed writing assignments can play a significant role in enticing students into critical thinking at higher levels," he wrote, noting that "Perry and Bloom provide valuable schemes to focus assignments for writing-to-learn" (p. 96). More recently, Justin Rademaekers (2018) explored the role critical thinking plays in writing-to-learn and writing-in-the-disciplines activities and assignments. He noted that "as faculty and WAC directors get specific about the kind of critical thinking a course is seeking from students, informal and writing-to-learn assignments can be discussed as important tools for helping students practice the kind of thinking their instructors want to encourage in their writing" (p. 122). Similarly,

Chris Anson has observed, "It's important to think about the intellectual activities that lie beneath WTL assignments. It's possible to design them so that they not only are capable of being completed in one draft, but also require rigorous underlying cognitive operations" (personal communication, September 2020). Anson (2017) recently explored this approach by reporting on WTL activities that linked reading with brief writing assignments, arguing that they can "engage students in deeper and more intellectually meaningful reading through brief, imaginative, focused writing assignments in a variety of genres" (p. 23).

Typically, WTL activities and assignments focus more on acquiring and gaining control over new knowledge than on applying, analyzing, or evaluating that knowledge. Yet, as Townsend, Zawacki, Irish, Rademaekers, and Anson have observed, these activities can involve the use of a wide range of critical thinking skills. McLeod and Maimon (2004) echo this argument, pointing out, "The purpose of writing to learn assignments—journals, discovery drafts, in-class writing—is to use writing as a tool for learning rather than a test of that learning, to have writers explain concepts or ideas to themselves, to ask questions, to make connections, to speculate, to engage in critical thinking" (p. 579). Their reference to explaining, asking questions, and speculating point toward remembering, understanding, and reflecting, while their reference to making connections and engaging in critical thinking suggest additional cognitive skills. As such, they leave open the possibility that WTL activities and assignments can engage students more deeply in exploring disciplinary knowledge, even though the majority of them do not.

With this in mind, it makes sense that the most commonly assigned WTL activities can be characterized as what Peter Elbow (1997) has called low-stakes writing. These activities are often ungraded and may receive little or no feedback from instructors. WTL activities are also typically writer-based (Flower, 1979), with little or no attention to an audience beyond the writer. Examples include freewriting and brainstorming, summarizing and responding to readings, reflecting on class sessions, defining concepts, describing processes, listing important ideas and questions about a subject, mapping and clustering, and developing outlines (see, for example, Bean, 1996, 2011; Beers & Howell, 2005; Knipper & Duggan, 2006; R. Young, 2011; Zinsser, 1988). The majority of these activities do little to engage students in the kinds of sustained critical thinking that go beyond the poorly named lower-order thinking skills often associated with introductory survey courses.

The problem I found myself addressing, then, became one of definition: how best to characterize writing activities that led students to engage in a larger number of the critical thinking skills defined by Bloom and his colleagues. I asked myself how I might describe to colleagues outside of writing studies those WAC activities and assignments that did not fit neatly into WTL or WID.

Defining Writing to Engage

As the title of this article suggests, writing-to-engage activities and assignments occupy a middle ground between typical writing-to-learn and writing-in-the-disciplines activities and assignments. This middle ground allows WAC scholars to explore assignments well suited to helping students move beyond their initial understanding of disciplinary content and processes to a deeper engagement with the information, ideas, and arguments central to a discipline. Writing to engage can thus be seen as falling along a spectrum between writing to learn and writing in the disciplines (Figure 2).

Figure 2. WAC activities and assignments are aligned along a spectrum of critical thinking skills.

Writing to engage is well suited to encouraging the use of cognitive skills such as reflecting, applying, analyzing, and evaluating, skills that are valuable for grappling with the information, ideas, and arguments within a discipline. The writing produced through WTL activities and assignments are less likely to resemble formal, discipline-based writing, but they can center students' attention on issues that are central to the discipline. For example, one of my colleagues from sociology told me that he had assigned a brief report that asked students to apply a sociological theory they had been discussing in class to a YouTube video that showed interactions among a particular group of people. He described the assignment as, essentially, "You've studied two approaches to this area. Here's a video. Watch it. Pick one of the approaches. Apply it. And then tell me why you didn't pick the other approach." Certainly, this isn't writing that would be published in a sociology journal, but it engaged his students more deeply with the theoretical frameworks they were exploring in the course.

Writing-to-engage activities could work well in a second-year or third-year course. They might also be used in a course offered toward the end of a student's first year. I've found the concept useful because it has helped me—and more importantly the faculty members I've worked with—better understand the range of activities we can ask our students to carry out. While some of my WAC colleagues will certainly observe that what I'm describing is far from new, I believe there is value in rethinking the long-standing WTL/WID dichotomy. Doing so will allow us to better understand what we are asking our students to accomplish and help us do a better job of

deciding when and how to use writing activities and assignments to engage students in the content and processes they'll work with in their major areas of study and, eventually, in their professions. In Table 1, I lay out the distinctive characteristics of writing to learn, writing to engage, and writing in the disciplines.

Table 1.

Approaches to WAC[5]

Writing to Learn	Writing to Engage	Writing in the Disciplines
Using writing to help students remember, understand, and reflect on course concepts, conceptual frameworks, skills, processes.	Using writing to help students assess and work with course concepts, conceptual frameworks, skills, and processes.	Using writing to help students learn how to contribute to discourse within a discipline or profession.
Best characterized as "low-stakes" writing: • The focus is on content; recognizing that students often struggle with new ideas, little or no attention is given to form. • Limited feedback, if any, is provided by the instructor.	Can be characterized as either "low-stakes" or "high-stakes" writing, or it might fall somewhere between the two. WTE assignments can: • Build on WTL activities and assignments • Support a higher level of engagement than WTL activities and assignments • Focus on reflecting, applying, and analyzing and might include some attention to evaluating	Best characterized as "high-stakes" writing: • A greater investment of instructor time is required for designing and responding to student writing. • There is greater potential for student academic misconduct, especially among students who lack confidence in producing original work.
Typical activities include: • In-class responses to prompts • Reflections • Summary/response • Forum discussions • Definitions and descriptions	Typical activities include: • Application of frameworks to texts, media, and cases • Evaluations of alternative approaches and methods • Reflections, critiques, and comparisons • Topic proposals, progress reports, and other brief reports	Typical activities include: • Articles and essays • Presentations • Longer reports • Poster sessions

Complicating Writing to Engage (and Writing Tasks in General)

Arranging writing activities along a spectrum of critical thinking skills suggests other ways that might be used to consider various ranges of writing activities. We might, as Anson (2017) has done, arrange writing tasks or genres along a spectrum from low-stakes to high-stakes writing. We might consider the rhetorical effectiveness of

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5. This table is based on a keynote presentation I delivered at the Second Conference on English Across the Curriculum in Hong Kong (Palmquist, 2018). That presentation was subsequently adapted for inclusion in an edited collection that emerged from the conference (Palmquist, 2021).

writing along Flower's spectrum of writer-based to reader-based prose. We might align writing along a spectrum of personal to public. We might do the same by aligning writing activities and assignments along a spectrum of meaningfulness, building on the work of Michele Eodice, Anne Ellen Geller, and Neal Lerner (2017a, 2017b, 2019). Of these, the low-stakes/high-stakes and meaningfulness continuums might have the most relevance to WAC activities and assignments.

Recently, Chris Anson shared his thoughts about low-stakes and high-stakes writing:

> I see writing on a continuum of informal/low stakes to formal/high stakes. The lowest stakes are really just self-directed reflection, informal in nature and not audience directed; the highest stakes are dissertations (in academic settings). Then along the way are various gradations of WTL assignments, some of them focusing on lower-order processes and then ramping up toward higher-order ones. (personal communication, September 2020)

Anson's spectrum is perhaps best illustrated in his chapter in Alice Horning's edited collection *What Is College Reading?*, in which he places genres ranging from journal entries and reading logs to term papers, reports, and formal essays along a spectrum moving from low-stakes to high-stakes writing (2017). Given the role these stakes play in the design of WAC activities and assignments, we might consider combining a critical-thinking-skills spectrum with a low-stakes/high-stakes spectrum, as shown in Figure 3. In this approach, we might ask where a particular writing activity or assignment fell in the field defined by the two axes, Bloom's modified taxonomy and what was at stake for the student writer. The goal would be to understand both the types of critical thinking an activity or assignment might lead students to engage in, the effort they might reasonably expect their instructors to put into evaluating and responding to the assignment, and their perceptions of the importance of that evaluation.
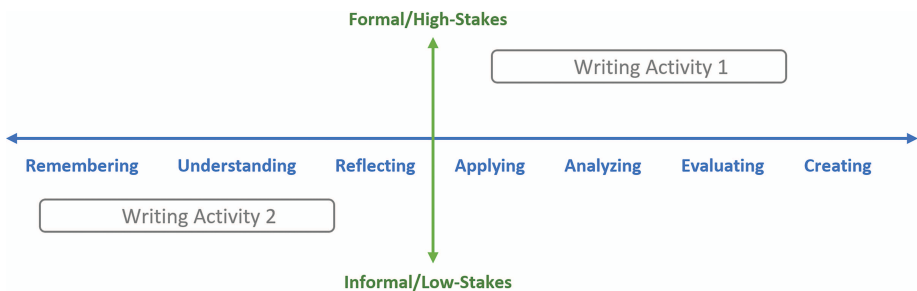
Figure 3. Two axes define a two-dimension space—essentially a grid—within which

assignments could be placed.

Eodice, Geller, and Lerner's Meaningful Writing Project (http://meaningfulwrit-ingproject.net) offers another useful spectrum through which we might consider the factors that lead students to engage critically with a writing activity or assignment. Based on a study that involved surveys of students at three universities, follow-up interviews, collection of student writing, and collection of writing assignments, the project considers factors that led students to think of specific writing assignments as meaningful. Eodice, Geller, and Lerner (2017b) reported that "students find writing projects meaningful when they have opportunities to connect on a personal level, to find meaning beyond the specifics of the assignment itself, and to imagine future selves or future writing identities connected to their goals and interests" (para. 21). They suggested as well that instructors who assigned writing that was reported as meaningful by students "often deliberately built these qualities into their teaching and curriculum" (para. 3).

Meaningfulness seems to provide another measure of student willingness to engage fully in the kinds of critical thinking required to carry out a writing activity or assignment—perhaps even more so than the consequences students face if they do well or poorly. Combining all three aspects of writing would provide us with a three-dimensional space (it could be represented as a cube or a sphere) within which we could consider the design of a writing task (see Figure 4).
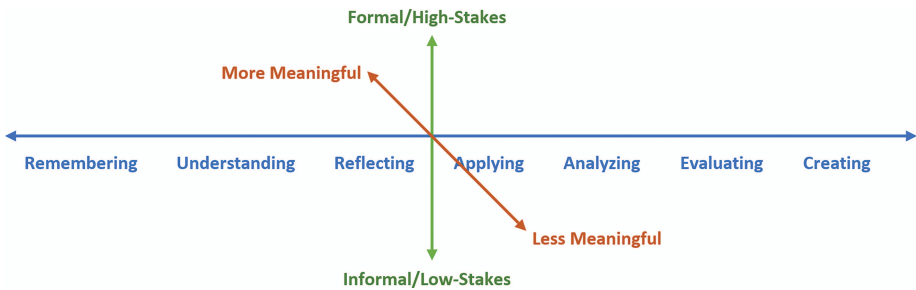
Figure 4. Three axes map out a three-dimensional space within which a writing assignment could be placed.

While writing to engage is rooted in an alignment of a writing task with a modi-fied version of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills, it involves more than viewing that writing task along a single spectrum. If we want students to put in the effort needed to engage in various types of critical thinking, we must not only design the activity or assignment to lead students to carry out particular kinds of thinking but also consider what is at stake for the student and the likelihood that they will find the work meaningful. Our students will ask reasonable questions: How much effort

do I need to put into this? What are the consequences of performing well or poorly? How meaningful do I find this? What kind of critical thinking skills can I bring to bear on this assignment or activity? How can I apply what I've already learned to the task at hand?

The answers to these questions suggest that designing a successful WTE activity or assignment will involve far more than a deep understanding of critical thinking. It will require instructors to draw on their expertise as teachers, their experiences as writers, and their awareness of what they must do to provide appropriate feedback to their students.

Conclusions

I've found value in mapping WAC activities and assignments to a spectrum defined by a widely used taxonomy of cognitive skills. It has allowed me to set aside the idea that writing to learn is one type of activity—even one type of WAC program—while writing in the disciplines is another. Introducing the concept of writing to engage has allowed me to blur the boundaries, as suggested in Figure 2, between each of these approaches to designing writing activities and assignments. It has also allowed me to connect with faculty members who see fostering students' ability to engage in critical thinking as one of their most important instructional objectives. By aligning writing activities and assignments to the critical thinking skills they see as central to working with information, ideas, and arguments within their disciplines, my colleagues have been able to see new roles that can be played by writing in their courses.

Writing to engage also allows us to distinguish between the kinds of learning that occur as students are introduced to a discipline and the kinds of learning that take place as students become more deeply involved with the discipline. Many writing-to-learn activities and assignments are intended to help students remember and understand key concepts and processes. Writing-to-engage activities and assignments build on that foundation by helping students build stronger connections among the concepts and processes they've already begun to understand—that is, these activities and assignments are designed to help students gain greater control over the information, ideas, arguments, frameworks, and processes that are central to the discipline. In this sense, by asking students to draw on critical thinking skills such as reflecting, applying, and analyzing as they work on writing-to-engage activities and assignments, we are engaging them in work that Marlene Scardamalia and Carl Bereiter (1987) describe as knowledge transforming. This work, which Scardamalia and Bereiter describe as adapting knowledge for presentation to a particular audience, asks writers to work with—to transform and build connections among—knowledge they have already gained. In carrying out this process, writers not only come to know their knowledge more deeply but also build new connections among what they've learned.

As a concept, as a name for a particular set of writing activities and assignments, writing to engage helps us distinguish among writing activities and assignments that support students' acquisition and understanding of knowledge central to a discipline, that lead students to work more deeply with that knowledge, and that prepare them to participate in disciplinary discourse. As a part of a larger conceptual framework for the design of writing activities and assignments in WAC courses, the use of this concept increases the nuance and precision with which we can discuss the relationship between writing and critical thinking as well as the role that writing can play in helping students advance in their disciplines and professions.

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Appendix

Defining the Activities in Bloom's (Modified) Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills

The following activities use the modifications made by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). I have added *reflecting* to Anderson and Krathwohl's list.

Remembering. Committing information to memory so that it can be recalled later

Understanding. Working with information so that you can explain the who, what, when, where, how, and why associated with information and ideas

Reflecting. Considering the meaning and implications of information, ideas, and events

Applying. Using your understanding of information and ideas to explore a situation, problem, subject, or issue

Analyzing. Assessing the parts of a subject and assessing how those parts function as a whole and/or in relationship to other subjects

Evaluating. Making criterion-based judgments about a subject

Creating. Making something new

Keywords Associated with Activities in the Taxonomy

Use the following terms to signal particular cognitive activities, or look for these or similar words in an assignment to understand what the assignment is asking student to do.[6]

Remembering. Define, duplicate, learn, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce, retain

Understanding. Classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase, summarize, comprehend

Reflecting. Contemplate, consider, explore, indicate, muse, ponder, reveal, think about, wonder

Applying. Apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, solve, use, write

Analyzing. Analyze, appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

Evaluating. Appraise, argue, assess, calculate, defend, evaluate, gauge, judge, select, support, value

Creating. Assemble, build, craft, conceive, construct, create, design, develop, fashion, formulate, generate, invent, write

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6. I have been unable to locate an original list of terms. Several exist on the web. This list extends work by others who have taken a similar approach to assessing the purpose of particular assignments. The list has also been modified to fit my revisions to the taxonomy.

Galvanizing Goals: What Early-Career Disciplinary Faculty Want to Learn about WAC Pedagogy

BRADLEY HUGHES

Consulting with disciplinary faculty from across the curriculum about WAC pedagogy is, of course, absolutely central to what WAC specialists do. But what kinds of pedagogical knowledge do new and future WAC specialists need in order to work effectively with disciplinary colleagues? What do disciplinary faculty want to learn about WAC pedagogy? How does our field conceptualize disciplinary faculty as WAC learners? To answer those questions, this qualitative research study analyzes WAC learning goals written by 107 tenure-track assistant professors from a wide array of disciplines at the start of a WAC unit within a year-long professional development program focused on teaching and learning at a large public research university, from 2014-2020. Their close to 300 learning goals—and what's missing from those goals--offer powerful lessons for WAC specialists. The centers of gravity within their learning goals included general and discipline-specific questions about designing assignments, teaching writing, responding, learners and learning, and existential questions about WAC.

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No one ever said that being or preparing to become a WAC specialist is easy. To succeed long term, WAC specialists eventually need to develop a wide range of skills, knowledge, traits, and experience—and around them, they need to develop a well-structured program and essential institutional support. Strong, enduring WAC programs require thinking in terms of complex systems, in the ways that Cox, Galin, Melzer and other authors highlight in *Sustainable WAC* (2018), and working strategically and being persistent, planning for "gradual rather than rapid reforms" (p. 159). When, as a consultant at other universities, I introduce WAC programs to colleagues who want to develop new programs or reinvigorate languishing ones, I always insist that WAC is maybe one of the ultimate long games within universities—and that WAC specialists have to be satisfied with incremental progress. To advocate for curricular reform within their universities, they need to know proven curricular models for WAC; be collaborative and creative, building

on local strengths and interests; be on the right committees, and cultivate strong, respectful relationships with faculty and administrators; and have real expertise in WAC assessment.

To consult effectively with disciplinary faculty about teaching and assignment design, WAC specialists need to be genuinely interested in and respect the substance and the pedagogy of a wide range of disciplines across a university and have some of the skill sets that Tarabochia (2017) and Jablonski (2006) identify through their research about consultations between cross-curricular literacy (CCL) experts and disciplinary faculty. Also essential is that WAC specialists be prepared to weather some of the clashes and power struggles with disciplinary faculty that Jablonski and Tarabochia illustrate in their case studies. Leading engaging faculty workshops requires managing expectations, having a repertoire of effective examples, designing good learning experiences that respect faculty knowledge, using active learning, in Fulwiler's (1981) terms, "showing, not telling," and featuring local examples and teachers.

That's a daunting list—and of course it's only the beginning. There are WAC theory, history, critical perspectives on WAC, and much more to add. But what should new and future WAC specialists prioritize in their learning? I would argue that because much of the interaction with disciplinary faculty in consultations and workshops focuses on pedagogy, *among* the first priorities, we should aim to build the knowledge that disciplinary faculty expect us to have in order to respond to their pedagogical questions and interests. We need a deep reservoir, actually a blend, of our own pedagogical experience together with models and stories from others, common sense about teaching, great consulting skills, and a collaborative mindset, as well as knowledge of relevant pedagogical research. If we cannot respond effectively to the largely pedagogical concerns that disciplinary colleagues bring to us, if we cannot draw flexibly from a breadth of pedagogical knowledge, we will not be able to earn the trust and respect of disciplinary colleagues across a college or university. Within their pedagogical interests, what do disciplinary faculty most want to learn about WAC?

Answering that question is the focus of this research study, drawing directly from what early-career disciplinary faculty say they want to learn about WAC. This data comes from faculty participating in one of the most successful of the many WAC programs that I led for decades at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a large public research university in the upper midwestern part of the United States. Designed specifically for assistant professors who learn together in a cohort, this particular program—called *Madison Teaching and Learning Excellence* (MTLE), described in more detail below—is a year-long professional development program and faculty learning community focused on teaching. The WAC unit on writing and research

assignments as learning activities runs for four weeks of the two-semester seminar. At the start of each unit in the MTLE program, all of the participants in this program, who each semester hail from a WAC director's dream of disciplinary diversity, write out learning goals for the new unit. For this research study I have compiled and analyzed the WAC learning goals written by 107 assistant professors participating in twelve MTLE cohorts from 2014-2020.

The results that come from this qualitative research study and the portrait that emerges of early-career disciplinary faculty just beginning to learn about WAC should interest all current and future WAC specialists. The learning goals from these faculty can galvanize both new WAC specialists to set priorities for their own learning and all WAC specialists to make good choices about topics for workshops and seminars, settings in which time is always too short and we have to decide how to condense WAC. It is especially persuasive research, I believe, because the answers came not from faculty checking boxes on closed survey questions, valuable as that kind of data can be, but from the direct language of faculty responding to an open-ended question, identifying what they want to learn about WAC. Of course, each goal is like a hyperlink, which through conversation could lead to complex teaching contexts and histories and possibilities and constraints, all worth exploring. But for research purposes, they are compressed enough to analyze and generalize from a good-sized sample, giving us a good sense of the group and a window into disciplinary faculty interests. To a small degree at least, I hope these faculty learning goals can be seen as a form of the honest, critical reaction and sometimes faculty resistance that Pamela Flash (2016) says we can see in department-meeting discussions of student writing and writing instruction, resistance that the Minnesota WEC model sees as essential to embrace in order to achieve enduring success with WAC. From the MTLE learning goals about WAC in this study, most impressive is the emerging ethos of these assistant professors as teachers and as learners themselves—they come across as thoughtful, honest, appropriately critical, introspective, eager to learn, and open to change, and most are seriously committed to including writing in their teaching. Many of these tenure-track assistant professors pose sophisticated questions, in many cases derived from their experience with using writing assignments in their teaching. Their desire to learn about WAC provides a powerful counter-narrative to common negative perceptions of disciplinary faculty being unwilling to teach with writing in their disciplines.

Within their detailed and specific learning goals, these professors' interests had several centers of gravity—some predictable for any experienced writing instructor and WAC specialist, but others surprising and fascinating—that tell WAC specialists some of what they absolutely need to be prepared to discuss. By far, their top interest was in learning more about designing effective writing assignments; within

their learning goals about designing was a mix of general and discipline-specific interests. Their second greatest interest was in learning more about effective writing instruction—how to teach and to help students learn general and discipline-specific dimensions of academic writing. Their third most common interest—only about half as common as designing—was learning more about responding to and evaluating student writing. The fourth most common theme was what I call an interest in learning and in learners—in guiding their students' development as writers, helping students develop as critical thinkers and strengthening their scientific reasoning, and calibrating the level of complexity of writing assignments. Other fascinating learning goals fell outside of these major categories, including what I call "existential questions about WAC."

Taken as a whole, these learning goals, analyzed in detail below, reflected sophisticated thinking about teaching disciplines with writing, including critical perspectives, and demonstrated a healthy balance between enthusiasm and realism. In their desire to learn more about designing assignments, many of these faculty demonstrated an important awareness of disciplinary norms of discourse. Although many of the learning goals sound familiar to experienced writing instructors and to those who design training for new writing instructors, the particulars of their goals and questions, often grounded in their actual teaching experience, clearly come from situations largely unfamiliar to most writing teachers—large classes, the difficulty of balancing content with writing instruction and support, and discipline-specific genres and research methods within assignments. And within their goals are also examples of what I see as emergent WAC interests in twenty-first-century higher education—such as the challenges of differentiating instruction for heterogeneous literacy preparation among students, sustaining a commitment to teaching with writing as pressure grows to increase class sizes, making collaborative writing assignments work, balancing open-endedness and exploration and curiosity in assignments with students' increasing need and expectations for specificity in assignments, and growing faculty interest in helping students succeed. As important as these WAC pedagogical interests are, WAC specialists also can learn valuable lessons from thinking critically about the learning goals from these disciplinary faculty, noticing key WAC principles that are missing. In response to those gaps, WAC specialists need to be prepared to focus attention on writing to learn; on the rhetorical importance of specifying audiences in assignments and the pedagogical power of conferences with students; on social justice and WAC; and on some WAC theory and research. Although the faculty participants in this study do not represent all faculty at all kinds of colleges and universities, these findings are likely representative of this time in university teaching. And they will contribute, I hope, to our field's continuing push for data-driven research about WAC in general, and in this case about disciplinary faculty.

In what follows, I first explain the MTLE Program, whose culture and curriculum for assistant professors are crucial for this research study; then briefly review WAC literature relevant for this study, focusing on the WAC pedagogical interests of disciplinary faculty and WAC professional education for graduate students; and explain my research design. I then present, analyze, and illustrate the major findings, identifying clusters of WAC pedagogical learning goals from these faculty, thus illuminating key knowledge that WAC professionals need to develop. In the final major section, I explore what's missing from those goals and identify key other lessons for WAC professionals.

The Context for This Study: A Successful, Enduring WAC Partnership

The site for this research study comes from a strong, enduring partnership between the university's WAC program and the Madison Teaching and Learning Excellence program. This partnership is a wonderful model for embedding WAC in a sustained, comprehensive professional development program for faculty—WAC does not need to create its own audience to reach early-career tenure-track faculty, and such a widely respected campus-wide teaching-development program signals that WAC is an integral part of strengthening teaching and learning. It's an example both of the ongoing integration and interconnectivity with campus hubs and of WAC's reaching a constantly expanding circle of tenure-track faculty that Cox et al. (2018) argue is essential for WAC programs to be sustainable. MTLE, which began in 2012, recruits assistant professors from departments across the university to participate actively in a two-semester seminar about teaching and learning. Each semester a new cohort of c. 8–10 faculty begin the program; in more recent years, as the program has become better known and drawn more funding, two cohorts now begin each semester. The assistant professors within those cohorts meet weekly for ninety minutes to support each other in a faculty learning community, the kind of cohort model that leads to substantial development and change in teaching (Beach & Cox, 2009; Desrochers, 2010). The "faculty fellows," as they are called, come from an exhilarating array of disciplines, from music (a professor of clarinet) to chemistry to psychology to engineering physics and computer science. Even in the brief version of its mission, the collaborative ethos of the program and its commitment to empowering faculty as teachers shine through: MTLE "partner[s] with assistant professors to improve teaching and learning" (MTLE, 2020). As it recruits assistant professors at a research-intensive university, the program carefully reassures faculty and department chairs and tenure committees that it helps assistant professors become "fast, effective, and efficient starters in teaching" (MTLE)—so that they can successfully balance demands of research, teaching, and service. To date, 211 tenure-track assistant professors from seventy-three different departments across the university have participated, and multi-faceted

assessments demonstrate that this program has a deep and enduring impact on teaching practices and confidence.

The MTLE program describes itself as an inclusive community of practice, dedicated to being learner centered, evidence based, critically reflective, and grounded in application (C. Castro, personal communication, May 18, 2020). Before their first semester in the program, new faculty fellows participate in a two-day faculty institute on teaching, during which they begin discussing core concepts like backward design, learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning, and syllabus design. In the weekly seminars, faculty have regular opportunities to share and discuss their current teaching successes and challenges and to reflect critically and broadly on their development as teachers. In addition, within each of the two semesters, the curriculum is divided into three- or four-week modules; within each module fellows first set their own learning goals for that topic and discuss core readings and concepts from the scholarship of teaching and learning, then create an artifact "to move from example and theory to action and practice" (C. Castro, personal communication), and then critically reflect on what they have learned and plan next steps to implement their new approach. In the first semester, the modules focus on (a) learning environments, (b) assessment for learning, and (c) deepening learning based on the cognitive science of learning. In the second semester, the modules feature (a) designing effective writing and research assignments, (b) teaching and reaching all students (inclusive teaching practices), and (c) teaching and tenure (C. Castro, personal communication).

In the first of four weeks within the WAC and research-assignment unit, led by both the university's director of WAC and the university libraries' director of teaching and learning, faculty fellows share their experience teaching with writing and research assignments, read and discuss chapters on designing formal writing and research assignments from Bean's (2011) *Engaging Ideas*, and in small groups analyze a sample writing assignment drawn from a course at the university to begin to identify elements of successful assignments. The faculty fellows also receive a copy of *Locally Sourced*, the UW-Madison WAC program's sourcebook for faculty, featuring c. 300 pages of advice and sample assignments developed by faculty and teaching assistants across the disciplines. As homework for the second week, faculty fellows each create a draft of a new or re-designed writing activity for a course they are teaching, and then during the seminar, share and workshop that draft assignment in small groups. For the third week, they discuss and debate principles in the chapter on designing assessment rubrics in Bean, which they read in advance, and plan revisions for their own writing assignment. In the final week, faculty fellows share their revised assignment or sequence of assignments, emphasizing the major changes they have made based on the feedback they received and the readings and discussion. After this four-week unit, each faculty fellow has an hour-long individual consultation—in their office or

lab or a coffee shop on campus—with either the director of the WAC program or the director of teaching and learning from the libraries, to talk in more depth about their plans for writing assignments in their courses and about any other individual pedagogical questions they have about teaching with writing and with research assignments. Having taught these sessions for eight years, I can vouch that the discussions about WAC were consistently smart, sophisticated, honest, and appropriately critical—reflecting the strong learning community developed over many months of weekly MTLE meetings—and the writing assignments that faculty fellows create are usually impressive, often innovative, well aligned with learning goals, and pedagogically enlightened. The MTLE program sends a powerful message about WAC with this four-week unit in its curriculum, and the WAC unit has consistently been rated one of the highest by faculty fellows.

Disciplinary Faculty Learning WAC Pedagogy: A Brief Review of Related Literature

What do disciplinary faculty want to learn about WAC? Although answering that broad question has not been the specific focus of previous WAC research, we can triangulate toward some answers. Examining what disciplinary faculty are thinking as they design their writing assignments is a welcome emerging focus, resembling some of the early process research in writing studies, now enlightened by insights from activity theory and a fuller appreciation for context. Another way to see some of what disciplinary faculty want to learn is through analysis of consultations between WAC specialists and disciplinary faculty (e.g., Jablonski, 2006; Tarabochia, 2017), through interviews with faculty (e.g., Eodice et al., 2016; Polk, 2019), and through analysis of disciplinary instructors workshopping draft WAC assignments (Hughes & Miller, 2018).

In *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines*, Thaiss and Zawacki (2006), for example, studied how faculty members' own writing practices influenced their decisions about writing assignments they gave their students. Within the interviews at the heart of that study, disciplinary faculty revealed that they were thinking about a wide range of pedagogical topics as they designed and taught assignments, including complexities of disciplinary expectations and universal expectations for writing, academic writing and alternative discourses, the personal in academic writing, risk-taking, passion, readers, reasoned and evidence-based argument, scientific thinking, motivation, differences in learning goals for general education courses vs. ones for majors, responding to student papers, and rubrics—often using terms to describe expectations for student papers that sounded similar across instructors but had different meanings for each professor. In their study of what makes writing assignments meaningful to students, Eodice, Geller, and Lerner (2016) focused chapter five on

faculty perspectives about assignment design. In their survey responses and interviews, disciplinary faculty signaled interest in, for example, audience, process, student engagement, choice, discovery, student learning, especially content learning, students' personal connection, transfer, depth of thought or reflection, and increasing efficiency in mentoring student-researchers with their writing. Through interviews with faculty teaching writing-intensive courses at George Mason University, Polk (2019) focused attention on elements of designing assignments that have, with a few notable exceptions, received little attention in WAC research—that is, the material and institutional contexts that lie behind assignments. Polk demonstrated just "how complicated designing (and teaching) an assignment can be" (p. 105) in a disciplinary course.

Research on WAC consultations with disciplinary faculty also provides glimpses into what faculty want to learn about WAC. Although most of the case studies in Jablonski's (2006) *Academic Writing Consulting and WAC* focused on defining and theorizing how collaborative relationships between CCLs and disciplinary faculty work, occasionally the pedagogical *topics* of consultations—what seem to be the learning goals of disciplinary faculty—appeared. Those included course design, disciplinary ways of seeing, designing assignments, writing instruction within disciplinary courses, critical pedagogy, faculty resistance, evaluating papers, and improving grammar in student papers. Using sociolinguistic methods, Tarabochia (2017) analyzed case studies of consultations between disciplinary faculty and CCLs from multiple institutions with the goal of developing "a guiding ethic, a spirit, a habit of mind or set of philosophical principles . . . coherent . . . and malleable enough to address the complexity of [WAC] daily work" with disciplinary colleagues (p. 9). Among the WAC pedagogical topics that came up in those consultations were instructors' expertise and authority, audiences, developing detailed assignments, sequencing assignments, process, identifying what faculty value in student writing, connections between disciplinary values and writing activities, style, grading writing, error in student writing, and workload.

In *The WAC Casebook*, a professional development book for current and future WAC specialists, Anson et al. (2002) provide another way to identify what disciplinary faculty want—or need—to learn about WAC pedagogy. The case studies—told by WAC specialists, grounded in authentic experience, many narrated with a deft touch of humor—covered a wide range of the challenges in WAC work, from program development to cross-departmental politics to consulting with disciplinary faculty about designing assignments and doing post-mortems on assignments. Some of the scenarios about consultations between WAC specialists and disciplinary faculty raised some of the same questions and dilemmas that my research study identifies

as faculty learning goals—for example, designing assignments effectively, the disappointing quality of student papers, workload, and student resistance.

Since I suggest that the results of this study give us a data-grounded basis for identifying some of the WAC pedagogical knowledge that new and future WAC directors need to develop, some recent research about WAC professional development for graduate students is relevant for this study. LaFrance and Russell (2018), for example, studied what graduate students learned in a research methods course in writing studies at George Mason University, whose centerpiece was a fascinating crossover WAC research project with a WAC program review, a project grounded in an authentic WAC context. Of course, many WAC programs have long created opportunities for graduate students to be in WAC assistant director and consultant roles so that they can see first-hand some of the pedagogical questions disciplinary faculty bring to WAC conversations. Cripps et al. (2016), for example, offered a persuasive argument for how much graduate-student WAC fellows in the CUNY model learn from their experience, including WAC-specific pedagogies.

Research Design and Methods

This research study aims to give our field a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of what disciplinary faculty want to learn about WAC. As a form of basic research, this study can offer a fuller portrait of disciplinary faculty as WAC learners, illuminating their pedagogical concerns, and at an applied level, it can help our field better prepare current and future WAC specialists to respond to those interests and concerns. Analyzing the learning goals identified by faculty fellows in MTLE, I sought to answer the following interrelated questions:

1. Within their own learning goals, what do early-career tenure-track disciplinary faculty (assistant professors) indicate that they most want to learn about WAC?
2. How general are those learning goals? How discipline-specific?
3. Which central WAC concepts are missing from those goals?
4. What do these learning goals say about how our field conceptualizes disciplinary faculty as WAC learners and their motivations to learn more about WAC?
5. What do WAC specialists need to know in order to help disciplinary faculty learn what they are motivated to learn and what kind of "curriculum" do these learning goals suggest for preparing new and future WAC specialists?

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 107 tenure-track assistant professors who were from 2014-2020 in 12 different cohorts of the two-semester-long MTLE program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Of the 117 total faculty in those MTLE cohorts, 107 completed the learning-goals writing activity (described below), for a response rate of 91.5%. The University of Wisconsin-Madison is a large public research university, currently enrolling about 31,000 undergraduate and about twelve thousand graduate and professional students. To give you some sense of the university's varied priorities—the university is classified as an R1 institution, with very high research activity, and has been in the top ten of all US universities in research spending every year since 1972 (Kassulke, 2019). The university also takes pride in ranking in the top ten nationally in alumni who become corporate CEOs (Knutson, 2016) *and* first nationally in alumni who volunteer for the Peace Corps (Barcus, 2020). The faculty participating in the MTLE program are a consistently diverse group along many dimensions, including a significant number of international faculty. As Table 1 illustrates, the faculty participating in the MTLE cohorts in this study came from an extraordinarily wide array of academic divisions and disciplines, just the kind of disciplinary variety with which WAC programs aspire to connect. These assistant professors represented fifty-five different departments, with 37.4% from the social sciences, 29% from the physical sciences, 19.6% from the arts and humanities, and 14% from the biological sciences. Compared to faculty in the university as a whole, this sample overrepresents the social sciences and physical sciences (by quite a bit) and the arts and humanities (slightly), and significantly underrepresents the biological sciences. In the 2019-20 university-wide headcount of faculty by division at all ranks, 33% were in the biological sciences, 28% in the social sciences, 23% in the physical sciences, and 17% in the arts and humanities (Academic Planning and Institutional Research, 2020, p. 43).

Table 1

Faculty research participants by division and department

Academic Divisions/Departments	# of Faculty in Division/ by Department	# of Departments in Division
Social Sciences	**40**	**19**
Agricultural and Applied Economics	1	
Anthropology	1	
Civil Society and Community Studies	1	
Community and Environmental Sociology	1	
Consumer Science	1	
Curriculum and Instruction	4	
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis	1	
Forest and Wildlife Ecology	1	
Journalism and Mass Communication	1	
Kinesiology	1	
Life Sciences Communication	3	
Nursing	10	
Occupational Therapy	1	
Planning and Landscape Architecture	1	
Political Science	3	
Psychology	3	
Public Affairs	3	
Social Work	2	
Statistics	1	
Physical Sciences	**31**	**15**
Astronomy	1	
Biomedical Engineering	1	
Chemistry	3	
Civil and Environmental Engineering	2	
Computer Science	1	
Electrical and Computer Engineering	3	
Engineering Physics	5	
Geography	1	
Geoscience	4	
Industrial and Systems Engineering	1	
Materials Science and Engineering	1	
Mechanical Engineering	2	
Physics	3	
Soil Science	2	
Statistics	1	

Arts and Humanities	21	14
Anthropology	1	
Asian Languages and Cultures	1	
Communication Arts	1	
Comparative Literature	1	
Consumer Science	1	
Design Studies	1	
Educational Psychology	2	
English	2	
French and Italian	1	
German, Nordic, and Slavic	5	
History	1	
Journalism and Mass Communication	2	
Music	1	
Theatre and Drama	1	
Biological Sciences	**15**	**13**
Agronomy	1	
Botany	1	
Dairy Science	1	
Dermatology	1	
Food Science	1	
Genetics	1	
Horticulture	2	
Integrative Biology	2	
Kinesiology	1	
Occupational Therapy	1	
Pediatrics	1	
Plant Pathology	1	
Radiology and Medical Physics	1	
Totals	**107 faculty**	**55 different departments**

Note. In this table, six departments appear in two different academic divisions (anthropology, journalism and mass communication, and kinesiology, for example), because faculty in some departments can choose the division in which their research best fits for tenure review. In this table, the total number of different departments represented in the study is non-duplicative.

Data Collection

The data for this study came from systematized learning activities embedded within the MTLE program, rather than from instruments or interviews external to the MTLE seminar. Specifically, the learning artifacts analyzed for this study were a regular part of the reflective learning for MTLE faculty fellows, and the artifacts were routinely gathered every semester for IRB-approved assessment and research within MTLE. As part of the MTLE program's commitment to critical reflection, at the start of each module faculty fellows wrote out learning goals for that unit. For the WAC module, the faculty in the cohorts included in this study wrote out responses to this intentionally broad prompt: "In this module, we will be exploring how writing and research can support your learning goals [i.e., the learning goals you establish in your course(s)]. When you think about using writing and research-based learning activities in your course(s), what do you want to know more about?" Almost all faculty fellows hand-wrote their responses for about five minutes at the start of the first seminar meeting in this module; a few who were unable to come to that first meeting sent their responses to the MTLE coordinator in a follow-up email, and a small number (ten) did not submit learning goals for this unit.

Data Analysis

In order to answer my research questions and to characterize the general WAC interests of these faculty, I needed to be able to group their close to three hundred discrete learning goals into categories or clusters of WAC interests (I explain later how I divided clustered goals from faculty into discrete goals for analysis). Developing and selecting themes or codes were complicated, in good ways, because their learning goals were so rich and fascinating and because they represented a wide array of interests—ranging from general interests (from a professor in electrical and computer engineering, "I'm open to learning"), to a specific need to solve a pedagogical problem in a particular course (from a professor in political science, "Redesign the big research project for International Studies 101"), to what I would characterize as wonderful teaching aspirations (from a professor in horticulture, how to "use writing as a [*sic*] feedback from the students about how much they have learned from my classes").

In my first stage of developing codes or themes to analyze the learning goals, I followed Charmaz (2014) and Saldaña (2016) to develop a kind of open coding system, identifying large categories from within the data. Those categories were informed by the major pedagogical elements of WAC—what you could find in a sampling of WAC research and theory, in, for example, Bazerman et al. (2005) and Anson (2015), and in practical WAC guides from across the decades, such as Walvoord (1986),

Howard and Jamieson (1995), Hedengren (2004), and Bean (2011). Through this initial coding, I identified major themes present in the goals and subsequently refined and consolidated those. I then did a second complete coding using these revised themes that emerged from both the data and core concepts in WAC pedagogy: (a) *designing* writing assignments, divided into (a1) general and (a2) discipline-specific concerns; (b) *writing instruction*, (b1) general and (b2) discipline-specific; (c) *responding* to and evaluating student writing; (d) *learning and learners*; and (e) *other* (important) learning goals. Obviously, as useful as they can be for identifying clusters of interests, these categories are flawed: simple labels are reductive and, as in all such research, themes or codes overlap—designing assignments, for example, is a dimension of teaching writing, and so are responding and evaluating. These themes would, honestly, be better represented as a Venn diagram than as a linear list. Nevertheless, these themes clearly emerge as major and distinct centers of gravity within the WAC learning goals of these faculty, and these categories give us invaluable insights into what disciplinary faculty want to learn about WAC.

In order to do some quantitative analyses, after having established the major themes but before actually coding individual goals, I had to decide what to count as a single goal within the free-form text written by the faculty. In some cases, that was easy—I simply followed the natural divisions that the research participants had created when they wrote their goals. Often, they numbered their goals or separated them with bullet points in a list. Even if they did not number or mark them visually as separate, there usually were logical breaks by sentences or within a paragraph, demarcating clearly different goals. Dividing the goals in this way created a total of 281 of what I call *disaggregated WAC learning goals* from the 107 research participants.

In most cases, I was able to assign one code for each goal. Because of the breadth of their content, however, quite a few goals clearly required assigning two (and in some rare cases three) codes. Doing so more accurately reflected their content and allowed for a fair representation in the quantitative findings. Of the 281 separate WAC learning goals, 191 were assigned a single code, and ninety had two or more codes. In total, 389 codes were assigned to the 281 separate learning goals. Here are two examples of goals that each ended up with two codes: first, from a faculty member in public affairs, "How to design them [writing assignments] to encourage good research without killing myself grading." I assigned two codes to that goal—designing assignments and responding and evaluating (the latter also includes a subcategory about workload). Second, from a faculty member in biomedical engineering, "How can I use writing and research to bridge the basic concepts students learn in my class to what they will 'actually do' as biomedical engineers?" I coded this in two different categories—designing assignments (in both the general and the discipline-specific

designing subcategories) and in learning and learners, the latter because of the specific focus on student learning.

In a very few situations, the research participants' specific language made it clear that my usual code for that pedagogical topic was *not* the right choice. For example, quite a few faculty expressed interest in learning more about group papers and collaborative writing, topics I coded in the instruction category. But in a few cases the faculty member's language for that particular goal (e.g., some form of "Should I assign a group paper or always individual?") warranted its coding in the designing category. Ultimately, what matters most is not the results of sorting a few difficult learning goals but rather representing the clusters of interests, which I try to do as comprehensively as possible in the findings that follow.

Findings: The Key WAC Learning Goals from Disciplinary Faculty

Enthusiastic Learners and Dedicated Teachers

Within all of these learning goals from 107 different faculty, what is most striking is not any particular theme in their goals. It is how engaged the vast majority of faculty fellows seemed to be with this unit in MTLE, judging from how fully they responded to the prompt, from how many learning goals they identified, and from the length and specificity of their goals. Table 2 gives a quantitative sense of the heft of these goals—the average length of each faculty member's goals was almost seventy-three words.

Table 2

Count of WAC learning goals and word averages per goal and per faculty participant

Number of Faculty Submitting WAC Learning Goals	107
Number of Disaggregated Goals	281
Mean Number of Goals Per Faculty Participant	2.63
Total Number of Words in All of the Written Learning Goals	7786
Mean Number of Words in Goals for Each Faculty Participant	72.8
Mean Number of Words Per Disaggregated Goal	27.7

From their responses, I could offer so many impressive examples of learning goals and questions about teaching with writing in disciplines across the university that, although they would warm the hearts of every WAC professional, they would become tiresome to read. Here are a few just to give a flavor of their thoughtfulness and engagement. From a professor in geography:

My courses are mostly technique oriented . . . [on] . . . geospatial technology . . . [and the] spatial web and mobile programming. Most of class assignments . . . are related to design and implement a tool, software and database. The final project proposal and project report are the only two writing assignments. I would like to learn how to leverage these two assignments to motivate students [to] think critically, frame scientific questions, check what have [*sic*] been done (find the sources) and then learn how to design and implement things to answer the questions.

From a professor in plant pathology:

A major learning goal of my course is for students to be able to use evidence in order to make or evaluate claims (evidence-based thinking) . . . My course . . . is more narrowly centered on quantitative data/experimental designs, but I hope the skills are generalizable. I would like to learn more about how I can use writing (or other assignments) to help students develop these skills, and also help me assess their progress. My course involves a semester[-]long research project that has both shared data[-]collection aspects and individualized hypothesis[-]generating and data[-]interpretation aspects. We also do shorter writing assignments around published literature throughout the semester. I'd like to think more about using the course sequence more effectively to build up and practice these skills before their final reports.

In this goal from a professor in materials science and engineering, even when he wondered about writing's place in undergraduate teaching within his discipline, historically based on problem sets, note how the way he framed the question indicated interest and openness: "What are effective/reasonable strategies for designing writing assignments in courses that are historically problem-set based?" Of course, to some degree, these enlightened, sophisticated learning goals for WAC reflect the self-selected group of faculty who chose to participate in MTLE, but they also offered a very encouraging portrait of early-career disciplinary faculty who will become the future of WAC.

Table 3 summarizes the central findings from this study—the most common WAC learning goals from these disciplinary faculty, in order of their frequency. To give an accurate sense of the power of discipline-specific interests within the first two themes—designing and teaching—I have provided overall quantitative totals along with breakout totals for general and for discipline-specific goals within those overall categories. (Some goals in the designing category had both general and discipline-specific elements.) Within the responding and evaluating theme, I have provided

a subtotal for goals related to an important concern among faculty—managing the workload involved in responding to student writing in pedagogically effective ways.

Table 3

Major themes in 281 disaggregated WAC learning goals from assistant professors, 2014-2020

Theme/Code	Subthemes and Examples	#
Designing assignments	**Total for <u>All</u> Kinds of Goals Related to Designing Assignments**	130
	General Goals Related to Designing (in 78 goals): choosing kind of assignment; expanding repertoire; creating innovative assignments; aligning with learning goals; sequencing; scope; manageable assignments for large(r) classes; formative, writing to learn (WTL), low-stakes, in-class assignments; short online assignments; clarifying expectations; specificity and choice within assignments; presentation assignments; written discussions in online and hybrid courses.	
	Discipline-Specific Goals Related to Designing Assignments (in 56 goals): choosing specific kinds of assignments to teach disciplinary ways of thinking; designing business-plan assignments, NSF proposal assignments; breaking free from limited disciplinary forms of writing; sacrificing student interest in order to scaffold disciplinary learning; choosing the focus for writing assignments in graduate courses in the sciences.	
Writing pedagogy within disciplinary courses	**Total for <u>All</u> Kinds of Goals Related to Writing Pedagogy**	99
	General Writing Instruction (in 69 goals): embedding instruction to help students succeed with writing assignments; scaffolding, process; teaching and motivating revision; guiding topic selection; strengthening peer review; improving group papers and collaborative writing; using models/examples; teaching students to give presentations, use sources effectively, improve organization, cite sources responsibly; integrating writing into class activities.	
	Discipline-Specific Writing Instruction (in 30 goals): teaching students the difference between description and analysis in literary analysis papers; the difference between academic and clinical writing in occupational therapy; how to make arguments in nursing papers rather than listing facts.	

Responding and evaluating	Total for <u>All</u> Kinds of Goals Related to Responding and Evaluating	76
	Responding to and Evaluating Student Writing: assessing student writing; providing effective feedback; developing rubrics, including critical perspectives on rubrics; choosing what to prioritize in feedback; not overwhelming students; respecting differences in students' preparation for writing activities; being fair; teaching TAs to evaluate student writing; giving feedback on group papers.	
	Managing Workload (in 23 goals): increasing efficiency; setting limits on feedback; not overburdening TAs and professors as enrollments increase.	
Learners and learning (through writing)	**Student-Writers as Learners and Learning Goals of Assignments**: aligning assignments with learners; improving critical thinking, evidence-based thinking, scientific reasoning; thinking about students developmentally; calibrating level of complexity in assignments; teaching heterogeneous groups of learners; engaging, interesting, and motivating students about writing and learning; considering workload for students; considering fairness to students from a social-justice perspective; fostering student learning from each other; helping graduate students develop and recognizing tensions between course writing and dissertation writing; motivating students about writing and learning; activating previous knowledge and building confidence.	64
Other important learning goals	**WAC Faculty as Learners**: WAC resources for faculty; seeing samples of how other faculty use writing; campus resources for faculty writers; the writing center; teaching library research skills; faculty learning from student papers.	12
Existential WAC	**Some Big Questions**: whether to teach with writing; role of writing assignments in my discipline.	8

Designing Assignments

Of the 281 disaggregated goals, 130 had designing assignments among their codes; thus, 46.3% of all of the goals included a concern with designing. So designing was by far the most common concern compared to the other categories of learning goals. The next closest was writing pedagogy or instruction, present in ninety-nine of the disaggregated goals. Based on my experience with WAC faculty workshops, seeing designing as the top interest was a somewhat surprising and a very encouraging finding. Over decades, in many different settings, my WAC colleagues and I consistently found that when we offered a series of à la carte workshops, many more instructors at all stages of their careers would choose to go to a WAC workshop on responding and evaluating than to one on designing. We found this preference disappointing because we believed that designing effective assignments is the heart of WAC, the key to influence the quality of student papers. Reading these learning goals about designing writing activities as a group of goals by themselves, as I have done many times, is absolutely fascinating. As we will see, these designing goals demonstrate faculty deeply engaged with creating assignments that help students succeed in learning complex subject matter. These goals also present a daunting challenge to WAC

specialists—we need to know a broad repertoire of assignments and consider all kinds of axes—including disciplines, curriculum, learning setting, genre, the students' preparation for doing this kind of thinking and writing, sequence, and multimodal assignments.

General. The designing goals ranged from a general quest for universal principles (from a professor in computer science who simply wanted to learn "how to structure the writing assignment"; sometimes with a touch of humor, as in this goal from a professor in geoscience: "How to write an assignment that inevitably results in students learning to write better") to very specific questions anchored in a specific course with a specific curriculum, particular size enrollment, and a sometimes vexed history with specific writing assignments. Among the seventy-eight WAC learning goals coded for *general* designing goals, several subthemes emerged. One of the most conspicuous, which is intertwined with the theme discussed below on learners and learning, emphasized the connection between assignment design and learning goals. This keen interest in connecting writing activities with learning goals reflects the MTLE program's focus on articulating specific learning goals for courses and for all learning activities. A dermatology professor, for example, wanted to "learn how to improve my designing so that the assignments can better align with my learning outcomes." A professor in industrial and systems engineering wanted to learn "how to match the scope/complexity of the writing assignment to the targeted learning outcome." Having disciplinary faculty lead with an interest in tying writing activities with learning goals is obviously a dream for WAC specialists. Quite a few faculty expressed interest in designing more effective semester-long research projects or assignments for capstone courses in the major: from a professor in English, "I've scaffolded research papers before and created a set of assignments (low stakes) but I don't know how to get students to *develop* [emphasis in original] their topic over the course of assignments."

A number of faculty were especially interested in learning how to clarify their assignments for students (of the 130 designing codes, thirteen specifically mentioned clarifying assignments). In a sophisticated framing of this goal, some faculty specifically wanted to explore tensions or trade-offs between specificity and open-endedness in assignment design. A professor in social work set this as a learning goal: "I teach a research-level class every year that has a writing assignment. Want to determine how to best balance open-endedness and clear guidelines." A professor in anthropology asked simply, "How much guidance is enough? How much is too much?" And a professor in psychology wanted to explore the "balance between being very specific in your writing assignment versus more general so students can provide more unique insights, even if it is unstructured." Polk's (2019) interviews with disciplinary faculty about the decisions behind their assignment designs reveal similar kinds of concerns.

In another of the most common general designing goals, a number of faculty wanted to think expansively and critically about the choice of genre for an assignment, moving beyond constraints of defaults in their disciplines. Some expressed interest in new-media assignments and in experimenting with genres. For example, a professor in the German, Nordic, and Slavic department wrote, "I also would like to know more about how to better utilize the online discussion forum that I already use." A professor in nursing wanted to explore "unique writing assignments—i.e., what kinds of assignments outside of literature reviews and research proposals." And a professor in consumer sciences wanted to learn about "writing assignments beyond the research paper such as book reviews, article reviews, etc."

Inspired by their own teaching experience and, in some cases, by examples they encountered reading from Bean (2011) for the MTLE seminar, a few faculty set designing goals specifically about low-stakes, informal, WTL writing assignments (this relative lack of interest in WTL is discussed below). A professor in physics explained,

> I'm currently giving a weekly writing assignment to my Physics 115 class of non-science majors. It is a simple one-paragraph response to an article of their choosing in current events concerning energy, providing a critical reaction and/or connecting to what we learn in class. I'm using the discussion forum component of Canvas for this, which provides integrated quick grading for the TA and I'm using a 3[-]point scale (1 for poor, 2 for good, 3 for outstanding). The question is how to structure the writing assignment. . . .

A professor in political science wanted to learn about the relationship between shorter informal assignments (in some cases new media assignments) and a longer more formal paper: "tying reading, short, less formal assignments (blogs), and long form together."

Finally, in this category of general goals about designing assignments, a number of faculty understandably raised tensions around workload (these appear in designing goals as well as in learning goals about responding and evaluating). Increasing enrollments in courses—and pressures to continue to increase enrollments in courses—are part of what I see as emergent or intensifying WAC challenges and learning goals in the twenty-first century. A professor in psychology explained,

> I tend to give writing assignments in which students choose their own topic (e.g., research question) and I try to help guide them through that individualized research. It would be helpful to develop skills to do that more effectively, especially by providing guidelines to the class as a *whole*, rather than relying on 1-on-1 meetings (that can take an hour . . .) with each

student. I love giving them that individual attention, but I have only done it in small classes, and I don't see how it could scale to a class of 90 students, as I have now. I avoided the issue by not assigning a paper to my 90[-]person lecture class this semester, but I would like to consider assigning a paper in the future for this class.

And another physics professor asked the extreme version of this question, "Are there any feasible writing activities for a class of 500+ people, assuming that there is minimal time for grading?"

Discipline-Specific. Within the designing goals, fifty-six focused on more discipline-specific designing interests, part of a powerful strand reflecting the WID awareness and interests of these assistant professors. Some are exploratory about possible kinds of assignments to help students learn disciplinary content, often in the sciences:

- From a professor in physics: "Writing as a way to learn basic physics equations?"
- From a professor in chemistry: I want to "incorporate scientific writing into my 2nd[-]semester, sophomore organic chemistry class. I think it could be very valuable, and am willing to take some risks, but right now I'm pretty lost for where to start. News/commentary article on a reaction? Research how a particular transformation is used? Write an explanation for why a particular transformation works in their own words?"
- From a professor in engineering physics: In my field "writing assignments are more or less always structured as: -statement of problem; -derivation of the solution using math and physics; -finding the solution; -then go to the next problem. I'd like to know more about ways to avoid this type of structures [sic] to foster student's critical thinking, innovative thoughts, etc. . . . I've tried a few things such as case studies/ structured homeworks with one goal overall and not a series of questions . . . but it is still a work in progress. . . ."
- From a professor in materials science and engineering: "I'd like to design an assignment for my senior undergrad/first-year grad course where they review a controversial topic in the current literature and design a set of experiments to test the controversial idea. What are some good strategies for scaffolding such an assignment over the course of half a semester?"

Some interests are tied to a particular genre, as in this example from a professor in communication arts: "I primarily teach media production classes in which students create video and web-based projects (podcasts, too). . . . So advice on conducting research on an industry and creating a business plan, rather than an essay, would be

helpful." And this impressive learning goal from a professor in French gets to the heart of disciplinary thinking and analysis of literary texts at the undergraduate level:

> I have been teaching the intro to literary analysis course . . . and this has been challenging, because it is the course where our students actually begin writing analytically. I quickly discovered that students don't automatically know how to do close readings of literary texts. It is more natural for them to [do] surface readings, to talk about what happens or to extrapolate some kind of message based on what happened. What I want them to do is show how texts make meaning and produce effects on readers. So, each of the semesters I've taught the course I've been making modifications and trying to find the best ways to get them doing this kind of analysis. My question is this: 1. My students write three compositions and I always leave it up to them to choose their subject. However, I wonder if it would not be better, at their level, to give them a more specific composition prompt, such as questions to choose from that they would have to answer, etc. My worry is that this will prevent them from writing about the aspects of the text that really interest them and impose a direction on their compositions (but perhaps, for many, this is needed?).

Finally, not surprisingly given the graduate-level teaching that many of these faculty do, quite a few were interested in learning better how to design assignments for their graduate courses, including ways to address this common tension in PhD coursework vs. lab research in the sciences:

- From a professor in soil science: "How to balance—for grad students— relevant writing activities with not 'wasting time' on research outside their actual thesis/dissertation project. Considering introducing independent research project, but not sure of value."
- From a professor in botany: "my new grad students (and future ones) have to submit an NSF proposal that's due in November (after starting in September). How can I jump start them more effectively?"

Writing Pedagogy

After designing, the second most common theme within all the goals involved learning more about pedagogy, about teaching writing more successfully—of the 281 total goals, ninety-nine (35%) had instruction among their codes. In this category, interests in general writing pedagogy (sixty-nine) far outweighed discipline-specific interests (thirty). It was heartening to see among these faculty a widespread recognition that in order to succeed with WAC, faculty need to do much more than simply

assign writing; they need to integrate targeted writing instruction into their courses and develop effective and manageable writing processes for assignments.

General. This category included such common pedagogical interests as how to help students succeed with writing assignments, coaching students through the writing process, scaffolding learning about writing, helping students make good choices about topics, using model papers, teaching and motivating revision, and improving outcomes of peer review. Some faculty expressed interest in learning how to teach foundational and transferable writing skills: for example, teaching organization, teaching students to make effective presentations, and teaching students to acknowledge and use sources effectively. And in what I see as an emerging pedagogical interest among disciplinary faculty, there was quite a bit of interest in helping students write effective group papers and improve the process of collaborative writing.

In what could be an epigraph for this category of goals, this honest, self-critical perspective from a history professor signals how clearly many of these faculty saw instruction as their responsibility:

> I want to better incorporate and set up writing assignments in class. They always feel like they are not as connected to course interest as they could be. And I also have a hard time setting them up and making goals and assessment clear. I know that this causes students some amount of anxiety.

Demonstrating an impressive understanding of process-writing instruction, a statistics professor wanted to learn more about

> Pre-writing activity. How to efficiently engage students into [*sic*] the topics before drafting. For example, design brainstorming sessions to prepare students for the background knowledge/supporting vocabulary. Post-writing activity. Discuss writing quality with students and identify their areas for improvement. Give feedback individually or as a collaborative process.

A horticulture professor had the pragmatic and important goal of learning to teach students "how to properly cite and not plagiarize," while a geoscience professor had the wonderfully ambitious goal of learning "how to get students to take risks and/or step up their creativity." Quite a few faculty shared this psychology professor's concern and wanted to learn more about "peer review, focusing on student learning—should I continue doing this? Not every student appears to benefit from this." And in what I see as an emerging pedagogical interest among disciplinary faculty, often borne out of disappointing experience, many of these faculty wanted to learn how to help students write effective group papers and improve the process of collaborative writing. The challenges center on group dynamics, the distribution of labor,

and the approaches to collaborative writing. A consumer science professor was not alone in wanting to learn how to "organize collaborative groups." A professor from geography wanted to learn, "for a team project, how to motivate all team members [to] engage the thinking and writing process." And a nursing professor described a familiar challenge across the curriculum: "How to develop group/team writing products that require some integration (vs. divide and conquer where students write different sections of report) of writing (team writing, shared accountability for clarity, writing quality)."

Discipline-Specific. Within their WAC learning goals, many faculty demonstrated a substantial awareness of disciplinary differences in discourse and in the writing instruction essential within disciplinary courses to help students develop their thinking and writing within disciplines. A professor in the German, Nordic, and Slavic department, for example, wanted to learn

> how to convey to students the differences between description and analytic writing. . . . *What's a thesis statement [within a literary analysis paper]?* I directly address this with students and feel like I always fail. . . . Finding a way to also inspire creativity in analysis but grounding these ideas empirically when appropriate.

A professor in Asian languages and cultures echoed that goal: "I'd like to know more about how to help students, coming from different backgrounds, understand the difference between an 'argument' and a 'description.'" A professor in planning and landscape architecture conveyed some of the complex choices instructors have when they try to help students develop better analytical skills: "How to improve critical analysis . . . I tend to be disappointed with most (not all) students' analytical ability and would like to continually strengthen that. I see theory as one of the most important means to improve analysis, but teaching theory is hard without significant time."

Faculty in a wide range of social and natural sciences expressed similar goals within their disciplines. A professor in nursing, for example, wanted to learn "how to encourage scholarly/scientific writing, development of persuasive arguments, rather than present a litany of facts." A professor in dairy science knew that students needed help "learning to summarize scientific literature and focus on what is important." With this goal, a professor in occupational therapy seemed to be speaking on behalf of the discipline, with its clear pre-professional focus: "Teaching our students the difference[s] and similarities between academic and clinical writing. . . . Transitioning students from 'evaluation' to 'treatment' writing assignments in clinical courses." And, finally, a professor from electrical and computer engineering captured some

of the familiar challenges and tensions within WAC consultations around students' lack of preparation for discipline-specific kinds of writing, perhaps raising questions about whose responsibility this instruction is: "Teaching students scientific, logically structured writing before they start (many students choose technical education because they don't want to/like to write." This is a pedagogical question, for sure, but also a question about motivating learning—a subtheme that surfaces regularly throughout these WAC learning goals for faculty. Faculty want students to view writing as central to their disciplines but need some help as teachers trying to inspire that interest and encouraging students to do the hard work necessary to develop as disciplinary writers.

Responding and Evaluating

The third most common category of WAC learning goals involved what in many WAC workshops and consultations seems always to be the primary (even the sole) interest of disciplinary faculty—learning to respond to, give feedback on, and evaluate or assess student writing effectively. Of the 281 disaggregated goals, seventy-six had responding and evaluating among their codes, so 27% of all of the goals included this concern. The variety of faculty interests demonstrated, once again, how much knowledge and pedagogical dexterity WAC specialists need in order to respond. Some of the learning goals were as general as this from a professor in the German, Nordic, and Slavic department who wanted to learn "best practices for grading and providing feedback on writing assignments." A nursing professor was focused on the students' perspective receiving feedback: "[I want to learn] how to provide feedback to students that are [*sic*] not overwhelming (e.g., with lots of track changes or comments)." A professor in journalism and mass communication wanted to learn about "grading along multiple axes (content, style, etc.)."

That kind of interest in the "multiple axes" of evaluation inevitably led to faculty wanting to learn to develop rubrics, in which there was a lot of interest—the word "rubric" appears in twenty-six goals. To respond to these kinds of learning goals, in which faculty signal an understanding of the multiple, often overly ambitious goals for rubrics—"develop quality rubrics for evaluating the assignments" (dermatology); "developing rubrics that can effectively assess the quality of work" (social work); "how to formulate rubrics that are helpful to students" (geoscience)—WAC specialists need to have clear concepts about what makes for effective rubrics and be skilled at guiding, in conversation, a disciplinary colleague through the process of developing a draft rubric. Within their goals, numerous faculty also demonstrated critical perspectives, some impressive insights into the problems with rubrics. As one nursing professor exclaimed, "RUBRICS! I struggle putting words to paper of what I am looking for in the writing assignments at times beyond the actual elements of

what to include [in the paper]." Another nursing professor asked, "evaluating the success and/or learning of the student using the assignment—are rubrics the only way? What if students demonstrate growth but still do not hit rubric benchmarks?" A food science professor described a common disappointment that rubrics are not saviors:

> I did some writing assignments in the past and gave students rubrics with the assignment. Many students just didn't get it. Other students did get it. But I was afraid that they did not learn how to structure [their] writing because the rubrics gave them an idea on how to structure their writings.

And within one of his learning goals, a psychology professor signaled such an awareness of the limits of generic evaluation rubrics that it seems like a perfect lead into Anson et al.'s (2012) "Weird Genres and Big Rubrics": "[My] writing/research assignment can be fulfilled in multiple media (e.g., a traditional paper, a video, a brochure/booklet). I wrote one rubric for all, but that led to it being somewhat more abstract than I would have hoped."

It was no surprise that some of these faculty were concerned about how much time it takes to give good feedback on student writing, at both formative and summative stages: twenty-three of the seventy-six responding and evaluating goals had some focus on efficiency, time, or workload. A professor in kinesiology wanted to learn "better ways to grade quickly and fairly. I use rubrics but still feel like it is burdensome and not all that objective. I don't have TA support, so get bogged down with the grading." Giving high-quality feedback to large numbers of students admittedly imperils research time, a trade-off just beneath the surface of this goal from a chemistry professor who clearly had a strong commitment to teaching:

> Writing skills are vital for scientists, but we don't traditionally teach scientific writing. I make it a central part of my graduate course that 1st years take. I know I have a *long* way to go to improve, but right now I'm losing a lot of time giving feedback for each student's writing. How can I make this more efficient?

In a familiar twenty-first-century WAC concern, a professor in curriculum and instruction echoed this challenge about high enrollments in masters-level courses: "One thing I'm finding particularly challenging is providing substantive feedback on student writing when I teach large sections of Master's courses (n=60)." And many of these faculty were concerned not only with their workload but also with the labor situation of their graduate TAs, an important matter in a research university, concerns demonstrated by a physics professor who wanted to learn to balance "feedback best for students and still keep it manageable for the TA who is now grading 120 (previously eighty) weekly submissions."

To respond to these legitimate concerns, WAC specialists have to strike a delicate balance. As we collaborate with disciplinary colleagues, we need to share a range of options for responding to and evaluating student writing and we need to acknowledge that workload concerns are real—at every kind of college or university or school. Teaching with writing takes time, and every instructor has too many demands competing for that time, and too many classes enroll too many students. With the exception of a few low-stakes assignments and a few stages of a longer writing process, students need and deserve guidance and feedback on their ideas and analyses and arguments to help them deepen their thinking and learning and strengthen their communication. So the goal is to share methods that are effective pedagogically and to suggest possible efficiencies within those methods.

Finally, some of the questions about time posed by disciplinary faculty ventured into fascinating territory far beyond that concern. For example, an agronomy professor opened up important (and familiar) questions about pedagogical priorities and responsibilities and WAC philosophy:

> [I assign] individual reflections and team group final reports. I always wonder how much correction I should/can/must do in those assignments (e.g., grammar, typos, vocabulary, style, syntax . . . or only focus on the idea I think they want to convey—which may differ from what is actually written). Should my goals be to improve their writing skills? Or should I have the goal of them reflecting and thinking, and let someone else take care of helping them with writing? Giving [*sic*] my resources and my time, how can I help them without being [*sic*] all day reading and correcting assignments?

A few of their learning goals about responding and evaluating revealed important social-justice concerns about fairness for student-writers and about differences in literacy preparation for disciplinary discourse. A professor in horticulture set as a goal, "how can I make [assignments and assessment] fair for all students regardless of their background and writing skills." A professor in nursing asked, "how do we assess for different writing levels and abilities?" A faculty member in electrical and computer engineering recognized the ways that standards for evaluating writing can interfere with some of the best goals of education; this professor wanted to learn "how to evaluate writing while leaving space for student discovery and growth." These are wonderful concerns for a few faculty to have raised, but, as I will discuss below, WAC specialists have an opportunity to make social justice and diversity much more central to the WAC pedagogical interests of disciplinary faculty.

Learners and Learning

One of the most exciting findings in this study, beyond the striking interest in designing, was how much emphasis these faculty placed on thinking about their students as learners and how much awareness faculty displayed about learning goals for writing activities. Of the 281 disaggregated goals, sixty-four had learners and learning among their codes, so 24% of all of the goals included these concerns. What stands out within these goals are two things: first, these faculty see writing and thinking and learning the subject matter and methods of a discipline as inextricably linked; and second, these faculty have a refreshing focus on students as complex learners, adopting a kind of constructivist view (Baviskar, Hartle, & Whitney, 2009) of students, recognizing that they have differing home discourse communities, differing degrees of motivation, differing levels of experience and skill with writing, and different material circumstances for learning. To some extent, these interests in learners and learning are just what we would expect in the self-selected group of faculty who chose to participate in a year-long faculty learning community on teaching and learning. These interests also obviously reflected the emphasis within MTLE on learning principles and on students as learners, and it was encouraging to see the core curriculum in a carefully conceived professional-development program transfer into specific faculty interests in WAC. But I also believe that the widespread evidence from this study reflects a growing trend for many twenty-first-century faculty to begin their faculty careers with a student-centered orientation and a desire to teach in ways that align with what we know about how students learn.

A number of faculty, especially from the sciences, raised what I see from WAC consulting experience as a frequent concern in the past twenty years or so—how to motivate students to do the hard work of writing and to see writing as integral to learning the subject matter of a course:

- "How to engage the students and not make it a boring tedious homework." (horticulture)
- "What I need to think about when integrating a writing assignment into the course to make it seem like a perfect fit to students. How do I show them this is what is the best approach for learning?" (statistics)
- "I want to know how to make student[s] understand that this writing assignment is [not] only for the writing purpose but serves the course learning objectives." (life sciences communication)
- "How much help/guidance to give students to trigger/motivate self-learning." (engineering physics)

Beyond motivating students, some faculty raised learning- and learner-focused questions about calibrating the level of difficulty for assignments (for a similar finding, see Polk, 2019, p. 97), about differentiating instruction, and about workload and fairness for students. An English professor, for example, wanted to learn "how to differentiate (scaffolding) assignments for advanced students (grads) undergrads." A professor in life sciences communication linked the level of difficulty with the open-endedness of an assignment:

> How to calibrate the level of difficulty—allowing more freedom and risking making it too hard vs. making more restrictions and making it easier. More freedom is better for students that can learn more, but too much freedom leads to paralysis. What are good ways of figuring out where to set the bar?

A professor in journalism and mass communication wondered what assumptions to make about prior knowledge for a long research paper in a history course:

> They have to be juniors and seniors, but I worry I'm assuming too much prior knowledge. Also want to figure out if the two prep assignments (critiques of old student papers and a proposal including research questions and primary/secondary sources) are sufficient prep or are too difficult in themselves.

Many faculty identified what I see as a twenty-first-century WAC concern—the teaching challenges that come with the increasing heterogeneity of students' preparation for course content. A professor in public affairs asked, "How [should I] design a writing assignment if students' background varies a lot?" Some faculty focused on another twenty-first-century WAC concern, new kinds of courses and learners. A professor in nursing explained,

> As I consider the inclusion of writing and research-based learning activities in my course (N318 Pathophysiology Essentials for Nursing Practice), I am challenged to ensure the assignments are a good fit for a heterogeneous learning group. This course, first in our new Accelerated BSN program, is comprised of students that are diverse in many ways, including time and setting of post degree/pre-requisites.

As they thought about students as learners, numerous faculty took an empathetic view, expressing concern about students' workloads. A professor in occupational therapy recognized the difficult professional situation many advanced students were in: "[For my evaluations of students' writing, I want to learn more about] balancing [considering both] effort and end product. (My learners are professionals working

online toward a post-professional doctorate. They are working 40+ hours a week and have real lives to manage.)" A professor in educational leadership and policy analysis posed a universal question about designing writing assignments: "How much is too much? How do I gauge the amount and difficulty of work I assign students before I get my end of the semester evaluations?"

Many, many faculty wanted help with achieving their big-picture learning goals for their students—helping students develop their critical thinking, scientific reasoning, ability to support arguments with disciplinary evidence, creativity, intellectual risk-taking, activation of prior knowledge, and confidence. Critical thinking was often the starting point, then intellectual risk-taking and creativity:

- "[I would like to learn] components that I should include to enhance students' critical thinking" (social work).
- "I'd like . . . to foster students' critical thinking, innovative thoughts." (engineering physics)
- "How to get students to take risks and/or step up their creativity." (geoscience)

A professor in theatre and drama wanted to learn how to help students to push beyond binaries:

> As the outcomes/goals from [my] classes are very personal based—it would be how to teach/encourage self-reflection. Many students want to be told right/wrong and that's not how the work is in my discipline. To help them think past good/bad responses and dig deeper.

A professor in horticulture used disciplinary examples, explaining, "I would like [my students] to be able to express their own opinion about certain controversial topics in my field (e.g. organic vs. conv[entional] GMO [genetically modified organisms] vs. Non-GMO; 3rd world countries['] fruit production; environmental concerns)." From a professor in integrative biology: "[I want my students to learn through writing assignments to] identify and examine the reasoning of scientific works; interrogate scientific writing for weaknesses and logical gaps." A professor in agricultural and applied economics shared this goal and raised challenging questions:

> For my undergraduate course, I'd like to better understand how to encourage critical thinking through engaging with the academic literature to help support an original argument. Or I wonder whether if this is too much to expect. There are always a few students that do this, but many do not.

And an English professor had this inspiring goal for learners and learning: "I'd also like to learn how to activate previous knowledge (confidence helps with the writing process—how do I help students understand that they already have the tools)."

Other Great Learning Goals and Existential WAC

Although relatively few goals fell outside the core themes (n=12), these are worth mentioning in order to fill out the picture of faculty WAC interests. Several faculty wanted to learn how to help students develop their library research skills and how to collaborate with the university's instructional librarians. Some had questions about working effectively with the university's writing center, and others had WAC-program questions about criteria for writing-intensive courses and wanted to see more samples of successful assignments from various disciplines. One professor wanted to learn about campus resources to help faculty with their own scholarly writing. And an engineering physics professor had a fabulous question, a different take on learning and WAC: "[I want to learn] how to use writing assignments as an assessment tool to know if my teaching methods are effective."

There is one more finding worth reporting here, one more kind of question that WAC specialists need to be prepared to address regularly. In their learning goals, a few (n=8) faculty asked very big questions, what I like to call "existential questions" about WAC—essentially how to sell WAC to students, whether WAC is worth doing for faculty and students, and what works in WAC. A computer science professor, for example, asked "how to convince computer science students that writing is important." A chemistry professor explained, "I think my question is: For science majors, in what circumstance should I use writing-based activities? And what is the benefit of using that?" And a geoscience professor conveyed a lot in very few words: "[I want to learn] what works! And what doesn't. Empirically." These are serious, important, appropriately skeptical and challenging questions, ones shared, no doubt, by almost all of the faculty in these learning communities—and they provide just the kind of opening for a conversation that WAC specialists relish.

Beyond the Particular Goals: Other Lessons for WAC Specialists

As I have argued, these particular pedagogical topics can serve as a sort of curriculum for new and future WAC specialists, with the quantitative findings guiding priorities. Beyond that, these learning goals from disciplinary faculty—including what is *missing* from their goals—offer other important lessons for WAC specialists. The first lesson comes from the heartening trends within these learning goals, ones every WAC professional should be delighted to see, especially as disciplinary faculty face more pressures than ever as teachers and researchers. As we have seen, these early-career faculty were almost universally open to learning more about teaching with writing,

and they were eager to use writing activities to foster student learning in their courses; they were more interested in assignment design than in managing the grading load; many were already using formal writing assignments in smart, effective ways; and, at least in their initial concerns, they put relatively little emphasis on grammar and mechanics. These faculty demonstrated, for the most part, a refreshingly positive attitude toward students and writing. Although there was a justifiable wariness about the potentially overwhelming workload associated with WAC pedagogy, there was very little of the negativity or complaint culture about student writing so familiar to experienced WAC workshop leaders. One professor, from educational psychology, said "ugh" when talking about reading student papers. And a professor from kinesiology said, "I struggle with lowering my expectations to fit the students' work." These were about the only exceptions among 107 faculty. For WAC professionals, these trends might mean as we work with newer faculty we need to spend less time confronting misconceptions than we have done in the past. These trends also powerfully remind us how we should conceptualize WAC work—not about converting uninitiated colleagues, but much more frequently about collaborating with disciplinary faculty as they teach with writing in exciting ways, ways we can learn from and then share with others.

The Need for Discipline-Specific Rhetorical Knowledge

From the strong disciplinary emphasis within the goals, another lesson emerges. The discipline-specific learning goals spotlight what experienced WAC specialists know well—that those new to the field need to develop far more than generic writing-course and humanities-centric knowledge of assignment design and writing pedagogy. To respond to the kinds of WAC learning goals we have seen above, WAC specialists need to become comfortable imagining, thinking critically about, and sharing resources for writing assignments in such varied fields as computer science, music, plant pathology, political science, literary studies, and chemistry, and in understanding learning settings as varied as clinical, lecture, seminar, and graduate courses. They also need to develop skill and comfort at establishing and sharing expertise with disciplinary faculty experts (Jablonski, 2006; Tarabochia, 2017), much as writing center tutors do as they cross disciplines in their consulting with student-writers (Nowacek, 2011, pp. 136-140). If, for example, a faculty member in an engineering discipline asked for advice about designing writing assignments in a capstone course, a WAC professional would of course want to have a sustained conversation with that colleague about what the learning goals are for the course, how large the enrollment is, what kinds of writing are assigned currently, what's worked well and what hasn't, what kind of writing instruction and support the course includes, and what prior experience students have with those kinds of writing. To bring to that conversation,

newer WAC specialists also need to develop an archive of successful assignment sequences from capstone courses in other disciplines on their campus, be conversant with relevant literature in journals such as *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *The Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, and *Technical Communication Quarterly*, know some WAC research about how students experience senior capstone design courses in engineering (e.g., Paretti, 2013), know some textbooks about research and writing in engineering (e.g., Crone, 2020), have some familiarity with design projects within various engineering majors and be efficient at learning a little about the curriculum in that particular engineering discipline, and appreciate the power of a local needs analysis done collaboratively by writing studies specialists and STEM faculty (Gallagher et al., 2020). Bringing some of this knowledge into consultations, WAC specialists will be able to ask better questions and earn the trust of and build relationships with colleagues faster.

Although many of the discipline-specific learning goals were familiar to experienced WAC specialists and we can turn to numerous publications for ideas to help with our responses, some of the other discipline-specific goals suggest important new areas for future WAC research, especially in STEM fields. One of those involves writing assignments in physics courses. A few WAC publications suggest ways to incorporate writing activities into quantitative disciplines (e.g., Bahls, 2012; King, 1982; Parker & Mattison, 2010), but we need more specific examples to respond to the learning goals from a physics professor mentioned above (are there ways to use "writing as a way [for students] to learn basic physics equations?") and from an engineering physics professor quoted above ("I'd like to know more about ways to avoid [typical structures of writing assignments in my field in order] to foster student's [*sic*] critical thinking, innovative thoughts, etc. . . ."). We also need more WAC research about writing assignments within graduate science courses, especially assignments that might resolve tensions, discussed above, between a graduate-course curriculum and the individual research interests of each graduate student; those interests are usually tied to the research within a particular lab group and unrelated to the graduate course. A soil science professor, for example, who was deeply committed to teaching with writing, puzzled over "How to balance—for grad students—relevant writing activities with not 'wasting time' on research outside their actual thesis/dissertation project." With more WAC research and case studies from these and other less-frequently discussed disciplinary areas, these kinds of questions are less likely to stump us as WAC specialists.

The key to discovering the remaining lessons is to think critically about the goals, comparing what's spoken to a comprehensive knowledge of the field and noticing what is *missing*. These lacunae tell us what WAC specialists need to be prepared to focus attention on—to introduce within workshops and consultations—even if no

one asks. By choosing sometimes to share new ideas that push beyond what disciplinary faculty initially ask about, WAC specialists can embrace the complexity of WAC questions. Obviously, identifying all of the WAC topics that these disciplinary faculty did *not* include would be endless, so the following sections focus on what I consider to be the most important topics largely unspoken in the faculty goals.

Writing to Learn

First, the assignment-design goals largely ignore writing to learn, obviously a bedrock principle within WAC. Despite the impressive interest in learning and learners and in aligning writing activities with learning goals for courses, the vast majority of that interest orbited around formal writing assignments. As I described above, a few of the designing-assignment goals did specifically mention what we would identify as WTL interests—a chemistry professor, for example, brainstorming ideas for low-stakes assignments in an organic chemistry course, wondered whether asking students to write a "news/commentary on a reaction" or "an explanation for how a particular reaction occurs in their own words" would be effective; a nursing professor wanted to develop "ideas for smaller 'micro' assignments that can be used in class"; a genetics professor wanted to improve the ways he uses "short responses to assigned reading (ungraded) and graded homework questions to assess conceptual understanding of readings and computational exercises." But these are the exceptions, found in only 10% of the designing goals. I can imagine various reasons for the lack of initial interest in WTL assignments—these faculty could have had little experience, when they were students themselves, with WTL assignments, or they could have less experience thinking about writing as form of learning rather than as summative assessment. They may have been understandably concerned first with improving major assignments already in their courses. Their emphasis on formal writing assignments might also reflect my choice of initial readings from Bean (2011)—chapters about designing formal and research assignments—which they had read before writing out their WAC learning goals. In their goals, a couple of faculty referred to specific examples of WTL assignments that Bean mentions briefly in the chapters I did assign. When I assign only a chapter or two from a book for reading, I always share the table of contents for the entire book to give a fuller context and to spark other interests, which led one of the faculty in this study to mention wanting to read Bean's chapter on informal writing assignments.

No matter the reasons, the fact that faculty largely overlooked WTL in their initial WAC learning goals reinforces how important it is for WAC specialists to be sure to introduce WTL into discussions with disciplinary faculty. One of my individual consultations with an MTLE faculty fellow illustrated this opportunity and served as an important reminder not to view WAC learning goals from disciplinary faculty

as fixed. Since they were written by assistant professors at the start of a WAC unit in MTLE, we should consider these goals as only *initial* learning goals, which inevitably evolve as disciplinary faculty gain more teaching experience and as these faculty consult with disciplinary colleagues and WAC specialists. In this case, an assistant professor in biomedical engineering switched—as a result of our conversation—completely away from plans to introduce a library-based research paper in an advanced undergraduate course, instead wanting to brainstorm ideas for low-stakes WTL activities to help students understand key concepts that they found difficult in her course. She had so much success with these new WTL activities that she subsequently expanded those into other courses and those assignments now form part of the educational component of her own NSF grant proposals.

Consideration of Audience and the Pedagogy of Student Conferences

Another cornerstone of WAC was conspicuously absent from almost all goals for assignments and writing pedagogy—the rhetorical importance of specifying audiences in assignments and of teaching students to adapt their writing for particular audiences. Given these professors' emphasis on discipline-specific assignments and genres and their desire to teach students to develop arguments in discipline-specific ways, and given some of my subsequent conversations with them, this seeming lack of interest stemmed, I believe, from limited experience thinking deeply about rhetorical situations, not from any resistance to the concept. So knowing that early-career disciplinary faculty are unlikely to focus on audience as they design assignments and coach students in the process of writing, WAC specialists need to be sure to foreground the importance of audience, illustrate that in analyses of successful sample WID assignments, and build audience into planning worksheets faculty use as they design new assignments.

Within the instructional learning goals, almost no faculty said that they wanted to learn more about the pedagogy of individual conferences with student-writers as part of building in writing process, which was in stark contrast to their high interest in student peer review. Obviously, workload explains some of this difference, but it's a striking gap. One of the few goals that did mention conferences explicitly raised concerns about the time commitment—this psychology professor (whose goals are mentioned above) was deeply committed in past teaching to individual conferences, but wanted advice for how to possibly continue to hold conferences when her enrollment had ballooned to ninety students. Even with more reasonably sized classes, faculty understandably would avoid a pedagogical method so labor intensive. Beyond time concerns, in many cases, I am sure, faculty simply did not conceptualize talk as an essential part of the writing process and did not realize how pedagogically effective conferences can be for student-writers. While acknowledging barriers, WAC

specialists have to find ways to introduce conferences as an option in some classes, demonstrate their value (in a large-scale assessment of writing-intensive courses on our campus, for example, students identified conferences with their instructors as one of the most effective methods of writing instruction in these courses (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001, p. 31), suggest ways to be as efficient as possible, including group conferences, and explore the possibility of integrating undergraduate writing fellows into disciplinary courses (e.g., Hall & Hughes, 2011) .

Intersections of WAC and Diversity and Social Justice

The fact that within their learning goals only a few early-career faculty signaled interest in diversity and social justice, which are some of the most important current interests in WAC, teaches WAC professionals how crucial it is that they open up conversations about these topics as part of WAC. As we saw above, a few of the goals about responding and evaluating included social-justice concerns about fairness for student-writers and about differences in literacy preparation for disciplinary discourse. In the goals about learners, a few faculty wanted to explore the pedagogical implications of students' differing home discourse communities, levels of experience and skill with writing, and material circumstances in which they study and write. But those were the exceptions. In the past ten years, WAC scholarship has argued compellingly for WAC leaders to emphasize diversity and social justice within our conversations with disciplinary faculty—especially focusing on race, not just on multilingualism. Anson (2012), for example, called for increased attention to diversity within WAC scholarship at the same time that he acknowledged complications that WAC specialists might face if they open up discussions about race: "the subject of race is perceived to generate layers of additional complexity over principles, theories, and pedagogies already challenging to faculty in various disciplines to interpret and apply to their teaching" (p. 19). Using a powerful example from a consultation with a professor designing a writing assignment for a health policy class, Poe (2013) argued that as WAC leaders "we need to anticipate these moments where race and writing come together across the curriculum and share ways of working through these moments as we work with faculty and teaching assistants in helping them design, deliver, and assess writing" (p. 2). Poe went on to offer some initial suggestions for WAC practitioners to "integrate discussions about race in our interactions with faculty, graduate students, and administrators across the curriculum" (p. 3).

Recent scholarship has, appropriately, taken a more critical stance. Walton et al. (2019), for example, made powerful arguments for and offered models for making social justice central to the study, teaching, research, and practice of technical communication. Kareem (2020) pushed WAC specialists to introduce culturally sustaining educational practices. Inoue argued that WAC should focus on anti-racist work,

especially around assessment, "to [address] ways in which the discourse expected of nurses, business majors, engineers . . . are quite simply white supremacist" (Lerner, 2018, p. 115). As WAC professionals, we need to be prepared to open up some of these conversations with disciplinary colleagues, even if they are not initially asking about how teaching with writing in their disciplines intersects powerfully with diversity and race. Many of the faculty fellows in the MTLE program are likely to be a receptive audience for these conversations, given that the faculty in these cohorts are diverse, that they are early in their careers, and that as scholars some of them study race, culture, diversity, sociology, and education. It is also interesting to speculate whether within their goals they might have signaled more interest in diversity and social justice if the WAC unit had followed, rather than preceded, the unit on inclusive teaching practices in the MTLE curriculum.

WAC Theory and Research

It's no surprise, of course, that these disciplinary faculty also did not ask about WAC theory and research directly—but it's our job, as WAC specialists, to know this theory and research and to bring it strategically into our consultations and workshops. These disciplinary faculty did not ask, for example, about designing "meaning-making tasks," what Anderson et al. (2015; 2016) identified from NSSE research as "constructs" to increase student engagement with writing activities—but they did ask about motivating students, which is clearly related to engagement research. None asked what the latest research says about which kinds of WTL assignments lead to more learning (e.g., Gere et al., 2018). Only a few asked what makes writing assignments meaningful for students or about personal connections students can have with assignments or about agency, and the few who asked what made assignments meaningful for instructors did so in an oblique way—but they would benefit from hearing about this research (Eodice et al., 2016; 2018). None asked about AAC&U research on writing-intensive courses as high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008). In their questions about responding to and evaluating student writing, none indicated any awareness of Sommers' (2006) research about how important the partnership between students and teachers is in determining how students respond to feedback.

No one, of course, referred explicitly to Anson's (2015) threshold concepts about WAC, but many of those threshold concepts lie behind, beneath, and around their learning goals—and clearly almost all of these early-career faculty had journeyed through the threshold concept that teaching students about writing is a shared responsibility for faculty in all disciplines. Their asking important questions about increasing students' motivation about writing opens the door for WAC specialists to share powerful ideas from writing studies more broadly, such as Russel Durst's (1999) thoughtful responses to the instrumentalism and careerism that students

bring to first-year writing courses. Disciplinary faculty looking to motivate their students about writing assignments might do well to acknowledge students' resistance and use concepts like Durst's "reflective instrumentalism," which "takes advantage of the motivation students bring to their areas of specialization, provides students with useful knowledge, and engages students in critical scrutiny of schooling and society" (p. 179). Disciplinary faculty did not ask about this research and theory because obviously this knowledge comes from our discipline, not theirs. WAC specialists of course absolutely need this depth and texture in their knowledge, in order to expand what disciplinary faculty understand about writing as well as to support their WAC-specialist pedagogical recommendations. And they need to be willing to bend a learning goal in a new direction, toward some of the specialized knowledge WAC professionals possess.

Closing Thoughts

I hope that the results of this study can help galvanize new and future WAC professionals' interest in the pedagogical concerns that matter so much to early-career disciplinary faculty. I also hope that the findings and analysis presented here help our field develop a more comprehensive, more accurate understanding of disciplinary faculty as WAC learners. The faculty in this study truly were an intellectually exciting group of learners, coming from a striking variety of disciplines, including many science faculty and many international faculty. Despite the very high research expectations of their university, these faculty were eager to learn about WAC, dedicated to incorporating writing activities of a wide sort as they teach their disciplines, and ready to ask many of the genuinely difficult and appropriately critical questions about WAC pedagogy. Most impressive were their deep interests in learning more about designing assignments that align with learning goals and the widespread evidence of their concern for students as learners. Because they were all assistant professors, these faculty represent the long-term future of engaged disciplinary faculty who can expand WAC in exciting ways.

I hope that these findings also inspire further research. It would be fascinating to compare these WAC learning goals with ones from faculty at different stages of their careers and at different kinds of schools and colleges and universities, and to explore the differences in these goals based on home disciplines. A follow-up study could help us understand how goals evolve as a result of changing teaching assignments (Walvoord et al., 1997), or of development as a result of the MTLE program and of deepening teaching experience. WAC specialists could use these findings to collaborate among themselves and with the WAC Graduate Organization (2020) to develop a curriculum for graduate students who aim to be future WAC specialists in their faculty careers.

Finally, the faculty in this study say something important about where we choose to do WAC work within our universities. The eagerness these faculty had to learn about WAC, their powerful curiosity and critical perspectives—reflected in the sheer volume and the sophistication of their goals and specifically the interests in learners and learning—show clearly how beneficial it is to integrate *some* WAC faculty development into broader campus faculty learning communities devoted to teaching and learning. It's no accident that these faculty were primed from the earlier parts of the MTLE curriculum to learn about WAC. It's also powerful to remember that these faculty were, almost exclusively, not teaching required writing-intensive courses in their departments. I've always strongly believed that WAC programs should not focus exclusively on faculty teaching such courses, but instead cast a much broader net. There's a powerful synergy between WAC and a larger, well-designed faculty learning community built around a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning, a connection that makes this kind of WAC conversation and learning and this kind of research possible.

Acknowledgments

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Writing Across the Co-Curriculum

HEATHER BASTIAN

This article builds on existing scholarship to further explore the potential of co-curricular collaborations and to advocate for co-curricular programs that utilize a peer-education based model as especially rich sites for WAC collaboration. By adopting Linkon and Pavesich's (2015) use of "affordance" and their accompanying gardening metaphor for WAC work, it explores how existing scholarship has understood labor in co-curricular collaborations and examines the affordances of peer-education based co-curricular programs. It then describes a collaboration between a WAC program and peer-education based co-curricular programs to demonstrate the potential and value of these kinds of collaborations for WAC programs and institutions at large. Overall, this article encourages WAC directors to identify and collaborate with co-curricular programs with affordances that allow for shared labor as a way to increase WAC visibility and sustainability.

Scholars have long argued that writing across the curriculum (WAC) must work to expand the scope of collaboration beyond faculty and traditional academic departments to include other institutional academic, administrative, and support units (McLeod et al., 2001; Parks & Goldblatt, 2000; Walvoord, 1996). Taking up these calls, the Statement of WAC Principles and Practices (2014), developed by the International Network of WAC Programs and endorsed by the Conference on College Composition and Communication Executive Committee, identified "collaborat[ing] with other groups in the institution" as an important step for WAC directors so they can work to "integrate WAC into the fabric of an institution." It goes on to list nineteen possible units or programs that are "natural allies of WAC." Several of the potential collaborators listed, including writing centers, undergraduate research offices, student affairs, and libraries, provide co-curriculum at universities and colleges.

In broad terms, the co-curriculum refers to structured activities, programs, and learning experiences, such as academic support services, research intensive experiences, internships, service or community-based learning initiatives, and student organizations among others, that complement or are connected to the formal academic curriculum. Co-curricular experiences, many of which have been identified

as high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008), provide important alternative sites of learning where students often are the primary actors and even leaders in their education. As the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (2007) has observed, "some of the most powerful learning in college occurs in activities undertaken as part of the co-curriculum, both on campus and through campus outreach to community partners" (p. 37). Research in writing studies that has examined co-curricular spaces further supports their value as alternative sites of rhetorical education and learning (e.g. Alexander & Jarratt, 2014; Hendrickson, 2016; Ruggles Gere, 1994).

Given the student learning and engagement that occurs in the co-curriculum, it seems a natural fit for WAC programs and initiatives that seek to infuse writing into daily teaching and learning practices. Additionally, the co-curriculum provides an excellent opportunity for WAC to encourage the transfer of writing knowledge and practices or what Yancey et al. (2018) has called the "writing-transfer-mindset" by asking students to write in multiple contexts and to reflect on the similarities and differences between writing in different contexts. Since they bridge multiple contexts, co-curricular programs and initiatives bring together students and faculty from across the disciplines as well as administration and staff from both academic and student affairs, making them prime sites for interdisciplinary and institutional collaborations.

Despite their potential, co-curricular collaborations receive relatively little attention in WAC research beyond those with service or community-based learning initiatives (Deans, 1997; Jolliffe, 2001; Parks & Goldblatt, 2000) and writing centers (Barnett & Blumner, 1999; Good & Barganier, 2013; Robinson & Hall, 2013). This article builds on existing scholarship to further explore the potential of co-curricular collaborations and to advocate for co-curricular programs that utilize a peer-education based model as especially rich sites for WAC collaboration. I adopt Linkon and Pavesich's (2015) use of "affordance" and their accompanying gardening analogy for WAC work to explore how existing scholarship has understood labor in co-curricular collaborations and to examine the affordances of peer-education based co-curricular programs. I then describe a collaboration between a WAC program and peer-education based co-curricular programs that has led to programmatic and institutional change to demonstrate the potential and value of these kinds of collaborations for WAC programs and institutions at large. Overall, this article encourages WAC directors to identify and collaborate with co-curricular programs that offer affordances that allow for shared labor as a way to increase WAC visibility and sustainability.

WAC and Co-Curricular Collaborations

Recent WAC scholarship has moved beyond practical tips for program administration into theorizing about it with scholars applying different approaches to WAC

development and sustainability. While there is certainly overlap between approaches as they have similar aims and advocate for systematic attention to program administration and institutional change, each offers a different entry point and focus for thinking about administrative work. Cox, Galin, and Melzer (2018) have put forward a whole-systems approach in which WAC directors work with stakeholders to study an institution's social networks, systems, and capacity for resilience so that they can identify potential bottlenecks, leverage points, and stressors that impact and influence program development (p. 25).[1] This approach is especially useful for understanding how WAC directors can work within complex and dynamic systems to plan, develop, and launch programs. Sheffield (2018) has advocated for design thinking in which WAC directors develop creative solutions to common WAC problems from a user perspective. This approach is especially useful for understanding how WAC directors can address complex problems with out-of-the-box solutions. Linkon and Pavesich (2015) have proposed an affordance approach to demonstrate how WAC directors can cultivate their environments to create the conditions for institutional change. This approach, I suggest here, is especially useful for understanding (and determining the value of) WAC collaborations by grounding a WAC director's work within environmental affordances and highlighting the labor that WAC directors undertake as part of any collaboration.

As Linkin and Pavesich have pointed out, affordance in writing studies generally refers to the "pedagogical and communicative potentials of new media technologies,"[2] but the concept of affordance has been applied across many disciplines and also refers more broadly to pre-existing environmental structures, attributes, and resources that evolve over time in response to human interaction (p. 22). To operationalize their use of affordances, they adopted a gardening analogy that asks WAC directors to view themselves as gardeners of a sort, identifying rich institutional ground that can be tilled, fertilized, planted, and harvested over changing seasons. The affordance approach requires that WAC directors understand the pre-existing affordances in the contexts in which they work so that they can identify where best to direct their attention and efforts and plan accordingly. It also asks WAC directors to look for potential in pre-existing affordances and then work to develop and cultivate them into new ones.

Adopting this approach and analogy, Linkon and Pavesich have suggested, shifts the ways in which WPAs interact with others at their institutions from a focus on cultivating individual "champions" who *create* institutional change to a focus on cultivating environmental affordances that *enable* institutional change. As they put it, "the real job of the WPA is to create possibility rather than hierarchy and to remain mindful of the nature of agency" (p. 33). While Linkon and Pavesich do not directly address labor, the gardening analogy also highlights the role of labor in WAC

program administration in important ways. Gardening requires physical labor—one must prepare and till the land, test and fertilize the soil, plant and monitor the seeds, water and nurture the plants, harvest the produce, and begin again. This labor is ongoing, time consuming, and physically demanding with little immediate reward; instead, gardeners work, watch, wait, and trust that they will see the fruits of their labor. A WAC director's labor, while not usually physical, can be similarly described and separated into administrative and programmatic work among other kinds.[3] I use administrative labor here to refer to the work related to the day-to-day management of the WAC program, e.g. scheduling, training and supervising student workers, and record keeping; and I use programmatic labor to refer to the creation and delivery of WAC pedagogy and content, e.g. workshops, seminars, and consultations. This kind of attention to labor when applied to thinking about collaboration provides a way to think not just about a WAC director's work during collaborations but also about ways in which a WAC director can share in that work with others at their institution. In other words, WAC directors need not always engage in labor alone as sole gardeners on lone plots but as members of a gardening collective cultivating institutional landscapes for harvest.

Existing research on WAC and co-curricular collaborations has focused on service or community-based learning initiatives and writing centers. Both offer affordances that WAC directors can cultivate, but WAC directors share labor differently within each collaboration. Scholars have advocated for collaboration between WAC and service or community-based learning initiatives since both are writing-intensive and value educational reform (Deans, 1997; Jolliffe, 2001; Parks & Goldblatt, 2000). These affordances are pedagogical and ideological in nature, which, scholars have suggested, allow WAC specialists to support faculty teaching service or community-based learning courses or projects by facilitating the conscious and purposeful integration of writing and writing assignments (Deans, 1997; Jolliffe, 2001; Savini 2016). For example, Savini (2016) has detailed a WAC and civic engagement program partnership that resulted in a faculty writing retreat focused on civic engagement in which she, as a WAC specialist, supported faculty as they developed reflective writing prompts. When WAC directors collaborate with service or community-based learning initiatives, like this one, the partners appear to primarily share in the programmatic labor with each partner contributing their expertise to support faculty as they work to integrate writing and service or community-based learning into their teaching.

Scholarship on WAC and writing center collaborations reveals that these kinds of partnerships allow for a sharing of both programmatic and administrative labor because they offer additional kinds of affordances. Most scholars have agreed that WAC and writing center partnerships are useful and can be productive (Barnett &

Blumner, 1999; Barnett & Rosen, 1999; Childers et al., 2002; Gill, 1996; Mullin, 2001); some have offered cautions and concerns (Childers et al. 2002; Pemberton, 1995); and others have provided examples of successful collaborations (Barnett & Blumner, 1999; Good & Barganier, 2013; Robinson & Hall, 2013). WAC scholars who have found writing center collaborations to be successful do so in part because of the shared affordances between WAC and writing centers. While WAC traditionally focuses on faculty support and writing centers on student support, they share several affordances, as Mullin (2001) has noted: "they both draw from some of the same theories, engage in shared practices, and are similarly placed within the academic community (often not reporting to departments or working across traditional curricular lines)" (p. 184).

These affordances are ideological and practical in nature but also grounded in institutional structures, allowing WAC and writing center directors to share in both programmatic and administrative labor. For example, Good and Barangier (2013) have outlined their collaboration between the Writing in the Disciplines (WID) Internship Program that provides academic support for the WAC program and the Learning Center that provides writing support for all students at the university. Specifically, they examined how the WID interns and writing center tutors contribute to each other's training and to faculty development sessions. Unlike in service or community-based learning collaborations where WAC appears to provide primarily programmatic support related to faculty development, WAC serves more as a central partner in writing center collaborations through the coordination and sharing of both administrative and programmatic labor. As Good and Barangier noted of their own collaboration, "As directors of the Learning Center and the WAC Program, we did not want to work at cross purposes. Rather, we each wanted to build on the unique strengths and offerings of our respective academic support programs, which required ongoing communication and deliberate collaboration" (p. 2).

Similar affordances and the potential for shared labor make co-curricular experiences a rich site for WAC collaborations. While existing WAC scholarship has focused on collaborations with service or community-based learning and writing centers, many universities and colleges support a host of other co-curricular activities as mentioned above. The co-curricular activities with the most potential for WAC collaborations will most likely vary from institution to institution depending on the environmental affordances; however, at UNC Charlotte, I have found that co-curricular programs that utilize peer education models, such as academic support services and peer mentorship, advising, and educator programs, provide a particularly rich site for WAC collaboration, especially for WAC programs that incorporate writing fellows.

The potential of peer education-based co-curricular programs for WAC collaboration is, most likely, not surprising given the attention paid to writing center collaborations in WAC scholarship. On most campuses, though, writing centers are one piece of a much larger student support network, and many of these programs offer affordances similar to those found in writing centers. Peer education-based co-curricular programs recruit and hire peer leaders and provide them with training and ongoing professional development that incorporates strategies from active learning, collaborative learning, and reflective practice. They mentor, supervise, and compensate students who work as peer leaders to tutor or mentor other students and, as such, are responsible for establishing or enforcing policies, expectations, responsibilities, and boundaries for peer leaders. They and their peer leaders need to be responsive to the curricular contexts to which they are connected or complement while carrying out their own independent work, and they must demonstrate their value through ongoing assessments of their programs to maintain institutional support and funding. This scope and depth of responsibility for directors of peer education-based co-curricular programs provides affordances with much potential for cultivation and growth. Moreover, these affordances lead to similar challenges and shared problems, such as policy development, training development and delivery, and communication with various audiences, that WAC specialists are uniquely situated to help peer education-based co-curricular programs address as a central working partner through shared administrative and programmatic labor.

In addition to offering affordances that allow for the sharing of labor, peer education-based co-curricular program collaborations provide WAC with several entry points to influence institutional practice and culture. Peer education-based programs provide the co-curriculum at two levels: they provide a co-curriculum experience for students in the form of peer mentoring and education, and they provide an additional and different co-curriculum experience for students who work as peer mentors and educators in the form of training and professional development. This allows WAC to potentially impact the writing knowledge and practices of two different student populations—those who utilize these kinds of services and those who work within them with, of course, some overlap between them. Additionally, peer education-based programs work with faculty and students from across the disciplines as well as administration and staff from across academic, student, and, at times, business affairs, increasing the reach and visibility of WAC beyond individual faculty in traditional academic units who participate in WAC work.

To summarize thus far, I have contended that co-curricular programs especially peer education-based co-curricular programs are rich sites for WAC collaboration in terms of affordances, labor, impact, and reach. While these collaborations have the potential to positively affect the visibility and reach of WAC at an institution, a

caution for WAC programs is that peer education-based programs are often directed by staff rather than faculty and are frequently connected to student success metrics that measure success in terms of grades, retention, and graduation. Those who direct these programs rarely if ever view success in such narrow terms, but those who grant funding for them might or, minimally, they look to those metrics to gauge student success. As such, WAC directors should be aware of the associations or assumptions that administration and faculty within an institution might make regarding WAC and peer education-based program collaborations and work to mitigate them as they are able, as is the case with any potential collaboration. With this caution in mind, I describe in the next section one such collaboration that has resulted in programmatic and institutional change to demonstrate the potential and value of these kinds of collaborations.

The Peer Leader Action Group

The peer leader action group (PLAG) at UNC Charlotte is a grassroots group that brings together seventeen programs across academic and student affairs (a full list of the programs can be found at https://uge.uncc.edu/peertopeerlearning) with the goal to create collaborations between programs that employ and train peer mentors and tutors who primarily provide academic support. I detail here the history, structure, and some of the work of PLAG to demonstrate the ways in which I, as a WAC associate director, identified pre-existing affordances and shared in labor with peer education-based co-curricular programs to grow and cultivate those affordances. I do so not to provide an exact model that others must or even should follow, but to provide insight into how the affordance approach can work to identify, foster, and build institutional collaborations as well as to demonstrate the potential of co-curricular programs for WAC collaboration and the sharing of labor. Before doing so, let me briefly provide some institutional context for the WAC program and the PLAG collaboration given that affordances are intimately tied to the local environment.

UNC Charlotte is a large, public, urban research university that has experienced rapid enrollment growth within the past ten years. The student population is diverse and primarily local: thirty-nine percent of students report being from an under-represented group; forty-two percent of all new undergraduates are first-generation college students; forty-four percent of new undergraduate students are transfers; and ninety-three percent are from North Carolina (University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2019). Several academic support services for students exist across the institution with some positioned in academic and student affairs at large (e.g. tutoring services, communication across the curriculum, and office of academic diversity and inclusion) and some positioned within the colleges (e.g. writing center, Belk College of Business peer advisors, education learning community peer mentors, and health

systems management peer advising). Additionally, some programs target specific undergraduate populations like transfer, at-risk, or first-year, first-time students and students within specific colleges or majors while others are open to the entire under-graduate student population. In general, upper administration strongly supports not only student support services but also on-campus student employment since many UNC Charlotte students must work. Both are viewed as important contributors to graduation and retention rates.

The communication across the curriculum (CxC) program at UNC Charlotte was established in 2009 and is housed in the office of undergraduate education, a university-wide unit in academic affairs that serves all undergraduate students through advising, student support services, coursework, and a wide variety of other student-centered initiatives. CxC is composed of an executive director who also serves as faculty, an associate director (me) who serves as staff, and one-two graduate students who support program work. The program has three main components: curriculum consultation, professional development, and the communication consultant program. The first two components center on facilitative work with departments and faculty to help them integrate communication across departmental curriculum and into individual teaching practice. The communication consultant program follows the writing fellows' model with primarily undergraduate students working with faculty and students in upper-division disciplinary writing- and/or oral-intensive courses and a sophomore-level general education course. In line with the writing fellows' model, consultants provide written and oral communication support for students in these courses inside and outside of class but also provide faculty with feedback and in-class assistance as they integrate communication into their courses and teaching. One of my primary CxC responsibilities is the communication consultant program as I, along with graduate student assistance, am responsible for the training, mentoring, and supervision of consultants, the support and development of faculty who participate in the program, and overall program administration in consultation with the executive director. Since I joined the CxC program 2016, the communication consultant program has tripled in size. On average, we support each semester sixty consultants who hold approximately two thousand individual or small group consultations, thirty-five to forty faculty members, and twenty to twenty-five courses across eighteen to twenty-two departments.

PLAG originated out of a shared affordance of peer leader training and professional development. When I joined the program, I identified, in consultation with the executive director, consultant training and professional development as an area of development. While I was aware of what training and professional development looked like for writing fellow programs at other institutions, I sought to identify what training and development structures worked at this particular institution. To do

so, I identified eleven programs that employed students in roles similar to communication consultants and had shared affordances in terms of structures and resources and then reached out to the directors (ten were staff and one was faculty) to schedule sit-down meetings. It is important to note here that most directors of these programs (including me) were staff, not faculty, and while WAC generally focuses its efforts on faculty and administration, looking to affordances rather than people led me to collaborating with a different population than is usual for WAC at the university. At these meetings, I was interested in learning about the following attributes of the programs: 1) the number of students working in the program, 2) the focus or purpose of the peer interactions, 3) the ways in which the students worked with their peers, 4) the hiring of students for these positions, 5) the training and professional development structure, content, and delivery for the peer educators, and 6) challenges or problems they encountered in their programs.

As I was collecting this information, it became clear to me that most programs employed a similar training and professional development structure for their peer leaders and were experiencing similar problems and challenges. For example, most programs provided some kind of in-person beginning of the semester training for all of their students but received pushback from returning students because much of the training focused on university policies and procedures for student employees that they learned the previous semester. With the focus on university policies and procedures, representatives from different offices, like legal, disability services, or the counseling center, were attending the trainings of several different programs and delivering the same material, often within the same few days. Directors also had reservations about this structure. They wanted training to be more interactive and scenario-based and less focused on information delivery and presentations.

Given the similar training and professional development structures and areas of concern regarding those structures, I saw potential for cultivation and growth within this particular affordance. Returning to Linkon and Pavesich's (2015) gardening analogy, the peer leader training and professional development soil, and specifically the beginning of the semester training plot, was especially well-suited to support collaboration between the programs. It contained the necessary nutrients of similar problems, concerns, and goals to grow our collaboration and focus our labor. Individually, no one program believed they could dedicate the labor needed to fully address the problems and challenges regarding the beginning of the semester training due to overall program workload. At the same time, by operating as individual gardeners cultivating our own isolated lots, we often were replicating each other's labor rather than sharing that labor. This is where I saw the potential for a gardening collective where we could pool our resources and share in the administrative labor in

particular to have a harvest that would benefit each of our individual programs while building a group identity.

The other program directors saw the potential (or at least were intrigued enough by the prospect) to meet in spring 2017 to discuss potential collaborations, and, thus, PLAG was formed. The sharing of labor has been at the forefront of our collaboration from the beginning. Since we are a grassroots group with no top-down charge or oversight and participation is optional, we operate as a collective that engages in shared decision-making and labor. We have a rotating coordinator role that serves a two-year term to facilitate the group as needed (leading discussion during meetings, negotiating priorities, assigning responsibilities, etc.) and to maintain momentum on projects (maintaining deadlines, sending reminders, and updating PLAG documents). However, all members must contribute to the labor of PLAG projects and discussions in some capacity. We generally meet twice a semester and commit to providing a welcoming and supportive environment, learning about each other's programs, and maintaining confidentiality. While we collaborate together on projects and share resources, all individual programs retain autonomy and primary responsibility for their peer leaders. In other words, while we operate as a gardening collective in our shared plots, we all still garden and maintain our own individual plots.

PLAG has had several robust harvests during its few years of existence, but I focus here on our first collaboration regarding the beginning of semester training because it laid the groundwork for later work and it is an ongoing collaborative effort. As mentioned above, I identified peer leader training as a starting point for group collaboration because my initial conversations with directors indicated that this area was the most immediate and pressing concern for most programs and, as such, was as an especially rich affordance that our programs shared, but I also suspected (as an experienced gardener) that it could be cultivated into new affordances and collaborations. The other programs agreed, so we worked together to collectively define the problem we wanted to address with the beginning of the semester training (too much training time was spent on information delivery and not enough on active learning and interaction), brainstorm possible solutions, and research other models of training at the university. Based on this, we developed an asynchronous online peer leader training course on Canvas (our learning management system). On average, 250 peer leaders complete the course in the fall and 150 in the spring, although those numbers continue to rise as more programs join PLAG. We also maintain IRB approval to study data from the course.

The peer leader training course is intended to be completed by all of the peer leaders from our different programs prior to their individual program beginning of the semester training. The purpose of the course is to provide peer leaders with what PLAG members determined to be essential baseline knowledge for working

with their peers and to help peer leaders understand their role and its importance at the university. By doing so, we sought to free up time in our individual training that was previously dedicated to information delivery for more interactive and scenario-based activities. We also sought to create a group identity for peer leaders to raise the profile of peer-based education and our programs at UNC Charlotte. Ten topics serve as modules within the course including FERPA and confidentiality, discrimination and the ADA, Title IX and sexual harassment, campus safety, peer-to-peer communication, cultural diversity, campus referrals, self-care and wellness, and timecards—a healthy mix of procedural and theoretical knowledge. Each module contains a short video (five to eight minutes) and a three-question scenario-based quiz that peer leaders must pass to move onto the next module. The training ends with two self-reflective questions that engage peer leaders in a writing-to-learn activity and a survey that provides PLAG with user feedback. The reflective questions are as follows: 1) "Explain in at least a few sentences how this online training influenced your understanding of what it means to be a peer leader" and 2) "Describe at least two ways you will apply the information you learned from these modules to your work as a peer leader."

Creating and maintaining the peer leader training course unsurprisingly required, and continues to require, a lot of administrative labor. Group members shared this labor among themselves and also with other units across campus. Each module had a lead developer who either developed the video or quiz on their own or worked with units across campus to develop the video and then created the quiz on their own. For instance, while the office for academic diversity and inclusion created the cultural diversity video, and I, on behalf of CxC, developed the peer-to-peer communication video with feedback from the executive director, other group members worked with our legal department to develop the FERPA and confidentiality, discrimination and the ADA, and Title IX and sexual harassment videos and with counseling services to develop the self-care and wellness video. Units outside of PLAG were happy to work with us to develop the videos, especially since it meant they no longer needed to address our groups individually. Beyond its immediate development, the course requires ongoing administrative labor in the form of yearly routine maintenance. We review all ten modules every spring/summer with group members volunteering to review one module and update with feedback from the appropriate units as needed. While we share maintenance of the peer leader training course, all programs are responsible for enrolling their peer leaders into the course and monitoring their completion.

The course also allowed for group members to share programmatic labor. As mentioned above, the office of diversity and inclusion and CxC were able to develop modules that furthered their programmatic aims. By developing the peer-to-peer

communication module, I was able to integrate WAC practices and philosophy as well as writing center practices into this co-curriculum, including active listening as well as practices of non-verbal and verbal feedback, that would be delivered to peer leaders across campus. I also advocated for inclusion of the two writing-to-learn self-reflective questions and crafted them with PLAG members' feedback. In short, I was able to integrate and cultivate WAC practices and philosophy into the co-curriculum provided to peer leaders across campus, thereby, hopefully, influencing the practices of peer leaders who provide different co-curricular activities at our university.

Student responses to the reflective questions have indicated that the peer-to-peer communication, campus referrals, and cultural diversity modules are among the most influential in helping peer leaders understand their role and in shaping their interactions with their peers. The following two examples are representative of the degree of thoughtfulness and engagement peer leaders continue to demonstrate in their responses to the reflective questions. In this first example, one peer leader remarked how the training expanded their understanding of their role beyond just academic support by drawing attention to communication skills:

> Q1: After completing the online training it became more apparent that being a peer leader means more than simply assisting peers for educational purposes. Being a peer leader requires effective and respectful communication skills, the ability to recognize and support others with their problems, and to be effective in handling various types of situations. This training has greatly expanded my understanding of what it means to be a peer leader, and how to be an effective and successful one at that.

> Q2: After the completion of these modules, I will be sure to apply the information I learned into my work as a peer leader. The first of this information will be how to conduct effective communication when working with my peers. I want to ensure that I am actively listening as well as using proper verbal and nonverbal communication skills to allow my peers to feel as though they are getting the most out of our time together. I will also use the knowledge I gained regarding how to execute effective referrals during the times that I cannot personally meet the needs of my peers.

In a second example, a peer leader observed how the training helped them see how their role is different from others at the university and the important role communication will play:

> Q1: I found it to be extremely helpful that the modules offered scenarios peer leaders could find themselves in while working at UNC Charlotte and

solutions to navigate these scenarios. It provided good context for the type of role I will be performing on a regular basis and has given me an opportunity to think about the way in which I should communicate with peers who seek my help. It also drove home the point that peer leaders fulfill a distinct role of being one of the most accessible resources for students, which also helped frame the types of responsibilities one will need to be aware of.

Q2: I will apply this information by being more aware of my communication methods with others. A key facet of being an effective peer leader is to know how to properly engage with and communicate ideas and suggestions to those who come seeking help. Practicing active listening and being sensitive to a person's needs, directly or implied, is something that I will apply to my work as a peer leader. The other aspect to this, is using the information learned from these training modules on how to properly handle the diverse needs of students who attend UNC Charlotte. I will apply what I learned about referrals and suggesting resources as the one of the primary means to help students who may be struggling or unsure of what resources are available. I believe that this is crucial in understanding the responsibilities that peer leaders have and distinguishing the responsibilities of other staff and faculty.

In both of these examples, the peer-to-peer communication module seems to have provided the peer leaders with a more expansive understanding of their role that extends beyond information or academic skill delivery to forefront the importance of person-centered and process-based communication, shifting (perhaps as much as is possible with one short informational video) their understanding of learning to something that one receives to something that is created through active listening and responsive feedback. I imagine this will help to create, for the students these peer leaders work with, a different kind of, and most likely more productive, collaborative learning experience than they might have had otherwise. Additionally, these two peer leaders were not part of CxC so they were not going to be providing direct feedback or support to their peers on writing or oral communication, but they still appear to have gained at least some self-awareness of their own communication in this particular role, its potential effects on different audiences, and its importance to establishing collaborative peer relationships, all insights that may not have been gained without the presence of the peer-to-peer communication module and ones that they will carry into their individual program trainings.

Any one of our individual programs most likely could not have created the peer leader training course alone, at least not within our timeline, nor could any one of

us perform maintenance yearly. The training course is truly a collaborative product grounded in shared resources and labor. As I suspected, the course resulted in a shared harvest that benefited each of our individual programs, which allowed me as then PLAG coordinator to draw our attention and labor to other affordances that had longer growing seasons and less immediate benefits for our individual programs but rather aimed for larger cultural change at our university. For instance, to promote the value of peer education (and consequently our programs) in the institution at large, we created a shared mission statement for peer leaders, and each director created an individual mission statement for peer leaders in their program so that we could clearly articulate our shared identity but also the ways in which our peer leaders in our programs differed to prevent mission creep and territoriality. This led to the creation of guiding principles and best practices for peer leader programs that are published on our PLAG website. While these projects did not necessarily immediately benefit our individual programs, they helped us create a culture around peer education on our campus, broaden our reach on campus, and build visibility for our programs. Under guidance of a new coordinator, PLAG has continued to walk this line between the immediate needs of our programs and larger cultural change with the creation of a PLAG website and the development of shared recruitment events.

PLAG continues to labor together with no immediate end in sight. Group members have reported that their participation has improved the quality of their individual training, helped them address ongoing problems and challenges, and improved their administrative workload. They also report appreciating the support and feedback the group provides. CxC continues to be an active participant, allowing me to continue advocating for and integrating WAC practices and philosophy into the co-curriculum. Participation in PLAG has strengthened the communication consultant program both in terms of peer leader support and of allies who have become advocates of CxC. My administrative labor is made easier with the assistance of other PLAG members. It also simply is a lot more enjoyable as I now am able to tackle small and mundane as well complex and intriguing tasks and challenges with colleagues engaged in similar kinds of work. I believe that they benefit from my labor and from WAC as much as I benefit from their labor and the approaches they bring to the group, and I look forward to seeing how our newly cultivated but not yet nurtured affordances grow.

Conclusion

As the peer leader action group demonstrates, co-curricular activities, especially those that integrate the peer-education based model, provide particularly fertile ground for WAC collaboration because they share some of the same environmental structures, attributes, and resources (affordances) and, as a result, encounter similar challenges

and problems that can be tackled through shared administrative and programmatic labor. I believe PLAG has been a success in large part because we identify productive environmental affordances on which to grow our collaborations and, equally important, we distribute and share in the labor of the work needed to nurture them. When we first met, I did not know if we shared enough ground to continue harvesting together beyond our initial collaboration, and I know that a change in institutional weather may halt our work together, but thankfully, the weather has been on our side and we continue to find ways in which our plots overlap and so our planning and labor has come to fruition over several seasons. We are all gardeners with individual plots, but we now look for how our plots overlap, creating shared lots that we can work together to make richer and more fruitful for all of us. I have proposed here that collaborations like these allow WAC to move beyond the curriculum and into the co-curriculum, strengthening WAC's presence, alliances, and reach and building toward long term sustainability.

Of course, not all WAC programs have a writing fellows component like CxC, so collaborations with other peer-education based co-curricular programs might not provide the most fertile soil at all institutions. This does not mean that other kinds of co-curricular programs and activities cannot provide equally fertile soil for WAC programs at other institutions. I encourage WAC directors to target co-curricular activities in their own institutions for collaboration after they have mapped out their pre-existing affordances, evaluated their potential for cultivation and growth, and identified ways in which labor (either or both administrative or programmatic) could be shared.

Even if a WAC director finds that co-curricular activities at their institution do not offer productive affordances, Linkon and Pavesich's (2015) affordance approach provides a useful lens through which WAC directors can view and evaluate the potential of all collaborations. The sheer number of collaborative opportunities that exist on any campus regardless of its size can be daunting for WAC directors as they work to identify collaborations that have the potential to be productive and avoid those that do not. By evaluating units based on their pre-existing affordances and their potential for cultivation, growth, and shared labor, WAC directors will be more likely to locate and engage in collaborations that help to sustain their programs rather than ones that drain their own time and energy or, at the very least, they will have a better idea of what they want their labor to look (and not look) like in that collaboration. Much like gardening, collaboration requires thought, planning, and hard work but also a bit of good luck.

Notes

1. While the whole-system approach is generally focused on understanding the current institutional context to plan, launch, and develop a WAC program, Brad Peters (2019) has suggested that the approach also can be used to read an established WAC program's history to plan for future development.

2. See, for example, *Rhetorics and Technologies: New Directions in Writing and Communication* (2010); *From A to <A>: Keywords of Markup* (2010); and *Technological Ecologies and Sustainability* (2009).

3. While I address programmatic and administrative labor in this article, I want to acknowledge that WAC directors certainly perform more than two kinds of labor, including emotional and affective labor. I focus on administrative and programmatic in this article because they most closely align with the gardening analogy and they are the kinds of labor most often addressed in existing scholarship regarding WAC and co-curricular collaborations.

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Something Larger Than Imagined: Developing a Theory, Building an Organization, Sustaining a Movement

THOMAS POLK

One of the things that I love best about working in writing across the curriculum (WAC) is the opportunity that it gives me to connect with faculty across my campus and to learn more about the work they do: what kinds of research they conduct, what communities they connect with, and how they engage their students. But, I've always enjoyed learning about the person behind the work more: why they do these things and how they came to do them. Hearing their stories helps me to better understand their work—and mine.

The interviews Carol Rutz conducted for *WAC Journal* for many years offered me similar context. I could listen to John Bean, Chris Thaiss, Mike Palmquist, Terry Zawacki, Martha Townsend, Chris Anson, and many other scholars important to our field telling me about their motivations, challenges, and stories of becoming professionals in the field. Through their stories, these scholars offered me a kind of mentorship, informing my development as a WAC scholar and practitioner, that I draw on in my daily work.

Recently, I was fortunate enough to interview three scholars who I admire very much: Dan Melzer, Jeffrey Galin, and Michelle Cox. Each is an accomplished scholar in their own right, but together they are the co-authors of *Sustainable WAC: A Whole Systems Approach to Launching and Developing Writing Across the Curriculum Programs* and are the principle organizers behind the formation of the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum (AWAC). These collaborations have made what I expect will be a lasting impact on the field and, as I learned in the interviews, a reflexive illustration of WAC pedagogy at its most foundational: using writing to learn and then to communicate a vision for the field, with their work on AWAC putting this vision into practice. What could be a better endorsement for the theory they articulate in their book?

As a current graduate student and chair of the AWAC Committee for graduate students (WAC-GO), I wanted to learn more about how they came to be the WAC leaders that they are today and what advice they have for the next generation of WAC

scholars. I saw their work as offering a new form of identity for developing practitioners like myself, and I was curious if they had this vision from the beginning. They didn't, but, as Dan told me, they realized they were onto "something larger than [they] had imagined" when they first started collaborating. So, I was curious to learn more about how these collaborations developed and how their work on AWAC and their scholarship on sustainability influenced each other. I sent these and other questions to each of them in writing, and they each returned immensely generous, written responses. I wish I were able to share all of their incredibly illuminating observations here, but I have edited their responses to create a more concise and coherent narrative. And to set up the larger context of that narrative, I began by asking them about AWAC.

Thomas Polk: How did you know that it was time to have a national organization dedicated to WAC?

Jeffrey Galin: The discussions actually started in the summer of 2015, just after Anne Ellen Geller, Michelle Cox, Dan Melzer, and I all responded to Chris Thaiss' call to replace him as the leader of INWAC. As the four of us began talking with each other, Chris Thaiss, and the INWAC board, we were asked to determine whether the INWAC SIG might be better served as a CCCC Standing Group. That conversation led us to consider what role a standing group would play, whether it would differ from the INWAC SIG structure that Chris had led for thirty-five years, and whether such an organization could serve the larger community of WAC nationally.

[A brief summary of the formation of the organization is provided on the AWAC website and a subset of the planning group that drafted the organization's articles of incorporation and bylaws published a chapter on its founding (Basgier et al., 2020).]

Michelle Cox: Yes, the three of us had all been involved with INWAC for some years, as we were on the INWAC Board of Consultants. So, we were connected with different people who had played large roles in the WAC community. We knew that people were worried about what would happen to the field when folks starting retiring and stepping away from WAC.

THP: So, a driver of developing the organization was ensuring the sustainability of WAC as a field?

Dan Melzer: All of us agreed that we wanted to develop a more expansive charge for INWAC and find a way to reach out to and welcome more members. We realized that there weren't formal structures in place to rotate in new WAC leaders, and we were especially concerned about the lack of diversity in WAC leadership—with an

awareness, of course, that the three of us were also a reflection of the racial homogeny of WAC.

MC: We also started to explore the history of INWAC, the roles of the group, and how the group was related to other WAC organizations in the field, and we started to realize that the field of WAC had many nodes, but no hub, and talked through the problems associated with this.

JG: Right, a significant moment for us was when we created a visual representation of the field's organizational structure (Figure 1). It became immediately clear that the network of relationships governing the field were loose and not apparent. We wondered if this was a historical moment during which making those relationships more apparent might benefit the field.

DM: The initial conversations we had about forming AWAC at the IWAC and CCCC conferences were not always easy, and understandably the founders of the WAC movement did not want WAC to lose its grassroots spirit or to lose resources that were already in place. But I think the turning point for the acceptance of AWAC was when folks came to understand that we weren't trying to replace existing resources or impose a top-down hierarchy on the WAC movement. Once folks understood that our goals were to coordinate WAC efforts to make them even stronger and more sustainable, and to create new opportunities for more people to get involved in the WAC movement, the momentum for AWAC became undeniable.

THP: What about your book: how did you know it was time to have an explicit theory of WAC administration?

DM: As is true of many things in WAC, Michelle Cox was the one who brought us together. The three of us had gotten to know each other through our participation in INWAC and the WAC Clearinghouse, but it was Michelle's idea to write a book about WAC program development.

MC: At first, we didn't realize that it was time for an explicit theory of WAC administration. We had started talking about co-authoring a practical book about program administration—a book with tips and advice—and I had reached out to Victor Villanueva to see if he would be interested in such a book for the *Studies in Writing and Rhetoric* series. When we all met, he told us that tips and advice wouldn't be very useful given that the contexts for WAC vary so widely and practical advice doesn't stand the test of time. He told us that what was really needed was a theoretical framework.

THP: So, which came first—the organization building or the theory building?
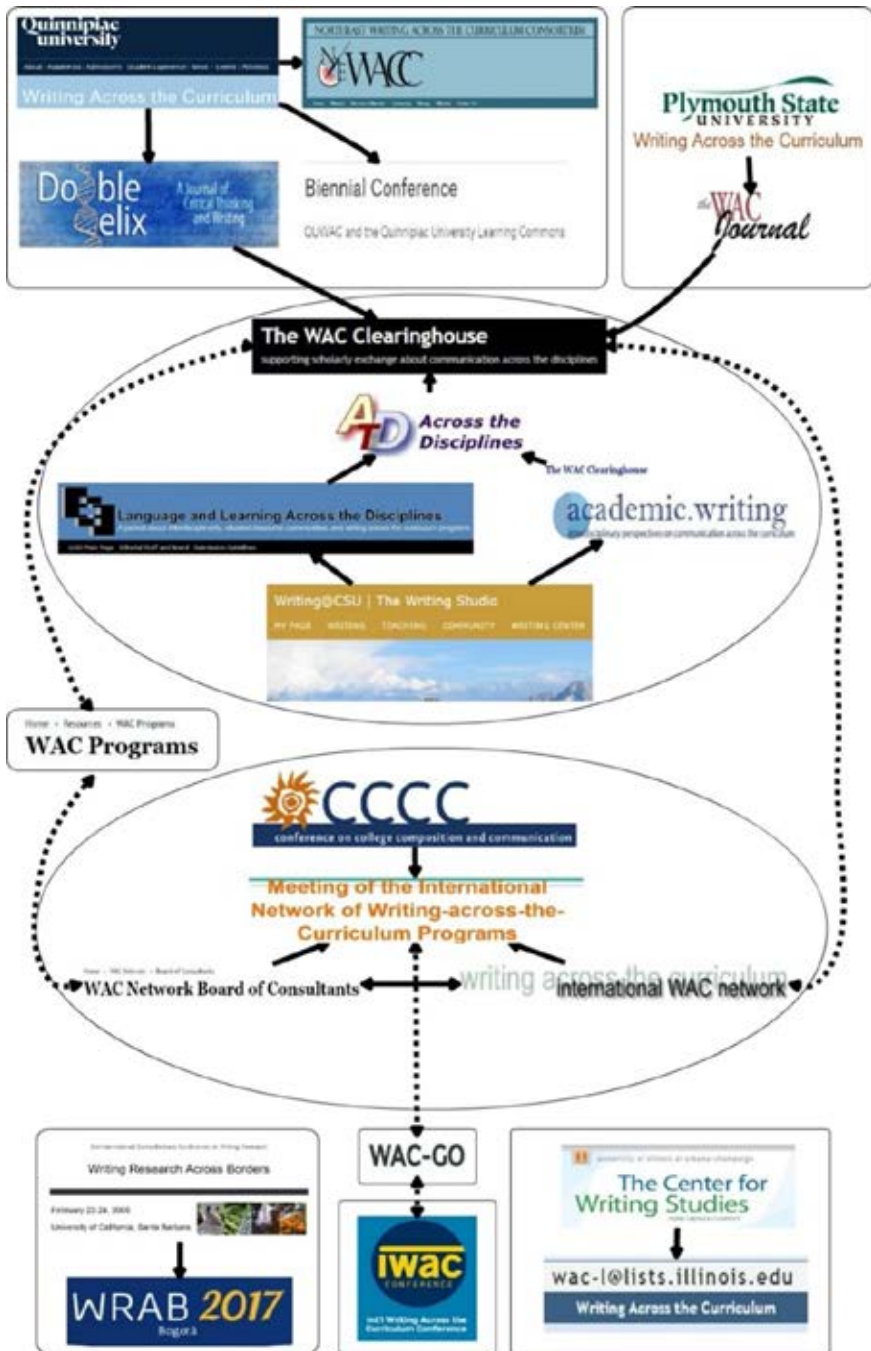
Figure 1: Mapping WAC as a field (Cox, Galin, & Melzer, 2018, p. 225; also shared in correspondence)

JG: The theory came first.

The theoretical framework for the book was a strongly collaborative process, but I had started developing it back in 2006 when I presented a talk at the IWAC conference about how WAC programs could benefit from sustainable development theory. The following year at CCCCs, Bill Condon participated in a panel about why WAC programs fail and introduced the framework for the taxonomy he would publish with Carol Rutz in 2013. I remember being frustrated by the taxonomy, thinking that it just wasn't a sharp enough tool to understand the diversity of WAC programs that were regularly failing. I raised questions during that presentation and then decided to go study Condon's WAC program at Washington State University as well as the program that Terry Zawacki had taken over from Chris Thaiss at George Mason to see if I could develop some sharper tools.

THP: You recount some of this in the book?

MC: Yes, Jeff had already been working with sustainable development theories and Dan had already been working with systems thinking, but we then spent a full year reading theory together and meeting weekly to share notes, piece the theories together (which also came to include more complexity theories, such as resilience theory), and think through how they applied to WAC program administration.

JG: I think it is fair to say that our work on the book led us to ask a set of questions that led to the discussions and stakeholder conversations that would eventually lead to the formation of the organization.

MC: So, during the three years we worked on the book, we started talking about the need for a professional organization. These conversations arose partly in relation to our evolving theory, but also in relation to other things that were happening in the field.

THP: The concerns about retirements and the broader connections across the field?

DM: Right. At first, we didn't anticipate applying our principles to the WAC movement itself or using what we'd learned to help make a national WAC organization a reality.

The assumption of the INWAC leadership role was fortuitous for us because it happened while the three of us were drafting *Sustainable WAC*. We knew that in the final chapter of the book we wanted to make an argument for the creation of a national WAC organization along the lines of CWPA and IWCA, but we weren't sure if we should focus on developing INWAC or propose the creation of a new and more ambitious WAC organization. The three of us and Anne Ellen Geller met to

debate this, and in the end, we decided that this was the right moment to propose a formal WAC organization.

THP: I see. That's really interesting how all of the work came together like that. So, I'm curious: what qualities or experiences do you think prepared you to really connect this work and leverage those opportunities?

DM: I think the three of us had similar perspectives on WAC in part because we'd had similar experiences. We were all in the second generation of WAC leaders, but we'd worked closely with many of the founders of the WAC movement as well as the next generation of leaders as represented in WAC-GO. So, in many ways we were well positioned to reflect on the history of WAC, but also open to significant changes and applying new theories and methodologies to WAC. We were equally concerned with sustaining the momentum of the WAC founders and welcoming in new and more diverse voices. We also each brought different kinds of expertise to the project.

MC: None of us felt especially confident going into the book or starting the organization. We felt like we were taking risks and didn't know how the work would be received. In terms of the book—we knew that we were drawing from theories that would feel foreign to many in writing studies and would get some pushback. In terms of AWAC—we knew that some people would really react negatively to the idea of an umbrella organization for WAC. So in response to your question: we were willing to take the risk of a negative response. Sometimes we would pause to ask ourselves if we were the "right people" to lead these efforts. We finally realized, if not us, then who? We really care about WAC—about WAC programs and about WAC as a field—and this motivated us to stick our necks out and propose new ways of thinking about how to push WAC forward.

JG: We were hoping to make a contribution that recognized the important work of those who have preceded us and provided new ways of thinking and program building. I think we have managed to accomplish both goals. There have been voices of concern and dissent during the process, but the overwhelming responses have been positive.

THP: To me, your responses speak about identity, both of the field and of the individuals who make up the field. On the WAC listserv recently, a number of people discussed the professional identity of WAC administrators: is there a unique WAC administrative identity? Do you think there is? How would you describe your own administrative identity? What do you think most shaped it?

MC: One thing that surprised me during both the book project and the development of AWAC is that some people do not see WAC as a field, and thus don't see WAC as a professional identity. I always have. When I was a graduate student, Cinthia Gannett brought me into different WAC projects, such as being a graduate writing fellow for a master's program in communication science and disorders, teaching a section of first-year writing linked to a nutrition science course, and developing a section of a technical writing course linked to an engineering course. I was brought into the WAC community at CCCC and attended the annual INWAC SIG meetings. So, to me, there is a unique WAC identity. But I think that professional identity is contextual. Those who are both WC directors and leaders of WAC efforts (led out of the writing center) may not see the two identities as distinct, nor would directors of WAC-informed first-year writing programs.

JG: I would say there is indeed a WAC administrative identity in the same way that Michel Foucault talks about the identity of authors by their functions. That identity looks different on most campuses because the roles that WAC directors play are so diverse. However, anyone who runs a university-wide program that is significantly integrated into the university likely serves on university committees, manages multiple program projects, and is likely involved in assessment and curricular change. Each of these roles carries with it sets of functions, strategies, techniques, and expectations. But, we say in our book that "A WAC director applying a CST [critical systems thinking] approach would be especially focused on exposing the ideologies that underlie the way writing is taught on campus." I would say that description defines my public role as an administrator.

DM: In *Sustainable WAC,* we also call into question the traditional identity of a WAC program director as a charismatic leader or singular campus writing guru. In a systems perspective, being a WPA is more about developing transformative, sustainable structures than it is about any one actor in the network. My own career reinforces for me that a WPA identity is less about individual roles or individual personality and more about building structures and working collaboratively. In my first position, as a WAC director at Cal State Sacramento, there was a tendency for folks on campus to either identify me as a writing guru ("Dan will help us 'fix' student writing by sheer force of will") or the person to blame if students "can't write a complete sentence" ("Dan has been here ten years and students still can't write"). But the reality is that whatever developing identity I grew into as a WAC director was always subsumed by distributed and collaborative leadership. I was always working in collaboration with my writing program colleagues, and the reforms we were trying to make to a stagnant and outdated culture of writing had a lot to do with changing the structures of the system and very little to do with my own identity.

THP: You bring up collaboration as central to WAC work. Can you talk some about your collaborations? How did the three of you collaborate?

JG: I have written collaboratively for most of my career, but I have to say I have never had such an exciting, productive, and enjoyable experience as I had with Michelle and Dan. Part of it was that we were working on a project that none of us could have written on our own, but each of us had specific expertise in areas that complemented each other. Also, we all have different styles of writing that made editing quite productive because each of us focused on different things. And Dan made sure we had several laughs each meeting.

MC: The collaboration evolved over time too. Week by week, we came to trust each other more, get to know each other better, and figure out collaborative processes that worked for us. If one of us couldn't get that week's "homework" done, we would say, "no problem; we all have weeks where we have too much on our plate." We'd each take the lead on certain parts or chapters, develop drafts, and then meet to review drafts, with all of us making revisions and edits only after it was agreed upon by all three of us. We figured out ways to move in step, by using Google docs and emailing to tell each other when we had finished drafts, so that reviewing could start ahead of a meeting.

DM: We also set a tone right from the start that we weren't going to be married to our own individual writing or perspectives, and that we were going to compromise. Using Google Docs helped emphasize that the writing didn't belong to any one person. And as we were getting deeper into the book, and at the same time beginning the conversations about forming a WAC organization, we had a growing sense that what we were doing was as much about WAC as a movement as it was about the three of us as individual authors. What started out as a "how to" book for developing WAC programs grew into something that was more about the sustainability of the WAC movement and the creation of a formal WAC organization. I think we felt an extra sense of responsibility as we came to the completion of the book, knowing that we'd tapped into something larger than we had imagined when Michelle conceived of the original idea for the book.

THP: I'm wondering about how you developed into these roles as scholars and leaders. Did you have good mentors who encouraged you?

MC: I have had many wonderful mentors. Cinthia Gannett was my first mentor for WAC, as I mentioned earlier. Terry Zawacki has also been a really important mentor. When Terry and I collaborated on our book collection and the special issue in *Across the Disciplines* on second language writers, she really taught me how to think

about scholarship and modeled mentorship for me. She showed me how to think critically about a manuscript and give feedback that was in itself mentorship. She also helped me take steps into the WAC community as a leader. I had asked her why there were no WAC statements, and she told me to talk with Chris Thaiss about drafting one sponsored by INWAC. This led to the "Statement on WAC Principles and Practices." My work on this led Chris to ask me to be on the INWAC Board of Consultants. I had also asked Terry why there were no materials on the WAC Clearinghouse on multilingual writing. She recommended that I raise this question with Mike Palmquist. I did, and he asked me to join the WAC Clearinghouse as editor of a page on this topic. Terry helped me turn my questions into actions, and she knew who I should contact and how I should approach them.

I've also had shorter mentorships—sometimes as short as one conversation at national and regional conferences where I've talked about challenges I was facing as a scholar, teacher, program administration, or simply as an academic/parent/woman. These conversations helped me figure out next steps as well as put the challenges into context.

JG: Honestly, the only mentors I had were the scholars I met and worked with at enumerable conferences, workshops, and campus visits. I would probably say that Bill Condon, Terry Zawacki, Paul Anderson, and Chris Anson have played the biggest roles as mentors in my career. I met Paul Anderson at an IWAC conference after attending a presentation he gave on teaching WAC in large section courses. I invited him to my campus to help us deal with that exact issue. He proved to be a fantastic ally and thoughtful facilitator of conversations when he visited that enabled us to move through a crisis in the program concerning large section courses. I met Chris at conferences over and over, sharing rides, getting rides from him, and taking the same train in from the airport one year. We started talking a bit more as the AWAC organization began forming, and then he agreed to join Terry, Paul, and I to help develop the AWAC WAC Summer Institute. I really got to know him during that time frame. The four of us invited Alisa Russell to join us in developing the institute. She proved an invaluable asset to the institute, helping us organize and stay focused. I would say that Alisa was a kind of collaborator mentor to me as well.

DM: I went to an MA program in literature at Colorado State University, and it was lucky for me that there were WPAs there like Jon Leydens and Steve Reid and Mike Palmquist who helped me recognize that Rhetoric and Composition was a better fit for me, and who served as role models for effective WPAs. I then went to Florida State University to study with Rick Straub and Wendy Bishop, and it was a blessing to be the beneficiary of two different but equally effective mentoring styles from them: Rick's way of pushing you to be your very best, and Wendy's way of flattening

hierarchies and bringing you along with her on the million projects she was always working on. Rick and Wendy are gone, but they're with me always in my WPA work. But the person at Florida State who had the biggest influence on me as a mentor was the director of first-year composition, Deborah Coxwell Teague. Deborah is collaborative, conscientious, strategic, graceful, current in the field, caring, a great teacher—the full WPA package. Serving as a junior WPA under her mentorship influenced the way I went about my business as a WPA for the rest of my career.

THP: The idea that systems or movements are more important than individuals has come up a couple of times now. So, I'm wondering a little bit about how recent inter/national events (COVID-19 and the protests advocating for racial justice) have prompted you to rethink WAC programs and the institutional work of WAC practitioners? Has this moment made anything more plainly visible to you?

JG: For me, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a dislocating one. WAC directors are network specialists, building webs of relationships. COVID-19 has shut down so much faculty interaction that it has meant many programs have moved into maintenance mode. It is hard to build new programs when there is so little opportunity to meet face-to-face and in an environment of dwindling resources. So, I have been less engaged in program building this year than I have since I started working as a WAC program director.

DM: One of the primary motivations for writing *Sustainable WAC* was to address the problem that half of WAC programs don't survive, and I'm very worried that the economic impacts of the Trump administration's failure to respond to COVID-19 are going to have a devastating effect on WAC programs. Newer WAC programs that aren't deeply integrated into their institutional network will be low hanging fruit for administrators looking to trim budgets. This is one reason I feel so strongly that it's a strategic mistake to locate WAC programs as English department appendages. I think WAC programs located in independent writing programs, or centers for teaching and learning, or writing centers are more likely to survive the ebbs and flows of funding to higher education.

THP: I'm also interested in this question because part of your administrative theory suggests that WAC practitioners "go slow." Are there moments when we might not want to go slow—when we should "dive in," to echo Barbara Walvoord? If there are moments like this, what might diving in look like?

MC: "Go slow" doesn't mean never moving quickly. "Go slow" also means working to position the program well so that when opportunity opens, you're ready for it—a kind of "ready waiting." For instance, a WAC program that already has a relationship

with a diversity and inclusion office might be able to respond quickly to calls for increased diversity and inclusivity efforts on campus by reaching out to collaborate. The WAC program could also use some of their existing projects—like teaching circles or workshop series—to respond quickly to current needs. In other words, a WAC program that has taken its time to become integrated into the university, develop collaborative relationships with other units, open lines of communication, and develop projects in tune with its mission and resources is well-positioned to respond nimbly to new challenges and needs.

DM: Even though we argue in *Sustainable WAC* that incremental change is usually the way that stagnant and complex systems transform, sometimes there are tipping point moments where the mood is right for rapid change. I hope that we're at a tipping point in our perspectives on race and writing, and that we use this moment of amplified attention on equity to amplify anti-racist work. WAC has always had that element of reform and resistance, starting with James Britton and Art Young and Toby Fulwiler bringing process pedagogy and writing-to-learn to the disciplines, and continuing with Victor Villanueva and Donna LeCourt and Asao Inoue and Mya Poe's calls for a critical WAC pedagogy. A reckoning about racism and white privilege is certainly the right time to aim for rapid transformational changes to WAC and the way writing is taught in higher education.

THP: A lot of this conversation points toward the future of the field. So, I'm curious: what advice do you have for graduate students and junior scholars in the field?

JG: I think it's important to know that program planning and building require a skill set that is acquired through practice, good mentorship, and a bit of confidence that is built on the small successes over time and across multiple opportunities. Also get involved at the national level. AWAC did not exist when I was emerging as a scholar and administrator, so I gravitated to the INWAC SIG (now WAC Standing Group) at CCCC. I developed relationships with other scholars in the field that have proven invaluable. You will form mentorship relationships with those with whom you work.

DM: When I was in graduate school, I sought out opportunities to receive mentoring from WAC leaders, whether it was driving Chris Anson around during his visit to FSU or attending the INWAC meeting at CCCC every year. So, be proactive and take advantage of formal opportunities to develop relationships with more experienced WPAs. AWAC also provides a variety of ways to connect with experienced scholars and WPAs; by joining an AWAC committee, you can rub elbows with more established WAC WPAs in a reciprocal way. You don't need to be shy about reaching out. I'm always happy to provide feedback, help, or advice to a new scholar or WPA.

It's paying it forward for me, since there were so many established WPAs who lifted me up when I needed mentoring.

MC: I would say to do the work that is meaningful to you, and let that lead you to a professional identity. For example, I've always worn three hats: WAC, multilingual writing, and graduate writing. When I was a graduate student, some scholars told me that I had to choose, or else people wouldn't know who I was. I never chose. I continued to do work in all three areas. Now at Cornell University, I am embedded in a WAC program (the Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines), where I direct a writing and speaking support program for multilingual graduate and professional students. I simply continued doing the work that was meaningful to me and pathways opened that allowed me to wear all three hats at the same time.

THP: What's next for the three of you?

MC: We received a CCCC Research Initiative Grant to conduct longitudinal research on universities using the whole systems approach (WSA) to launch and develop sustainable and transformative WAC programs. This grant allowed us to form the Sustainable WAC Consortium—a group of six universities. For the past two years, we have been guiding WAC leaders from these universities in using the WSA, and the participants have been collecting data from their programs. Ultimately, this work will result in a book comprised of case studies written by the participants and an introduction and conclusion in which we analyze the case studies in order to refine the WSA.

THP: What's next for AWAC and the field?

MC: AWAC has started offering benefits to members, by offering two webinar series (one on WAC administration and one on WAC pedagogy), offering a summer institute focused on developing WAC programs, creating a board of WAC consultants, collaborating with the CCCC WAC SG to offer online discussion groups, collaborating with the WAC Clearinghouse to offer a set of awards for publications and service to the field, and collaborating with different organizations to provide discounts to related conferences and events. We are hoping to develop an increased focus on WAC in secondary education and to continue thinking through how AWAC can support anti-racist pedagogy and programming, as well as help WAC programs survive COVID-19 related austerity measures taken by universities.

DM: There are important issues that my generation only began to pursue that I think the next generation of WAC leaders are poised to take on: issues of writing transfer, multimodal literacies, anti-racist WAC work, feminist approaches to WAC, WAC

WPA identities. One thing I admire about the next generation of WPAs is how they have spoken out about sexism and racism in spaces that have often been dominated by whiteliness and masculinist discourse. I think the next evolution of WAC would benefit from having the structural and impactful features that more formal organizations like NCTE and CWPA and CCCC have: position statements, outcomes statements, policy papers, research grants, political advocacy efforts, coordinating efforts across WPAs and institutions.

JG: AWAC has a bright future because there are so many folks involved at the leadership level. The more members we can get actively involved, the more we can do for the field. I hope that AWAC will provide a springboard for more scholars to get involved in leadership and that the projects in the organization will lead to productive mentorship relationships and research opportunities. And I hope that more graduate students like you will continue asking these kinds of insightful questions to keep the engine running.

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Carol Rutz: Conversations about Writing in WAC and Beyond

CAMERON BUSHNELL

The *WAC Journal* is delighted to introduce a new column "Conversations about Writing," formalizing the interview columns conducted by Carol Rutz over a period of 12 years in the early 2000s during which she talked with colleagues in the field about their writing practices. In identifying a column, we hope to invite ongoing dialogue about writing across the curriculum (WAC) and all the ways it is implemented in workshops, classrooms, and campus environments. As we well know, WAC offers an umbrella for a broad range of pedagogical and scholarly endeavors from writing to learn, writing in the disciplines, writing-intensive and writing-enhanced classrooms, and more broadly, communication across the curriculum.

Investigating her colleagues' engagement with WAC, Carol has shown us the value of interviews. Research has demonstrated their usefulness. For example, Dana Lynn Driscoll (2011) found for primary research that interviews provide in-depth views into people's "behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes" (p. 162).[1] Similarly, Baird and Dilger (2018) suggest that for understanding the contexts of writing transfer interviews "provide insight into motivations by investigating [instructors'] writing lives, classroom practices, and engagement with curricular structures while simultaneously illuminating department cultures" (p. 26).[2] Carol's interviews with scholars dedicated to WAC, from John Bean (2003) to Jill Gladstein (2016)[3] not only succeeded in bringing to light multiple different strategies for helping faculty think about writing as a passion and a craft, but also portrayed these insights with zest and humor, allowing us to see the deep personal investments WAC scholars bring to their profession.

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3. For a list of all the interviews by years, see Appendix 1.

This interview, for which Carol and I communicated in June 2020 over Zoom, the virtual meeting platform, necessitated by coronavirus, proved useful to accommodate our distant locations in Minnesota and South Carolina, respectively, and provided a near face-to-face environment, a welcome break for both from quarantine. In conducting this interview, I hewed closely to the format Carol used in many of her interviews; I was conscious, also, of following in the footsteps of Terry Zawacki, who interviewed Carol in 2014 for the *WAC Journal*, entitled "The Tables are Turned."

I opened our conversation from a point that Carol had raised in response to Terry's question about Carleton College, the institution where Carol spent thirty years of her career.

Cameron Bushnell: One of the take-aways from your interview with Terry was about a particularly important role for small universities and colleges, like your institution, Carleton. Smaller, more nimble institutions could provide a model, you suggested, operating as a small, experimental laboratory for programs that could be taken out into the larger world. I'm curious as to how you thought that worked. Could Carleton be considered an incubator of sorts, a place for pilot projects? What we can learn from Carleton about the experiments you tried out over the years?

Carol Rutz: I'm not sure how it scales, frankly, but part of it, I think, has to do with the relationship I had with Carleton. For the first ten years I worked there, I was on the staff. I was in student services; I was in publications; I was in other places, and at that point, I decided to go back to grad school. But after ten years I knew everybody; it's a tiny place. And it's a very democratic place in the sense that—at least at the time, this would have been from like '83 to '92—things weren't as stratified in terms of status, and nobody was skipping lunch for email, so there was a lot more circulation. You saw people at lunch, you saw people on the sidewalk, and so it was, since I worked in so many different places and had different points of contact and the place is small, it didn't take much. If you're halfway alert, you kind of know what's going on.

Having worked in a number of different offices, I was able to connect people and ideas from across campus; this became particularly true after I left Carleton for graduate school at University of Minnesota but then returned to campus with new perspective.

When I went to Minnesota, Chris Anson [currently, distinguished university professor and director of campus writing and speaking program at University of North Carolina] was the director of writing and composition. I entered the PhD program with no illusions about finding a tenure-track job. I was over forty, and I was geographically bound, but I thought I could work in business, or maybe at a community college, or something. Mostly, I just wanted to learn how to teach, and

that certainly happened. To my great surprise after five years, there was an opening at Carleton, a temporary opening. A maternity leave and some other things fell together; two of my staff colleagues had sent me the job description independently, and so, I called the associate dean who was in charge of the search and asked her if it was appropriate for me to apply. She encouraged me: "Well, come see me." She put together a search committee, and I got the job. At first, it was just a temporary position for a year, and I'm thinking, "Okay, I've got this dissertation to write, I will have an office and a computer and a door to close. This is all good." Pretty much, that's how it played out.

At first, I wasn't doing anything spectacular at all except picking up the pieces of work for someone who was no longer available. But I was located in a building that was across the hall from the writing center, so I helped out over there once in a while, too, and did some training with them because in grad school, I'd done a lot of TA training. Additionally, since Chris and I together had led a College-in-the-Schools program, a dual enrollment program, I felt I could pretty easily step into the work required at Carleton.

It was a very congenial environment. People welcomed me back, which was very flattering. And then the dean launched a search for a permanent position. Now this would have been about '99, and this is how badly she misread the market: She launched a search for halftime adjunct in teaching writing and halftime administrator of faculty development and got a grand total of fifteen applications, including mine. So she dumped the search and asked me if I would continue while they figured it out, and I said, "Well, if you'll let me teach, yes." They agreed, so I never left.

CB: Ah, how wonderful to have it work out that way!

CR: I'm sure it wasn't a universal joy on campus, but it was enough to keep me there and keep me busy in a good way, and I'm very grateful for people that took that chance.

CB: Would you say that Carleton has always been a good place for you, the right place for you? You had the experience of a small college, but also of a big university when you went off to Minnesota. Did you ever wish you'd worked in a larger institution?

CR: That was very interesting, you know; Minnesota is huge and well I don't know who put that that river in the middle of it, but you know it's complicated, and I enjoyed it for the most part. But it was nice to go back to where I knew where the bodies were buried.

CB: I sympathize; I've often wished for a smaller venue for teaching and working. I have a career not unlike yours in that I went back to school after I had worked elsewhere, in my case, in nonprofit and in business at Nike International for a while. When I went back to school, I felt like you and had no illusions of working in academia. But I decided to go for it when my family urged me to.

CR: It was wonderful in some surprising ways. We had kids in middle school at the time, and I could work out my schedule so that I got home pretty much when they did, which would not have been true if I would have kept an eight-to-five job. And I ended up being the one that went to the track meets and went to the consults or—what do you call them?—the meetings where teachers tell you how your kid is doing, and all the other events because my husband traveled a lot. It worked out really well in that respect, and I think my kids paid attention to what they were seeing: Here's a grown-up working hard on stuff and staying up late at night writing papers and things, and I think they learned some things from that model. Well, it was not easy. It certainly wasn't cheap, even though I did have support, but you know, we got by.

CB: But to return to Carleton's small experimental laboratory—you said you weren't sure that the scale up happens. Could you explain?

CR: Well, my experience is my experience. So again, I'm not sure how generalizable it is, but it seemed to be the case—both where I worked and in the larger network of WAC people that I got to know—that these things are relationship-based. If people are interested in you and trust you and you show your interest in them, things go well. But if there's some sort of interference in the form of status or disciplinary disagreements or methodological disagreements, it's harder. I feel very fortunate that I've been interested in everything my entire life. (Again, I grew up under a field biologist.) And so, if somebody from computer science wanted to talk to me about what they were doing for senior projects, I was all ears, and I wanted to help. I don't know that my colleagues in the English department, let's say—I was never fully part of the department; they made sure of that—but my colleagues in the English department weren't necessarily tuned that way. They were specialists; I was a generalist and happily so.

CB: That's a great segue to the next question. I find myself exceedingly concerned and curious about this divide that exists between writing and literature in English departments—and we certainly have it. As director of a relatively small professional writing center at Clemson, Pearce Center for Professional Communication, I've experienced some resistance in the English department for writing across the curriculum activities, such as training graduate TAs, who not in English not only how to write better themselves, but more importantly, how to teach writing themselves

to their undergraduate students. Even though graduate TAs are often responsible for assigning and assessing lab reports, for example, the question always seems to come up: can non-English majors effectively teach writing?

I noticed this issue of disciplinary divide informed one of the first questions that you asked in the interview with John Bean. I love the way you put it: "How did a nice Spenserian scholar find himself in this writing field." What kind of a divide did you find in your career, and what can we do to, or should we do anything, to try to ameliorate it?

CR: Well, I don't know. I guess it may be more place-specific than we would like to think. I mean, there may be traditions that are hardened in certain places that are just impenetrable for whatever reason. It may be a question of, as it was at Carleton, certain people needed to leave, you know, needed to age out, since they were iconic, revered from the old days. Those people eventually left, but sometimes it just takes patience. I think it helped that I was not much of a threat to them. I was in a non-tenure track job; I taught a couple of courses they didn't want to teach, so that was fine with them, and I took on advisees. Not major advisees, God forbid, but, you know, in terms of the freshman and sophomores that are crawling all over the place in a small school looking for direction.

I also did a lot of outreach, and I don't think they ever noticed until—this is really funny—the college was slow to ramp up reviewing procedures for non-tenure track and staff. And so, I had my first real teaching review (outside of the usual annual review with my supervisor in the dean's office, which was usually, you know, "Keep up the good work") only after I'd been teaching for years. The first teaching review with observations and student evaluations and so forth wasn't done until I'd been in the job fourteen years. That meant that three senior members of the department who were in the next wave after the crummy guys left were visiting my classes and looking at my CV and my publications and my evaluations. I'll never forget, the chair of the department, who was a fine Renaissance scholar, sat me down partway through this review and said, as he looked at my CV, which was full of conferences, papers, publications: "You know, I just can't believe that we've had somebody working with us all these years who's more productive than anybody else in the department." I taught like two or three courses a year, but I also did a lot of faculty development, and I was on the road a lot doing conferences and helping people, mostly at other small colleges. I think I went to thirty-some consultations over the twenty years that I was in that job—a lot of it was about WAC, a lot of it was about assessment, a lot of it was just, you know, we need help with X. And I think he was totally blown away by that, and I looked at him, and I said, "Hey, it's been fourteen years. Stuff adds up!" I mean, come on!

I had been so far under the radar from their perspective and so far out of their interests—and actually, vice versa—I didn't care what they were doing because I knew they weren't particularly receptive. Now I have to say this: Individually, they were fine, with one exception. One person was horrible, but everybody else was very nice. We got along fine—they came to my workshops; I went to their talks; it was good. But in terms of collaboration or having a project together…hmmm [not so much.]

CB: But I wonder if you ran into colleagues, often from the English department, who think that they are the only ones that should be teaching writing; the implication is that it wouldn't be wise to leave the teaching of writing to a chemistry professor, for example. There seems to be resistance, even suspicion that it could be effective in teaching students how to write.

CR: Well, see, that's our big coup at Carleton. And this is what the English chair realized during that review. He says, you know, Carleton was a big leader in writing across the curriculum since the '70s. Because it was fired up by Dean Harriet Sheridan who got it going in English, her home department, English was stuck with it, along with a few other select places on the campus. But the chair said, "You've changed that; you've taken that burden away. Things are spread out; everybody's doing it. Everybody's happy to do it. This has been wonderful." But it took that focus on the fact that the curriculum had spread out and that I was willing to go out and do what you just described—hold somebody's hand while they tried to figure out how to build a rubric or whatever the problem was. There were people in that English department when I came back to Carleton who were still using, an old textbook that had a bunch of nineteenth and twentieth century British pieces like Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant"; that's the kind of stuff they were using in a writing class!

CB: Sounds like it was the wrong text.

CR: You know, it was crazy, but they didn't know that. Their approach was a very high, *belle-lettres* kind of a philosophy; that's what most English instructors thought they were supposed to do. And I'm sure they carried that in from their own graduate training. Well, anyway, we did disrupt that content. The other thing that disrupted this aesthetic approach to teaching writing was the introduction of sophomore portfolios for assessment; we read portfolios from every sophomore, which changed faculty attitudes, particularly of those in English and history who had done most of the writing instruction up to that moment. They suddenly realized that great writing was going on everywhere and that we were all teaching the same kids, all of us. And that if we were all holding to the requirements like revision and multiple drafts—the obvious things that make writing better—then students were going to do it. They weren't

going to whine because one mean writing teacher was making them do something that they didn't have to anywhere else in the world. We changed that.

CB: That's fabulous! So I'm curious: One of the—and this may be a small school thing, but I'm really interested—how do you help the chemistry professor, co-teach, for example, and yet avoid an expectation that you as the writing teacher would do all the feedback on the paper as the "expert." How do you make sure that both content *and* assessment are conducted in partnership? What do you do if you encounter resistance from instructors outside of the humanities who insist "We're in math, we don't know how to write." Even though they have degrees and surely are published in multiple venues! I think sometimes the protest arises out of fear that it's not their field.

CR: I can remember starting workshops with people from all kinds of disciplines, and the first thing they had to do was make a list of everything they were writing right now, from Christmas cards to grocery lists to scholarly work to whatever. We expose that they write—they write all the time. And that they'd learned that. That was the next phase: Where did you learn to do this? And for most of them, if they're lucky, it was in grad school. Otherwise, it was on the job. Grant proposals, all that kind of stuff, on the job. And you know, they figured it out themselves. "This is nuts. I've got smart students who want to go on and do great things in the world; it's my job to help them. And this is one of the ways it's going to make a difference." They get it.

CB: That's interesting. I love the fact that you don't let them sit with this myth that they're telling themselves.

CR: No, I'm mean and evil, through and through! I was provocative, and I got away with that, you know. Again, we all knew each other reasonably well, and with new people, of course, it's easy because they want to be accepted and they want to be taken care of, and I was more than happy to do that. But in many cases, it was just, by the time many of these individuals and various departments were catching on, they were immediately evangelistic—immediately. They would see the reasoning, they would see the benefits to their students, they would start showing off their students' work, and that's how it spreads.

CB: Was it simply fortuitous that you began your career studying with Chris Anson? Maybe he wasn't as well known in the WAC field then.

CR: He was, even in the '90s. He was doing lots of workshops and conference gigs by then, and he was also a full professor—and one of the handful of Regent's Professors. He was highly regarded.

CB: Was he?

CR: At the time I arrived in 1992, I didn't know anything about him. Again, I was place-bound, so I applied to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and I got into Wisconsin and Minnesota, but Wisconsin was going to be a tough commute, so I went to Minnesota. I was very fortunate to be there at a time when the kind of teaching techniques I needed to know were being taught. The fact that I was older and that there were administrative roles in the [WAC] program meant that I got to be helpful. It didn't hurt a bit when it came to recommendations and coming back to Carleton where I'd already been in lots of jobs. But now, I had even more job experience that was pertinent to what they needed. I think that really was just plain luck.

CB: Well, it does seem like it worked out well. One of the things that I've been immensely grateful for is that Art Young was a predecessor (a few people removed). But it was very nice that I got to meet him sort of after the fact. He retired the year that I came, in 2007.

CR: And [Kathleen Blake] Yancey had been gone for a while, right?

CB: Yes, she'd already been gone. I didn't actually meet her, but have met her since at conferences, but I didn't actually get to work with her. Art lives in the area, so I've had the pleasure of getting to know him, which I'm very glad about. I was at a workshop last year for emerging, restarting programs, and Chris Anson was the facilitator, and that was a great pleasure to get to know him.

CR: He's extremely good at workshops. People just get completely enthralled.

CB: I want to go back to that issue of administrative work and sort of tie this into the sort of backhanded question with Stephen Wilhoit where he talked about stealth WAC. He was getting to the idea that people don't realize how much leadership is involved in WAC even though administrative leadership is critical to running a writing program. But I also like the idea of stealth, of coming in through the back door, of getting things done by starting where possible. I guess I'm partial to the term because I feel I've sort of had to go through the back door. At Clemson, I have not started with faculty workshops, so it feels a little backwards. But I started where I felt like I could start, which was with graduate students. I like the question you posed to Stephen, and I just wondered whether or not you felt that there were ways that somehow we sort of have to, many times, have to come through the back door and discover more that is required of us in these writing jobs than perhaps meets the eye when you first get in there.

CR: I can't remember how I phrased it. Do you have it in front of you?

CB: He used the term "stealth" in relationship to "talking about how easy it is to overlook the leadership necessary to the writing program administration."

CR: Well, at that point, Steve and I had been collaborating a lot over the years. I think we met at WPA conferences, and then we'd bump into each other at 4 Cs. We saw each other a couple times a year. I did bring him in to do a workshop with my faculty fairly early on, and he was a great hit.

One of the things that Steve really epitomizes for me is that he's a guy in the right place. He's working with this Catholic institution, the University of Dayton, and he has the real belief in and mastery of servant leadership. That's where he starts. He organizes for faculty these year-long seminars they have to apply for, I think. It could have changed since we've talked about it. And they met regularly. I don't know if it was every week or twice a month or something, but there was a curriculum. And he really held to that and held them to it. And again, it turned out to be sort of evangelistic; people that experienced that tended to contaminate their colleagues in really good ways. And that's just the kind of guy he is. And I think one of the things that interview talked about is how his kids blamed him for all the writing they were doing in their high school because the high school had reached out to him, and he responded. I mean, it's just who he is. His techniques and his foundations are solid, and he's a quick learner and establishes rapport very easily. I think that's why it feels stealthy sometimes because you don't see it coming.

CB: As I remember your interview, Stephen talks about the things that got done and how they got done, the sort of forceful imperative that he brought to the job. Stealth isn't mentioned anywhere except in your title; "Stephen Wilhoit: A Stealth WAC Practitioner." I thought it so interesting that you put together his personal and programmatic attributes in a way that captured, I don't know, how he works magic somehow."

CR: He's a magic mushroom!

CB: That reminds me to ask about people like yourself who started in the '70s and were, you know, the engines behind WAC and …

CR: I wasn't there in the '70s!

CB: So you were there in the '90s?

CR: No, no I inherited that. I should have been clearer about that earlier. I inherited a faculty that believed in writing pedagogy. But it wasn't very systematic, and there were people who could exempt themselves. And that's less common now. Again, assessment is what changed that.

CB: So could you explain this to me. I'd like to be doing more faculty development, but I'm not certain how assessment becomes the motivation for faculty. It seems a mystery. In other words, how do we get the faculty to be interested in assessment, in ways that makes faculty development sort of the thing that they want to do?

CR: Well, actually, they don't want to do it. They don't want to do assessment.

CB: That's my experience.

CR: They don't want to do it. And that was the case when I came back to Carleton, but we were at a point there where a local foundation in St. Paul that had given us money pretty regularly had essentially extended an offer, you know, "send us a proposal for something that you really want to do, and we'll be happy to review it." And my boss, Elizabeth Ciner [now Emerita, Department of English, Carleton], who's a genius at this kind of thing, said, "We've got to do something about writing" because at that time, again, we still had these pockets of practice, but it was kind of on its last legs. The system that Harriet Sheridan[4] developed, allowed students to choose to more or less attempt the writing requirement in a range of courses. But that meant the professor had to agree that a subset of the class was doing more writing than others in the class, and then had to deal with the management of the two tracks of instruction. To help them with that problem, Sheridan also invented what we now call writing fellows or writing assistants. You had senior English majors that would help with the assessment, essentially. At the end of the course, the kid might get a B for the course, but not pass the writing requirement if her work didn't show well enough. That was the system that was in place, which was twenty-five years old and moribund. Something had to change.

So we asked: "what are we going to change?" We started working on what we could do, and since I was fired up after going through this graduate program about Writing Across the Curriculum and the people who were doing the research, which nobody on my campus knew anything about, I said, "Let's get money to bring people in and help us with this. Let's learn what assessment might be like; let's find out about barrier exams and find out about rubrics. Let's find out about placement. Let's find out about all this stuff that we aren't doing." Well, we put all that into the grant, and then the reviewers said, "Well, that's nice, but where's your assessment of what you're going to do?" Oh. So we went back to the drawing board, and we decided that what we needed to do was get faculty to—not get them to, but expose faculty to— more writing than what they were assigning, that we had to make that distinction:

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4. In 26 years at Carleton, Sheridan served variously as the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities, English Department Chair, and the university's acting president; she went on to be undergraduate dean at Brown University, 1979-1987.

Assigning writing is one thing; teaching writing is something else. And our genius idea was to require students to—well this had actually come up years before in a review of the writing program in the early 90s—but now we thought: "It'd be nice if everybody had students collect all their writing and we could kind of look at it at the end. But how would you ever administer that?" We decided to put a frame on that and design a way for students to submit a manageable amount of stuff to be read that was bounded by criteria. It had to be done at a strategic moment in the sophomore year that fit with our calendar and when the majors are declared and all that kind of jazz. And we'd have faculty read them and score them, and for anybody who didn't pass, we would offer remediation in the form of working with me or with the writing center or whatever seemed to be appropriate. That got funded.

With the grant, we still got the visiting speakers to tell us about good assessment and WAC stuff. We also got the funding for the portfolio project, which meant like the first time we read portfolios, Kathy Yancey, [currently, Kellogg W. Hunt Professor of English and distinguished research professor, Florida State University] came in. She set up the readings. For the second time, we hosted Richard H. Haswell [Professor Emeritus, English, Texas A&M.] We had fabulous, well-experienced people, and Bill Condon currently Professor Emeritus, English, Washington State University, was the overall consultant for this whole business. So, all in one swoop over six years, my colleagues were exposed to the scholarship in the field and the scholars themselves, who are all very approachable and tootin' fun to be with. Faculty read all this writing that they did not assign—that's what finally did it.

CB: Interesting! So the lesson is that the students are learning to write in all these other different places and that . . .

CR: Yeah, and those professors who were claiming they couldn't write had to admit they have amnesia. They did that stuff. They just don't remember. They made it through the bachelor's degree from history to French to biology to whatever, right—that's how you survive college. You know, it was so intuitive in those days. There was no writing center when I was an undergraduate. There was nobody telling me in detailed assignments what was expected. It was, "write about the Civil War" or whatever the heck. That's gone. I mean, our faculty now have superb methodology in terms of presenting assignments and evaluating them and helping students understand their strengths and weaknesses. I have to say that they were already really, really good because the students are so good, but now it's phenomenal what they get out of all of those kids!

CB: That's amazing. We still have many faculty that don't use rubrics; their graduate students tell them how useful they are, and they're shocked; they just don't realize how much easier grading can be.

CR: I still have colleagues that line edit. Sometimes you just got to give up on it. But at the same time, they know what they're looking for, and they also know that their other colleagues are using rubrics. Or their other colleagues are doing pop quizzes or other things that mitigate the problems that everybody is trying to work on. Because there's more of a team feeling to the whole thing.

CB: That's great. After hearing the way things unfolded at Carleton, I have to agree with your hesitation. I'm not sure if it's ever going to scale up, to be appropriate for a university like Clemson that is kind of siloed. If we could get some group of stakeholders together . . .

CR: Well, that's where you should talk to Steve Wilhoit. That's the kind of thing he did; he did it through the learning and teaching center, this seminar that he's been doing for however long. He could help you with how they got started, who paid for it, and so on. You might want to give him a call. I hope he's still there. Anyway, he's one of those people who can help size up the situation on the campus and help choose people who are willing or even invite people who are unwilling—sometimes that works just as well. The cohort model, as you know, is so effective.

CB: One of the things you talked about with Bill Condon was his opinion that you really needed to attract the tenure and tenure-track faculty to your program, as well as the adjunct and lecturers, even though the latter tend to be much more interested in this stuff than the tenure and tenure-track. Do you think that kind of balance among faculty ranks is necessary for a successful program?

CR: Bill was always in large universities, and his work with us, I think, was revealing to him. I think he started to change a little bit on that. And then when he and I and others got that grant from the Spencer Foundation and wrote that book on faculty development, a lot of what he provided from Washington State was evidence that, at the college level, the department level, the unit level, and among people like lecturers and TAs, there was great faculty development going on that the top end didn't know about. So I think he was much more, well, he was excited about that professional development that was going on kind of under the radar. He could see how much it counted; that students were benefiting—that's the main thing. But also, he also realized that you can have institutional aversion, maybe, to some of this stuff, but you can still promote it.

CB: I find that really encouraging because I do find a lot of enthusiasm among my lecturer colleagues for what we're doing, and so maybe I don't need to be concerned with getting the tenure-track, at least in the first round. Maybe you can get some enthusiasm going on the campus and some stakeholders identified in other departments, which is what I need to do more of, I feel.

CR: I remember being asked many times when I'd visit different campuses, "How do you get faculty to participate, and I remember saying, "I have to push back on that a little bit." That sounds like faculty are a problem to be managed, and if that's how you feel, that's going to make it hard for you to find a way to invite them into something you know is good, especially when you also know it's hard work, but it's going to be better for them when they learn how to do it. And that sounds very school-marmy. That's hard. So the trick is in the inviting part, I think, in many cases. If you're looking for stakeholders, you might want to start with the people you're having coffee with, the people whom you walk home with or those you meet informally. You're working with lecturers from a bunch of departments?

CB: One or two from engineering, who I was happy to meet, but most of them are in English, so I need to branch out a little bit.

CR: Well, yeah, but that's a fine place to start. They're enough different that they're going to learn from each other without even trying. I was at Otterbein College in Ohio shortly after I retired, in fact the last paid workshop I did. And they were having all kinds of problems. There were giant budget cuts and enrollment worries and God knows what all, and some of the fallout had to do with changing requirements. I was going to see two groups that day. In the morning, it was English people; in the afternoon, it was going to be more WAC-ish. So it was kind of hard to prepare for, but I brought everything I could think of, and it went fine in the morning. We came up with some great ideas for trying to accommodate the fact that the requirements had changed, which, I think, boiled down to the fact that no student had to take more than one course in literature, which didn't seem to be enough for the group teaching those courses.

Finally, toward the end of the morning, one woman was visibly distressed. So I finally said to her, "Well, you know, all your students are going to major in something. And every major has a literature. And your English majors come to that literature after twelve years of preparation. That's not the case in mechanical engineering. That's not the case in psychology. But because they've been exposed to your literature in high school and in required classes here, they have tools that help them address the new literature, as well as the guidance of people that are experts in it. And this is how it's supposed to work." And for some reason, in that group, that was a huge

breakthrough. I don't know how it came out of my mouth, but it was one of the few times in my life where I felt I was making a difference.

CB: Wow, that's great, really. And how smart! People draw such divides, not only between English and writing, but of course between sciences and humanities. Many don't think that anything you learn in the humanities might actually be applicable, and vice versa, actually.

CR: Which is baloney. We're in the liberal arts, aren't we? I don't know. But anyhow, something you might want to try is to talk to people about the major and writing in the major; often that's a way in.

CB: In your interview with John Bean, one of the things he said that really struck me was he said, "I made my breakthrough when I could help finance solve the problem in finance. You know, and I wasn't trying to do anything other than address a problem that the finance department had." He was really making the point that it's fruitless to insist that you're an expert on writing and that you're coming into someone else's class to rescue writing instruction. The way he put it in your interview was very helpful. But I wrote down this idea of invitation, I think, is important. Well, I'm conscious of the fact that it's probably been too long here today, so, just two questions. One, I was curious, did you have that mentor like . . .?

CR: Well, I think in large respects, it was Chris. I mean, he did a really good job for me. He was my primary advisor. There were others on my committee who were better readers than he was because he was slow to get back to me. They made up for that, and he certainly supported me and wrote recommendations and did lots of things. I think he thought that in some respects I settled for Carleton, but he understood the economic and geographical and every other factor. And he came to campus, two or three times, maybe more than that, to do workshops with me, which was very flattering. And he was always so well received. But other people: Bill Condon was certainly important, Kathy Yancey was important, and Rich Haswell—we're still in touch, even though he's been retired a lot longer than I have. There are such a lot of fine, fine people out there that will pitch in. I think this is something I said to Terry, though maybe I didn't in the interview she did with me. When I would invite people to come to my school and do something, nobody ever said "no." It might take two years to set it up, but nobody said outright, "Oh no, I can't do it." They were all so willing and so available. For example, [Irwin] "Bud" Weiser at Purdue came for a talk—even though Purdue had no WAC programs whatsoever—to discuss how Purdue's Online Writing Lab led to the illusion they had WAC, and how the university had benefited from the misperception. I just can't believe that I lucked into such a friendly, scholarly community.

CB: I have thought that writing may be a more more generous field than English. You can run into a bunch of snooty, ego-driven professors —maybe anywhere—but the English department sponsors its fair share.

CR: I don't know, sometimes I think it's sort of a casting call.

CB: That's a good way to put it.

CB: Anyway, you're off to Cannon Valley Elder Collegium. How are you liking that, and is there a translation there between what you've done and what you're doing and what you'd like to do with them?

CR: Well, I did get that grant in, but for the first round, the Spencer Foundation was overwhelmed with responses. They made it a really short call and had three review dates, two in May and the last one was on June 8th. That's the one when we sneaked in under the wire. For their first review, they had to extend the review period, and they funded two percent of the proposals. So I'm not very optimistic. My only hope is that, first of all, our population is so understudied, and secondly, we're this little, tiny nonprofit out in the middle of nowhere with no resources so that, the proposal is essentially an assessment. I worked with colleagues from the Science Education Resource Center at Carleton, and the project is designed so that it's about classroom observations, student surveys, faculty interviews, and focus groups. There's no thumb on the scale. The outside people would be doing all the assessing, and then we would have a way of making sense of both student and instructor experiences as we change our delivery system from in-person classes to remote learning. This place has been running on autopilot since 1997. And this COVID is a sea change. It's also a total watershed in terms of how to engage older learners in liberal arts materials at a distance given that they're not going to come to a classroom; they're not going to do it.[5]

CB: Not right now, that's for sure.

CR: It's not going to happen, and if we have to go even another term without any connection with them, I think we're done; we have to try. We've got nine courses teed up for fall, and they're good! Instructors, many of them, are my old Carleton colleagues. They are stepping up; they are trying something new. They're worried about Zoom delivery, but they're very adventurous, and the material is solid. They have a reputation in the community. They're the kind of people who draw students anyway. I'm hoping that even with a reduced number of courses and a limited enrollment figure, that the classes will fill. Then people will have their new experience, and the

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5. The proposal was not among the 2% funded in the final round.

next time it'll be better. Maybe by winter we can have some things in person, but I ain't holding my breath.

CB: I don't think we can really predict; it's kind of a crazy time. So, it's a whole range of courses? It's not just writing, it's not just . . .

CR: Oh, no. Let me tell you; I have them right here. We have one on the history of mathematics, one from a couple who grew up in Turkey talking essentially about sort of socio-political stuff, a course on Reinhold Niebuhr and democracy.

CB: Oh really, yeah, interesting. That's appropriate.

CR: It is! That should fill in a minute. We have a retired developmental psychologist doing "Numbers in the News: Lessons from the Pandemic." That should fill in a hurry. We have a philosopher doing ethics and literature. We have a retired minister doing "The Holocaust and The Churches." We have a wonderful retired physicist—who talked me into this job, but I still adore him—doing a course called "It's About Time." So, it's "time" in the sense of physics as well as philosophy and human experience. I took that course the first time he offered it; it's fabulous. And then we have a guy teaching Poetry 101; and we have "Oceans, Climate, and Corals." Presumably that course will draw connections and perspectives from Minnesotans since we have none of those things—given we have climate, but not oceans and corals. And that's about it.

CB: Sounds fabulous! So, Cannon Valley is around Carleton? Where is Cannon Valley?

CR: The Cannon River Valley is a chunk of southern Minnesota, one of the tributaries to the Minnesota River, which dumps into the Mississippi. And our catchment area is largely south and southeastern Minnesota; we typically have a couple hundred registrations a term. Some people take more than one, but we're aiming at, you know, nine courses, low enrollment of fifteen, total enrollment of 135. So if we can fill all that, that'll keep us going, and then we'll have some momentum into winter, however that shakes out. But the classes are very popular, attendance is good, and evaluations are strong. People miss them. It broke our hearts to have to cancel spring term. When we did a little poll—partly for the grant, but partly just to see if this was worth doing—people were very eager to get back into class. A few said, "Nope, not until there's a vaccine"; a few said maybe, but most said, "Online, sure, I'll take two." Or "I don't have transportation. This is the only way I can do it." Or "I moved away from Northfield; this would be great to get back in." That surprised us.

CB: Are you actually administering this program, and does it actually draw on what you did?

CR: Well when you were talking at first about this interview and future of WAC, I kept thinking, "This is where old WAC people go to die; the colloquium is a situation where you have to deal with everything—I mean oceans, Niebuhr, world cultures, the Holocaust—I'm game."

CB: Sounds actually fascinating.

CR: I think this conversation and one that I had recently with—do you know Susan Thomas down in Sydney, Australia? She's running a WAC program there, and she came out of one of the Georgia universities. I got to know her before she went to Australia through WPA mostly. But anyway, she's doing a collection, I believe, on something like "unexpected things in writing careers." She had questions for me about the faculty development/assessment thing, just as you were, and I think one of the things we talked about a lot was how essential it is in WAC (and this goes back to that Otterbein conversation too) to be respectful of many fields of knowledge, including their methods. That if you're going to sniff at test tubes as not being relevant to your moral worth or something, you're missing something. And you've got to be generous in your assessment of your colleagues, that they know a lot more than just their specialty. They have a lot to teach you.

CB: I completely agree; I feel that WAC is one of those centers or those collectivities where that interdisciplinary work actually happens, even though it's not usual, at big universities in particular. You know, the chemistry people are over here, and the history people are over here, and they never talk. And yet WAC is a center or a site where people can actually collect and share those ideas. I think it's almost more important than it ever has been. And yet, in some places, WAC programs tend to have cycles of strength and weaknesses on various campuses. Do you think there's a way to sort of keep them re-energized on a regular basis?

CR: Well, that is the challenge. Ed White always talks about it as a cycle, you know, a boom and bust, and that if you lose your director or something, it goes to hell, and that may be true in some places. I always viewed it as more of a sine curve and that my job was to keep the amplitude up. If things were sagging, I needed to do something about that, whether it was with the students or whether it was with the new faculty, whether it was with the Learning and Teaching Center, whether it was, you know, something sneaky and indirect like having lunch with a colleague of mine, I was willing to do that.

CB: I like the fact that you reported to the dean as opposed to, for example, the chair of some department, English for example.

CR: It turned out to be a good thing.

CB: Yeah, I was wondering if you thought it was a good thing and why. Is it because that automatically gives you reach across . . .?

CR: It cuts a couple different ways, Cameron. I think I was suspect because I worked for the dean. But on the other hand, the first ten years or so that I was in that job, I worked for a very compatible associate dean, Liz Ciner, who was also plugged in everywhere on campus. So she was a great broker. If I screwed up, she was there to set me straight or else to defend me, whatever was needed. After she retired, then I was reporting to a new person every couple of years, and that was less satisfactory. They tended to be associate professors who'd been picked out for some administrative experience, and then they'd go back to their departments and become chairs and other things. Lovely people, all of them. But at that time, the dean was not one to be inviting a lot of innovative ideas. I don't know how many times I would sit and talk to my current supervisor about something I wanted to do—for instance, I thought that communication across the curriculum is something we should get into and include non-curricular stuff and all kinds of things. We had Chris come in and do a workshop on that; people were all fired up. And so, I was looking for permission to start looking at grant opportunities. And, month after month, I would bring this up, and the current associate dean would say, "Okay, I'll talk to the dean," and finally he talked to the dean, and she said, "Hmm, not now." And that tends to be her default. I hate to think how she's doing these days with all the all the turmoil, because I think it's very hard for her to be adventurous. Now, you know, she's stuck. She's just stuck with this horrible situation, all this responsibility. For her, almost any twitch in a new direction is opening a can of worms. Poor woman. Her technique worked for a long time. I don't think it works for my successor. He would rather be in English, but he also might be more welcome in English because of his more literary scholarship. But in any case, for me, it worked when it worked. And then when it didn't work, I had to get sneaky.

CB: I'm really curious about this. I have split responsibilities, some to the Center and some to the English department. I teach a course in English and work with the graduate students in the center. We have a new dean coming on; I would like to actually make a pitch to actually report to him. And it does sound like there are some advantages to doing that, so I want to think about that.

CR: It could work. As I said, the one thing English, I think, appreciated about me is I taught first-year writing seminars that many of them were tired of teaching, and I taught them the way I wanted to (no shooting an elephant). I had a lot of fun with that, and they could deploy their people otherwise. I think they liked that, but they were…they were careful.

CB: Yeah, I guess, that's what has to happen. That about wraps it up. This has been such a pleasure, Carol. Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix 1

Up Close and Personal with a WAC Pioneer: John Bean (2003)

WAC and Beyond: An Interview with Chris Anson (2004)

The Tallest WAC Expert in North America: An Interview with Bill Condon (2005)

Martha "Marty" Townsend: A Different Kind of Pioneer (2006)

Terry Myers Zawacki: Creator of an Integrated Career (2007)

Considering WAC from Training and Hiring Perspectives: An Interview with Irwin "Bud" Weiser of Purdue University (2008)

Richard H. Haswell: A Conversation with an Empirical Romanticist (2009)

Making a Difference through Serendipity and Skill: An Interview with Kathleen Blake Yancey (2010)

A WAC Teacher and Advocate: An Interview with Rita Malenczyk, Eastern Connecticut State University (2011)

Joe Harris: Teaching Writing Via the Liberal Arts (2012)

Committed to WAC: Christopher Thaiss (2013)

Stephen Wilhoit: A Stealth WAC Practitioner (2014)

The Man Behind the WAC Clearinghouse: Mike Palmquist (2015)

Jill Gladstein: A Data-Driven Researcher (2016)

and . . .

The Tables Are Turned: Carol Rutz by Terry Myers Zawacki (2014)

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Contributors

Cameron Bushnell, Director of the Pearce Center for Professional Communication and Associate Professor of English, works on global politics in aesthetic forms and in the humanities, exploring intersections of postcoloniality, politics, and Western music. Her monograph, published by Routledge, is *Postcolonial Readings of Music in World Literature: Turning Empire on its Ear* (2013). She currently divides her time between work on a new monograph, *Orientalism Otherwise,* which discusses women's travel experiences to and from the Orient, and on scholarly articles in the field of writing-to-engage and anti-racist writing pedagogy.

Bradley Hughes is the Director Emeritus of the Writing Center (1984-2019) and Director Emeritus of Writing Across the Curriculum (1990-2019) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has published extensively about WAC, writing centers, and writing fellows, and the WAC faculty sourcebook that he and colleagues at UW-Madison have developed (writing.wisc.edu/wac) is widely used at many universities. Beyond his work at Wisconsin, he has consulted about, helped establish, and evaluated WAC programs and writing centers at many colleges and universities across the US and in countries around the world.

Heather Bastian is the Associate Director of Communication Across the Curriculum at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her research interests include composition pedagogy, writing program administration, WAC/WID, and genre studies. Her work has appeared in the *CCC, WPA: Writing Program Administration*, *Composition Studies*, *Composition Forum*, *Across the Disciplines*, and *Reader*.

Mike Palmquist is Professor of English and University Distinguished Teaching Scholar at Colorado State University. Prior to returning to his role as a faculty member in the 2020-2021 academic year, he served for fourteen years in various university leadership roles, including founding director of the Institute for Learning and Teaching, director of the university's online division, and Associate Provost for Instructional Innovation. His scholarly interests include writing across the curriculum, the effects of computer and network technologies on writing instruction, and new approaches to scholarly publishing.

Thomas Polk serves as the Acting Director of the WAC Program at George Mason University where he teaches academic and professional writing in the English department. Tom is also a doctoral student in Writing and Rhetoric at Mason and serves as the Chair of WAC-GO, the graduate student organization for AWAC. He has conducted research on writing assignments, faculty development, and feminist research methodologies. His current research interests focus on student writing and identity development in undergraduate research programs. Prior to working at Mason, he coordinated the writing center at Bowie State University.

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