the WAC Journal

The WAC Journal

Writing Across the Curriculum
Volume 22
November 2011

WAC Journal Seeks Funding in Order to Continue

The WAC Journal, for the first time in 23 years, has no funding for next year's volume. We need $6,000 a year to continue. Can anyone help?

The journal is an extremely lean operation in which a dedicated staff puts in many volunteer hours, but even so minimal funding is needed to keep the production process going. Our sources of funding over the last 23 years have been cut. The New Hampshire Legislature cut 50% of state funding for Plymouth State University, our home institution, and the U.S. Congress cut all federal support for The National Writing Project, which for the past 20 years had been the only federally-funded program dedicated to the teaching of writing. NWP had taken over funding of the journal this year.

The journal has always been generous, offering to everyone top-of-the-line writing education support, some of it written by the most prominent writing scholars in the world. Readership of the journal has increased steadily since it went national and international in 2001. On-line readership is now over 200,000 hits and 31,000 downloads per year.

But will annual production of the journal be able to continue?

If you can contribute any dollar amount to support *The WAC Journal,* please send a check or money order payable to *The WAC Journal* Fund. Mail it to *The WAC Journal* Fund, c/o NWP-NH, English Dept., MSC 40, Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH 03264 Contributions are tax-deductible.

If you would like to contribute in some other way, please contact Jane Weber at WAC-Journal@plymouth.edu. We welcome your ideas as well as your financial support.

Sincerely,
Roy Andrews, editor, *The WAC Journal*

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The Intradisciplinary Influence of Composition and WAC, Part Two: 1986–2006

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HISTORIES OF WRITING ACROSS the curriculum (WAC) do not generally ascribe the development of this enduring movement to scholars and teachers within the disciplines themselves. Most accounts suggest that WAC originated in the work of writing and literacy scholars who advocated a more widespread attention to writing in all disciplinary areas across higher education (Russell; Bazerman et al.). But we know little about the influence of this cross-disciplinary outreach and the extent to which it made its way into the inner workings of various disciplines. Investigating the question of influence allows us to begin exploring how particular disciplinary communities have adopted, adapted, and repurposed scholarship on writing and writing instruction based on their own instructional ideologies, disciplinary orientations, and curricular needs. In this article, we report the results of archival research designed to gauge the influence of composition studies on how writing is taught in a range of disciplines. We examined articles published in discipline-specific pedagogical journals, which represent one of the purest indices of possible influence by showing us what scholars and instructors within the disciplines say to each other about the integration of writing into college-level teaching. Fourteen discipline-based pedagogical journals published between January 1967 and December 2006 were mined for articles focusing on instruction in writing (all articles focusing on non-instructional aspects of writing, such as publication tips for scholars, were ignored). The resulting corpus was subjected to counts of publications over time, citation analysis, and content analysis (Neuendorf; Krippendorff) for trends in focus and orientation.

The first phase of the study, published in Volume 21 (2010) of this journal, covered the years 1967–1986. In that phase, Anson found a consistent increase in discipline-based

pedagogical articles focusing on writing beginning in the 1970s. These articles also evidenced a strong shift in orientation, beginning in the 1980s, from a preoccupation with student writing skills to an interest in the relationship between writing and learning disciplinary content. This shift corresponded to an increase in the authors' references to research and publications in the field of composition studies, suggesting an "almost certain influence of composition scholars and, eventually, WAC scholars and practitioners on both the theorizing and implementation of writing practices in these disciplines as reflected in their publications" (Anson 17).

Here we report the results of the second phase of the study, which examined the corpus of articles over the subsequent twenty years, from 1986–2006, "a time of increasing programmatic activity, stronger interest in factors such as social context, student development, and diversity, and the burgeoning influence of computer technology on writing and learning to write" (Anson 17). For details about the study's methodology and a more extensive discussion of the results of the first phase than the sketch provided here, we urge the reader to consult Part One.

Creating and Analyzing the Corpus

The journals examined in the first phase of this study were chosen to represent a range of disciplines, roughly distributed among the arts and humanities, social sciences, and sciences:

> *Teaching of Psychology*
> *Teaching Sociology*
> *Teaching Philosophy*
> *History Teacher*
> *Engineering Education*
> *Mathematics Teacher*
> *Journal of College Science Teaching*
> *Teaching Political Science*
> *Journal of Economic Education*
> *Journal of Architectural Education*
> *Physics Teacher*
> *Journal of Chemical Education*
> *Journal of Aesthetics Education*

As pointed out in Part One of this article, we deliberately ignored all journals that focus more intentionally on writing or communication pedagogy, such as *Communication Education* or the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication,* because including

them would have increased the number of articles published in allied areas, falsely suggesting that composition had a stronger influence across the disciplines than is the case (Anson "Intradisciplinary" 7).

Fortunately, all but one of the journals continued publication over the subsequent twenty-year period. Because the journal *Teaching Political Science* was no longer published after 1989, though, we were faced with the decision either to select another journal as a substitute (adding the articles found within the substitute journal to those published in *TPS* before the journal went defunct) or to omit political science from the corpus so that just thirteen journals were considered during the second stage. Both options were problematic because of their potential influence on the results, but we chose to replace the journal because doing so would still enable us to consider the influence of writing on the discipline of political science. We chose to count articles in *Teaching Political Science* up to its termination and then switch to those published in the pedagogical sections of *Political Science and Politics.* A careful examination of the trends and the nature of the material published suggested that this switch did not confound the analysis. The second change in the corpus was more minor, entailing a title shift for the journal *Engineering Education,* which was renamed the *Journal of Engineering Education* in 1993. This change did not affect the counts of publications or the content analysis, and we saw no difference in the trajectory of the journal's focus on writing.

Following the methods used in the first phase of the study, we created a database of all articles focusing on writing, adopting the same criteria for inclusion that are described in Part One. This added 537 articles to the entire 40-year corpus (141 articles were published in the first 20 years of the study). We then subjected the additional articles to the same citation analysis used in the first phase, noting every reference to a scholar identified within the field of composition studies or its affiliated cross-curricular offshoots—that is, to those whose primary area of expertise was or is in writing studies, WAC, or communication across the curriculum. If we were unsure, we checked the background of the person referenced, using appropriate search strategies.

We then conducted a content analysis of the additional articles. As explained below, the distinction earlier noted between articles focusing on "writing to learn" and those with a skills-based, "learning-to-write" orientation became complicated by a number of other new trends, and we abandoned that distinction in favor of a more wide-ranging analysis.

Results

As shown in Fig. 1, the number of writing-focused articles continued to increase from the end of the period covered in the first phase of the study, then dropped off somewhat in

FIGURE 1
Total Articles in the Corpus

All Articles Focusing on Writing
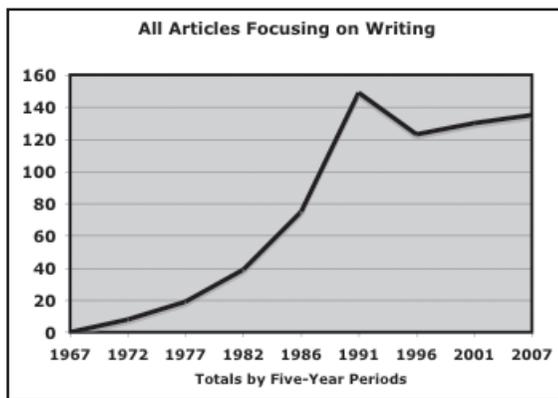
the early 1990s, picking back up again in the mid-1990s and then leveling off to the end of the period covered in the second phase. The reason for the leveling is not clear, but may be related to the overall space within the journals for coverage of writing-related pedagogies. That is, the journals may have collectively reached a threshold of coverage, although this assumption ignores changes, over time, in the ratios between the total page numbers in each journal and the number of pages devoted to writing instruction. For the purposes and focus of this study, however, it is clear that faculty and scholars in the disciplines represented by these journals have dramatically increased their interest in writing over the past 40 years and have sustained a consistent concern for WAC-related issues well beyond the turn of the 21st century.

As shown in Fig. 2, some interesting differences can be observed in the number of articles published in the specific journals in the second two decades of the study. Among the disciplinary clusters, the social sciences together outweigh both the sciences and the arts and humanities, but the high number of articles published in *Chemical Education* makes up for the somewhat lower numbers in the other sciences, also putting that cluster ahead of the arts and humanities. The reason that the sciences outpace the arts and humanities (disciplines traditionally associated with verbal expression) is puzzling. At the same time, one would also have expected a strong surge of publication in the hard sciences following the release of ABET 2000, a revised set of accreditation standards published by the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) which newly emphasized attention to communication; yet between 2000 and 2006 there was no discernible increase.

As shown in Fig. 3, references to scholars in written communication or WAC increased significantly in the middle years of the study's first phase, but starting in the early 1990s,

FIGURE 2
Article Totals by Journal, 1986–2007

Articles by Journal, 1986-2007
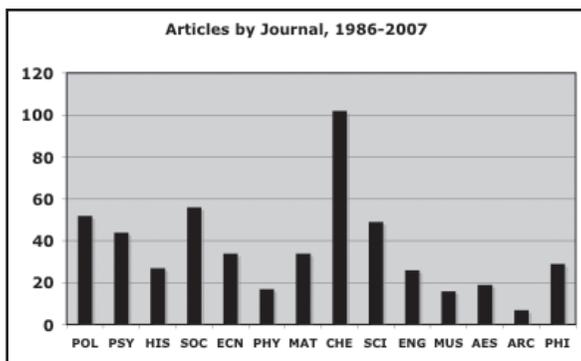
leveled off through the end of the that decade, picking up a little between 2001 and 2006. This trend is partly explained through our more detailed citation analysis. In the first phase of the study, as noted in Part One, references to scholars in composition studies rose dramatically between 1977 and 1986, eventually representing an almost equal number to those articles that did not reference composition scholars. In the second phase, a significant number of articles cite the authors of prior articles on writing within their fields, sometimes with and sometimes without references to scholars in writing studies or WAC. One example of this trend is Simpson and Caroll's "Assignments for a Writing-Intensive Economics Course," published in the *Journal of Economic Education* in 1999. This piece references other writing-related work by economics scholars rather than those in WAC or writing studies. The content reveals an unmistakable confidence in the authors' knowledge about the goals and principles of writing across the curriculum, writing-intensive programs, and pedagogical strategies such as revision, peer response, and evaluation, without a characteristic need—displayed often in articles published during the first 20-year period—to seek support or information in the work of writing and literacy scholars. Similarly, we see within-discipline citation in three articles published in the *Journal of College Science Teaching:* Dunn; Trombulak and Sheldon; and Sadler, Haller, and Garfield, all of whom cite an earlier piece by Ambron, "Writing to Improve Learning in Biology," published in 1987. For its part, Ambron's article had cited a number of prominent scholars in composition studies and WAC, including John Bean, Peter Elbow, Janet Emig, Toby Fulwiler, James Moffett, George Newell, and David Schwalm.

From this and a number of other cases, we can tentatively conclude that early adopters of WAC, influenced by work in the field of writing studies and often citing literature by such scholars as those aforementioned and others like Britton, Young, and Flower and

FIGURE 3
References to Composition Scholars,
Total Corpus

References to Composition Scholars
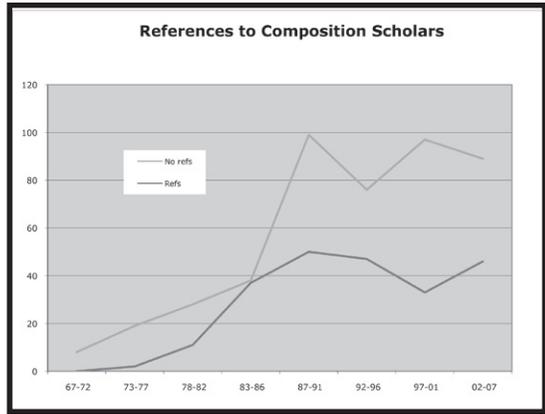
Hayes, established the intellectual precedents for their colleagues, who then had no particular need to cite work beyond their own discipline for the kind of background they needed to move ahead with new ideas for incorporating writing into their curriculum; the progenitor WAC-focused articles in their own fields sufficed. The development of more systemic WAC programs starting in the mid-1990s, some of which replaced organic, grassroots efforts, may also explain the increasing self-reference within the journals and the increased terminological and conceptual sophistication of the discussions. As more faculty in various subject areas work on writing-intensive committees or engage in departmentally-focused work on writing (see Anson, "Assessing"), they begin to develop shared understandings of the goals, methods, and underlying philosophies for writing across the curriculum.

Starting in the late 1980s, we also see the influence of emerging technologies on writing across the curriculum. However, this influence was much more modest than we had anticipated, especially in light of the time frame that was the focus of the second phase. We found that articles addressing computers and writing could be isolated into those with a relatively weak focus and those with a stronger, more sustained focus, though more articles tended to fall into the former category than the latter. For example, Manning and Riordan's article "Using Groupware Software to Support Collaborative Learning in Economics," published in the *Journal of Economic Education* in 2000, demonstrates a weak focus on writing in its preoccupation with the methods and logistics of using computers to teach economics and the benefits thereof, such as increased student participation in class and faster progress on projects. Although such essays often establish a rationale for a stronger focus on communication through technology, they lack deeper commentary, analysis, or instructional strategies and examples, suggesting that there are many oppor-

tunities for further exploration of the role of writing and digital technologies across the disciplines. Stronger focus on writing does appear occasionally in such articles as Persell's "Using Focused Web-Based Discussions to Enhance Student Engagement and Deep Understanding," published in *Teaching Sociology* in 2004. In this contribution, Persell is interested in "how digital technologies might further the development of a community of learners … [and] if changes in those relationships might affect students' deep understanding of sociological ideas" (62). Motivated by the goal of increasing students' critical awareness of their own writing, thinking, and learning, the author "realized that systematically reviewing student writing through the course of a semester helps make student thinking more transparent, thereby illuminating areas of difficulty they were identifying and suggesting ways I might provide further instructional scaffolding" (62).

The corpus for 1986–2006 also shows a stronger influence from more general work in higher education, such as the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) than in the first phase of the study. Instructionally, this influence is reflected in an increasing interest in collaborative learning and the embeddedness of writing into other learning activities. Starting in the 1990s, there is a discernible interest in such activities and methods as role play, simulations, peer-group conferences, team-based writing projects, and interactive journals (especially as these are occasioned by emerging technologies), strategies advocated in the more general improvement of teaching and the more intentional focus on what happens to students in the experience of learning. The emphasis on teaching as reflective practice (Schön) also includes a modest but noticeable increase in classroom-based research on writing conducted by scholars and practitioners within the disciplines themselves, as reflected in Chizmar and Ostrosky's "The One-Minute Paper: Some Empirical Findings" and Williams' "Writing about the Problem-Solving Process to Improve Problem-Solving Performance." The former, which was published in the *Journal of Economic Education* in 1998, discusses an experimental study controlling for end-of-class minute papers (which were associated with statistically significant gains in students' knowledge as measured in an end-of-course assessment) and later became a frequently cited article within that journal. The latter, which was published in *Mathematics Teacher* in 2003, also discusses an experimental study that showed gains in problem-solving abilities of students who wrote about processes in introductory algebra. These and a number of other cases suggest a growing independence of scholarship in WAC within the disciplines, as faculty became acquainted enough with the theoretical and empirical background of writing studies to conduct their own research. Of course, writing has been studied within various fields for years, but our data suggest a broadening of such research across the disciplines. The motivation appears to have several origins, including a stronger

emphasis on classroom-based research as promoted by various higher-education organizations, increased recognition of the importance of teaching and its relationship to scholarship (see Boyer), WAC-sponsored grant programs and assistance for teacher-scholars to engage in classroom-based research, and a more widespread curricular and disciplinary interest in writing.

As the focus on writing increased across the fourteen journals, the distinction between an emphasis on skills (the ability to write persuasively, correctly, or with adherence to various disciplinary conventions) versus an emphasis on the use of writing as a medium or tool for learning began to blur in the 1990s, so that it was, in many cases, difficult to categorize articles into the orientations described in Part One. This categorical difficulty reflects the growing complexity of WAC during the second phase of the study, and its development of curricular offshoots. The influence of "writing in the disciplines" (WID), which emphasizes deeper relationships between the epistemological characteristics of fields (or their "ways of knowing"–see Carter) and their textual features, provides greater sophistication in authors' understanding of "skill" and the assessment of student work. At the same time, the corpus showed no evidence that the submovement of "writing to learn" abated during the second phase. For example, in their article "Using Log Assignments to Foster Learning: Revisiting Writing across the Curriculum," published in 2000 in the *Journal of Engineering Education,* Maharaj and Banta discuss the use of learning logs to help students learn core content, incorporating excerpts from sample students' logs to demonstrate their evolving understanding of course material. And in his article "Don't Argue, Reflect! Reflections on Introducing Reflective Writing into Political Science Courses," published in 2005 in *Political Science,* Josefson argues for the inclusion of reflective writing in the political science curriculum, claiming that its four basic stages (explanation, reflection, analysis, and formulation of plans) makes it a more effective genre for teaching students than the typical argumentative essay, as it encourages them to seek the "truth."

Both of the aforementioned articles also reflect another trend—an increasing emphasis on the role of personal and creative writing in learning. Articles such as Keller and Davidson's "The Math Poem: Incorporating Mathematical Terms in Poetry," published in 2001 in *Mathematics Teacher,* Dunn's "Perspectives on Human Aggression: Writing to Einstein and Freud on 'Why War?,'" published in 1992 in *Teaching of Psychology,* and Leibowitz and Witz's "Why Now After All These Years You Want to Listen to Me?: Using Journals in Teaching History at a South African University," published in 1996 in *The History Teacher,* among others, further demonstrate the growing interest in the use of personal writing to facilitate learning in the disciplines. The reasons for the continued interest in "expressivist" writing (see Burnham), as reflected in blogs, journals, diaries, and

reflective pieces, are unclear. Scholars in composition studies have vigorously debated the usefulness of expressivism in writing instruction (see Zebroski), yet WAC scholars and advocates may be continuing to promote it as a way to help students to learn course material without burdening instructors with heavy doses of formal assessment.

The attraction to personal and expressivist writing established in the first phase of the corpus also branches out during the second phase to include assignments that promote student interest in writing itself and not just core content. Whereas the writing assignments across the disciplines in the first phase were generally assigned in "canonical" genres (journals, short documented papers, term papers, and the like), in the second phase we find some increased diversification of genres, such as autobiographies, tabloid writing, audience-based online writing, a series of postcards, a marriage contract, a letter concerning work alienation, and a "diary of a 79-year-old." Initiatives such as Art Young's "poetry across the curriculum" at Clemson University (see Young) may also have helped to sustain an interest in the creative dimensions of writing and genres thereof. The diversification of genres for writing may have found some of its impetus from WAC workshop leaders who often show how teachers can use multiple and mixed genres (such as "annotated dialogues"—see Anson, "My Dinner") to deepen students' understanding of course concepts and readings.

Another somewhat unanticipated finding was that although there was some attention to the use of writing for assessment, this was minimal in comparison to the other areas that were addressed across the journals we examined. For example, whereas assessment was a main topic of just five articles published in *Mathematics Teacher* within the time frame of the second stage of the study, the subject of writing to learn was a main focus of thirteen articles within that same journal. Despite brief references in some articles to the use of materials such as portfolios to assess students' learning of core content as well as reading and writing skills across an entire department, the subject was seemingly under-explored in all of the journals we studied. In the context of burgeoning interest in learning outcomes, assessment, and quality enhancement across all of higher education, the potential for further significant exploration of the uses of writing for assessment in other disciplines remains strong, suggesting promising future opportunities for collaboration among teacher-scholars from the composition field and those in at least the fourteen other disciplines considered. These opportunities exist both in isolated courses and at higher (departmental, college-unit, and institutional) levels.

Conclusion

As reflected in our analysis of articles in fourteen pedagogical journals across a 40-year period, writing has played an increasingly important role in instruction and curricular

design. Based on the numbers of articles published, this interest was almost four times stronger in the years between 1986 and 2006 than in the first twenty years of the study. Citation practices and the increasingly sophisticated views of pedagogy reflected in articles written by content-area experts provide some evidence that WAC has "seeded" within the disciplines. The growth of institution-wide initiatives such as writing-intensive programs and departmentally-focused outcomes assessments may be partly responsible for the greater autonomy we noticed in discussions of writing and in classroom-based research on writing. However, our citation analysis also shows that WAC experts continue to exert an important influence. Especially in the areas of writing assessment and digital literacies, which have developed into significant subdisciplines of composition studies, we expect the role of WAC experts to be essential in furthering work on writing in all courses and curricula. The content of the articles in the second phase also suggests the diversification of WAC in terms of disciplinary focus, learning of content, programmatic interests, and genres for writing, while the steady expressivist trend noticed in the first phase continues. In all of these areas, writing scholars and WAC specialists can play a central role, as well as in important areas where we saw almost no focus at all, such as the role of linguistic and cultural diversity in support for and assessment of classroom-based writing (see Anson, "Black Holes").

This study also suggests some further areas for continued archival research. For example, we know little about the way that writing is integrated into individual disciplines or clusters of disciplines (such as the hard sciences). Studies of more journals within such disciplinary clusters could yield richer information about how writing is related to the epistemological orientations of specific areas of inquiry. Furthermore, our analysis speculated about broader influences on discipline-based pedagogy in writing, but did not attempt to conduct a more thorough inquiry of such influences. Studying conversations within particular disciplinary areas and allied organizations, such as accrediting agencies, might help to explain trends noticed in the pedagogical literature, or these trends could be mapped against broader analyses of social and educational influences, such as alarmist editorializing in the popular media about student abilities or federal educational incentives and programs.

While our analysis revealed a few cases in which certain authors within the disciplines were cited in further publication, more scholarship is needed to trace the influence of specific scholars who dedicate a major portion of their academic lives to promoting discipline-specific educational reform. For example, Richard Felder, a chemist by training, has developed international renown for his work in college-level science education (see Felder). Although this work focuses on broader constructivist principles and methods (such as problem-based and active learning), writing plays an important role as well. Case

studies of such scholar-teachers' influence could supplement and refine the broader data we have presented here.

The heft of the corpus made it impossible for us to do more than a general analysis of the articles' contents. More extensive and meticulous content analysis of a smaller set of publications, perhaps those within specific disciplines, could provide evidence of disciplinary practices and epistemologies and the way they become instantiated in pedagogical work. Such studies have precedence in scholarly writing (see, for example, Bazerman), but to date they have been largely absent from the literature on teaching and learning. Interview or survey data from members of specific disciplines, especially in response to selected articles from the pedagogical journals relevant to their own teaching, could offer additional sources of rich data. Further potential also exists in mixed-methods studies that could relate statistical trends in publication to the results of interviews with journal editors, who make sophisticated decisions about how many articles to include on certain topics, relying on knowledge of their backlog of accepted manuscripts, special issues past or forthcoming, interest trends, and the like. Turning to them for further information could provide stronger explanations of the overall trajectory of publication on writing-related topics.

Finally, we made no attempt in our study to sort the data by authors' institutional type and mission or by the presence of cross-curricular faculty-development or WAC/WID programs. Such an analysis, although painstaking, could show whether writing is receiving more focus at particular kinds of colleges and universities, or if not, whether the treatment of writing varies by institutional type.

A quick sampling of publications in the fourteen chosen journals beyond the end of the second phase (i.e., since 2006) shows that writing continues to be of interest and concern to teacher-scholars in the disciplines these journals represent. How and with what sophistication members of these disciplines will continue to weave writing into their instruction, what further influences will affect their thinking, and what role WAC specialists will play, remain questions that beg continued inquiry, both through archival research and other methods best suited to such analysis.

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Preparing Faculty, Professionalizing Fellows: Keys to Success with Undergraduate Writing Fellows in WAC

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SINCE THEIR BEGINNINGS in the late 1970s and early 1980s at Carleton College and Brown University (Haring-Smith; Severino and Trachsel, "Starting"; Soven, "Curriculum-Based and WAC"), Undergraduate Writing Fellows have become increasingly common and featured characters in comprehensive WAC programs. And in the past 15 years, WAC Fellows programs have spread beyond liberal arts colleges and private universities, taking root in larger public comprehensive and research universities and in community colleges as well. Writing Fellows programs have achieved this kind of success because they help integrate some best practices of writing instruction into writing-intensive courses across the curriculum. They do so by tapping into the talents of carefully selected and trained undergraduate students (Fellows) to help other students with papers and to improve the quality of writing instruction across the curriculum. Built on process models and principles of collaborative learning, Writing Fellows programs stretch out the writing process by building in cycles of drafts, conferences, and revisions in courses where otherwise such a process might not be possible, and through the dialogue between Fellows and faculty, they help faculty reflect critically on their own practices in designing writing assignments, in coaching students through the process, and in evaluating student writing. The instructors in these courses are at many stages of their teaching careers, ranging from lecturers to full professors.

Within the modest but steadily growing literature about Writing Fellows, there is no shortage of publications about the philosophy informing the model and the steps involved in implementing it (Bazerman, Little, Bethel, Chavkin, Fouquette, and Garufis 110; Haring-Smith; Leahy, "When"; Mullin, Schorn, Turner, Hertz, Davidson, and Baca; Mullin and Schorn; Severino and Trachsel; Soven; Spigelman and Grobman, "Hybrid";

Zawacki). This literature demonstrates persuasively that Writing Fellows energize and enrich WAC and WID initiatives. Fellows give tangible help to faculty who are willing to do the hard work of integrating writing into their teaching in enlightened ways. The Writing Fellows model and the interaction between WFs and faculty can influence faculty attitudes and practices (Corroy; Mullin, Schorn, Turner, Hertz, Davidson, and Baca; Soven, "Curriculum-Based and WAC"). And the work that Fellows do within writing-intensive classes across the disciplines offers valuable research opportunities, for Fellows and scholars alike (see, for example, Gladstein; Lutes; Mullin, Schorn, Turner, Hertz, Davidson, and Baca; O'Leary; Severino and Trachsel, "Theories"). Because of these benefits, Writing Fellows programs have now become, we would argue, essential components of comprehensive WAC programs.

At the same time, however, some of the Writing Fellows literature also makes it clear that real challenges exist, especially in finding the right faculty to work with Fellows. That's actually putting it mildly. In fact, the narratives of failed partnerships between faculty and Fellows (see, for example, Leahy; Mattison; Zawacki) can send shivers up the spines of WAC and writing center directors contemplating starting a new Fellows program. After reading widely about Writing Fellows and consulting with many directors of Fellows programs, a colleague from Lansing Community College, for example, who's currently in the process of launching a new Writing Fellows program, concluded: "Most of the significant problems I have heard about and read about did seem to involve faculty in some way–faculty 'abusing' the Writing Fellows (intentionally or unintentionally), faculty not understanding what was required of THEM in the relationship, faculty saying things to the class that were simply untrue about what the Writing Fellow could and could not do, and faculty thinking of the Writing Fellow as a teaching assistant, no matter how hard the director of the program tried to dissuade them of this notion" (Reglin). Within the Writing Fellows literature, then, there's a gap between the impressive potential that Fellows have to be agents of change in WAC and the cautionary tales from the complex realities of Fellows actually working with faculty and student-writers. Where we see most of the challenges arising is right there, where Fellows and faculty meet.

The simple description of Fellows programs—that we select and educate Fellows and pair them with faculty and students in writing-intensive courses—actually belies the complexity involved. To succeed, this Writing Fellows model demands quite a complex teaching collaboration between faculty and Fellows. How, after all, can undergraduate Fellows motivate students to care about their writing, persuade student-writers to work collaboratively with peers outside of class, cross all sorts of disciplinary boundaries, earn trust and acceptance by faculty as partners in teaching, satisfy understandable faculty desires

for stronger writing from students, earn strong evaluations from appropriately critical faculty, and convince experienced faculty to examine and even change their pedagogical priorities and practices? None of these tasks would be easy for a course instructor or a WAC professional to accomplish (Jablonski). But they're especially challenging for undergraduate students to do working collaboratively with faculty, though they have the potential to enact interdisciplinary collaborations in productive ways (Haviland et al.). In this article, we hope to begin to fill what we perceive to be a gap in the Writing Fellows literature by delving deeply into two of the most critical parts of setting up a Writing Fellows program: (1) recruiting and preparing faculty to work collaboratively with Fellows and (2) rigorously preparing Fellows to help them to have meaningful collaborations with faculty. As we explore these challenges, we'll offer suggestions for making these relationships succeed.

Selecting and Preparing Faculty to Work with Writing Fellows

Because this teaching collaboration is so complex, we select faculty for our Writing Fellows program just as we select undergraduate Fellows—very carefully. Recruiting, screening, and preparing faculty are time-consuming and delicate tasks that must be done again every year as the program works with new faculty and new Fellows. Even though our program is now well established (it began in 1997) and well respected, we've found that on a large campus like ours—where faculty have too much to do, where they constantly receive too many communications, where they rotate in and out of undergraduate teaching, and where they regularly go on research leave or leave altogether for another university—we have to continue to publicize and recruit for the program, and we have to be always on the lookout for faculty who would be a good match for the program. We don't quite sell door to door, but we're always selling the program, always recruiting. Each semester, we send emails to all faculty, as well as specifically to faculty who are teaching or who have taught writing-intensive courses, introducing the program and inviting faculty to consider working with Fellows (see Appendix A for a sample recruiting memo to faculty). In orientations for new faculty and in faculty teaching institutes, we introduce the Fellows program. And in WAC workshops and consultations and in our writing center outreach with faculty across campus, we're always listening carefully as faculty talk about the writing components of their courses and about their teaching generally, identifying and recruiting faculty whose courses might be a good match for the Fellows program. As we recruit faculty, we're eager to form effective partnerships and to learn with and from colleagues.

The literature and our experience suggest that when choosing faculty to work with Writing Fellows, we should look for colleagues who demonstrate that they are:

- committed to undergraduate teaching and writing, and especially to thinking carefully about writing instruction (rather than just assigning writing in their course)
- willing to collaborate with Fellows as teaching partners
- careful listeners and patient as we explain the program, its philosophy, logistics and challenges
- flexible, willing to experiment with teaching and to work with our Writing Fellows model
- open to building process and revision into paper assignments
- willing to sell the process of working with Fellows to student-writers, signaling what a great opportunity it is and that they expect students to work seriously with the Fellows and to do substantial revisions

We begin to glean this information ourselves during a meeting we insist on having in person with faculty who express interest in working with Fellows. We actually have multiple goals for this meeting, which usually lasts half an hour. As we listen to faculty talk about the course and their approach to the writing assignments, we're thinking about whether this course is a good match for our Writing Fellows model and whether we have confidence that this will be a successful placement for Fellows. At the same time, we want to describe the program in enough depth so that the professor can make an informed choice about working with Fellows. We're also aiming to convey the ethos of the program—its philosophy, its carefully designed model, its pedagogy of drafts and comments and conferences and revision, its deep respect for the potential of undergraduates as peer mentors, its collaborative approach, its deep respect for the student-writers in the course, and its deep respect for and desire to support faculty. We focus our conversation by using a brief list of nine key points about working with Fellows, a list that we explicitly review together during our meeting. (See Appendix B for that list.)

During some of these conversations, it's evident that faculty members and courses are great matches for the program, which many are, and we eagerly agree to have Fellows work with them. In other cases, faculty want to think it over for a while, which we're glad to have them do. And often it's a mixed bag—we encounter some of the varied faculty attitudes about teaching writing-intensive courses and about faculty work in general that Salem and Jones identify in their recent research. They cluster faculty based on five factors that define their experience with writing-intensive courses: their "enthusiasm about teaching," "confidence in [their] teaching ability," "belief in the fairness of the workplace," "belief that grammar instruction belongs to the writing center," and "preferences for teaching underprepared students" (65-66). When we encounter faculty attitudes that cause us some

concern about whether the Writing Fellows model is a good match for a course and an instructor, we listen carefully and offer respectful suggestions about sequences of assignments and try to convey the attitudes about student-writers and about successful writing instruction that are central to the Writing Fellows model. Sometimes, if we're seriously concerned that Fellows are not likely to succeed, we'll kindly explain that we always have more requests for Fellows than we can meet and that we're sorry but we won't be able to offer Fellows for that semester. In other cases, depending on how eager we are to have more possible placements or how adamant the professor is about working with Fellows, we will hope that the process of actually working with Fellows will change faculty attitudes toward writing and students, which it can. Sometimes we're then pleasantly surprised and other times, the Fellows and we, as well as the faculty member and the students in the course, suffer through a less-than-ideal placement.

When our faculty lineup is complete, at the beginning of each semester, we hold an informal, hour-long brown bag meeting with all of the faculty who are working with Writing Fellows. This conversation includes not only faculty who are new to working with Fellows but also those who have worked with Fellows before. We deliberately devote most of the time to open discussion, to questions and answers among the Fellows faculty. The topics faculty raise vary, but they often talk about what faculty like about working with Fellows, what's challenging about working with Fellows, how students react to Fellows, how much responsibility and direction to give Fellows, how to encourage student-writers to listen carefully to the feedback from Fellows and to do substantial revisions, what to do when students fail to meet with a Fellow for a required conference, and how much attention Fellows should give to global versus local concerns in student drafts. We're always delighted by how much the experienced faculty take the lead in this discussion, sharing and recommending best practices in WAC teaching. And then during the semester, the Fellows meet several times with the faculty whose course they're working in—to discuss assignments, drafts, goals, and methods—and the Writing Fellows director touches base with faculty, by email and in a meeting for Fellows faculty.

Despite all our screening and meetings and information we give faculty, we do face challenges in working with colleagues. Drawing from the Writing Fellows literature (Leahy; Mattison; Zawacki, for example) and from our own long-time experience matching faculty with Fellows, we can catalog some of the most common complications that can torpedo Fellows' work with faculty, complications that WAC and Writing Fellows directors need to be aware of in order to forge effective partnerships with faculty. One of the most basic challenges involves communication between faculty and the Fellows. Because collaborative work requires planning and timely communication, if faculty are

unavailable for meetings or don't respond to emails, it's inevitably difficult for Fellows to succeed. Other challenges involve syllabus and assignment design. Sometimes our exploratory conversations with colleagues make it clear that key elements of our Writing Fellows model aren't a good match for some courses. Because they have had success with different patterns in the past or because they have understandable concerns about stretching out the writing/revising process, some faculty are unwilling to build in the necessary time between a draft and a final deadline. Or, in other cases, they want Fellows to work with a paper that is too informal to revise, or they want Fellows to grade papers or to offer the kind of content-based or methods-based advice on writing projects that really needs to come from a course instructor.

Other challenges that Writing Fellows encounter as they work with faculty are more complex and sometimes seem more daunting for administrators and Fellows; these situations, however, often actually create opportunities for meaningful intervention and negotiation. From the many successes we have had with colleagues, we are convinced that these faculty who present these challenges are, in fact, important audiences with whom WAC and Fellows programs need to learn to work. Here are a few examples of the "types" of faculty we've encountered—those who offer us complicated pedagogical and administrative quandaries yet ultimately provide promising opportunities. First, there are faculty whose view of writing focuses almost exclusively on grammar and whose view of writing instruction focuses on correcting error. Faculty who hold these views sometimes question why Fellows prioritize larger rhetorical concerns in their feedback to students, or they complain that Fellows have failed to comment on some problems with grammar or style in students' drafts. In these cases, we're convinced that the Fellows' comments on drafts model, for faculty, thoughtful engagement with student-writers through the process of writing. And we're convinced that the multiple conversations between Fellows and faculty about guiding students' revisions open up healthy discussions about priorities for feedback, discussions that are more sustained and deeper and have more potential for change than ones that typically occur in faculty WAC workshops.

Second, there are some faculty who initially hope to make only a minimal commitment to WAC and to the Writing Fellows. They want to have some writing in their courses and they choose to work with Fellows as a way to integrate writing instruction into their course, but they want to make only a minimal investment of time in this pedagogy. As a consequence, they aren't prepared to fully integrate the Fellows process into their assignments, they don't talk deeply with their students or with Fellows about the purpose of writing assignments or about students' growth as writers, and in their comments on and evaluation of students' papers, these faculty do not reinforce the importance of drafting

and revising, and of peer collaboration in the writing process. We affectionately refer to them as the faculty who are willing to "date" the writing Fellows program but don't yet want to commit.

The third concern is the opposite of the second. Some faculty who choose to work with Fellows turn out to be "helicopter faculty," who struggle sharing authority with their Fellows. They hover over Fellows' work, they insist on reviewing Fellows' comments before student-writers receive them, and they want the students in their courses to confer about their drafts with them—sometimes instead of with their Fellows. Some of this close attention can, in fact, be ideal—students and faculty and Fellows all can benefit from it. Taken too far, though, this kind of hovering can undermine the Fellows' authority and confidence and discourages student-writers from learning to trust and collaborate with Fellows. Being willing to learn from undergraduate Writing Fellows, from students, is indeed new territory for some faculty.

Within these complex situations, we have found that carefully prepared Fellows can genuinely effect change. If Fellows work meaningfully with faculty as a team, if both Fellows and faculty bring flexibility and respect to the partnership, Fellows can open up dialogue about effective writing pedagogy, earn faculty trust, and help faculty develop even more effective writing pedagogies.

Professionalizing Fellows to Work Successfully with Faculty

As our discussion of our interactions with faculty has indicated, professors vary widely in their expectations for their work with Writing Fellows, but they are united in their desire to see tangible improvements in their students' writing. Thus, at a minimum, Writing Fellows need to have practical, applied knowledge about reading and responding to student writing and about holding effective conferences with students. But their collaborations with faculty who resemble the "types" we describe above demand even more than this: Writing Fellows need to be equipped with some breadth of theoretical knowledge, intellectual flexibility, confidence, resourcefulness, and awareness of how writing abilities develop. To gain the trust and respect of their faculty collaborators, they must be capable of offering tactful suggestions on assignments to a professor in a subject they may never have studied, able to discuss process-model philosophies of teaching writing, and willing to negotiate these philosophies in conversations with faculty and students. In other words, they must be WAC practitioners, diplomats, peer collaborators and more. As Jeffrey Jablonski has argued, "More than goodwill and good communication skills are needed when negotiating relationships forged in the ambiguous spaces across disciplinary ways of knowing and doing" (12). Like Jablonski, we believe in the importance

of "training/professionalizing writing specialists for [cross-curricular literacy] work" (13). To prepare Fellows for their multi-faceted role, our training, like that of many Writing Fellows programs, offers Fellows both practical skills and theoretical knowledge, along with opportunities to contribute to scholarly knowledge themselves. By uniting practice with theory and, in turn, offering Fellows the chance to generate new theories, our program aims to prepare Fellows to serve as cross-disciplinary writing specialists—to play a genuinely cooperative and even occasionally transformative role in their work with faculty.

We accomplish these lofty goals through a comprehensive training program composed of three central parts: a semester-long course for new Fellows; a sequence of ongoing-education sessions and staff meetings; and individual mentoring for each Fellow, every semester. Margot Soven has pointed out that a semester-long training course requirement emphasizes to students and faculty the academic seriousness of the program ("Survey" 64). We strive to offer Fellows a rich, intellectually challenging education throughout their time in our program. We feel strongly that only a sustained, engaging training sequence can enable Fellows to think deeply and critically about writing issues and can prepare Fellows for the complex, layered interactions they will have with course faculty. In the balance of this article, we explain the philosophy, context, and methods of our Fellows training, focusing particularly on the ways we unite practice and theory—and demonstrate the substantial results this can yield.

The Fellows Seminar
All new Writing Fellows enroll in a three-credit, writing-intensive honors seminar. Our Fellows course combines strategies to help new tutors learn and practice the skills necessary for commenting on papers and holding successful student conferences with intellectual inquiry into issues that surface in the teaching of writing. The class is based on the ethic of peer collaboration; in all aspects of the course, Fellows are both teachers and learners. In addition to requiring rigorous theoretical readings, the course encourages students to consider and debate multiple approaches to writing and learning issues, to discuss and learn from one another during class meetings and through shared journals and personal writing, and to design and conduct an original research project. Topics explored include commenting and holding conferences, teaching style and grammar, working with L2 writers, WID, and theories of writing and difference. In all aspects of the course we seek to equip Fellows with the practical expertise and the theoretical frameworks necessary to work as partners with faculty. The benefits of applied training are obvious; the Fellows are first and foremost peer tutors and they need the skills to work effectively and efficiently

with their student peers. And indeed, many of the applied topics we cover resemble those in well-known peer tutor training textbooks such as Soven's *What a Tutor Needs to Know*, which has a particular focus on training Fellows. What is less evident is how this training, combined with learning composition and rhetorical theory and with the chance to generate original scholarship, provides an exciting opportunity to model contemporary WAC practice to faculty and to professionalize, in a sense, Writing Fellow-Faculty interactions.

Writing Comments

To prepare Fellows for the challenging task of writing smart, thoughtful comments on student papers, they read authors such as Nancy Sommers, Peter Elbow, Richard Straub, Donald Daiker, and John Bean. During class meetings, Fellows learn to respond to student papers both globally and locally, offering specific marginal suggestions as well as an "end note," or letter to the student writer, which outlines specific strengths in a draft and offers substantive suggestions for the writer. Class discussions revolve around questions of how to balance marginalia with an end note, how specific should comments be, how to combine directive comments with more open-ended or suggestive ones, and how to respond like a peer. From these readings and discussions, Fellows develop a personal philosophy of commenting, which they put into practice in their work with students. Practical experience then begins to inform classroom discussion as Fellows share with their colleagues which strategies are effective and which are less so. Here is an example of a typical "end note" to a student—in this case to a student in an upper-level philosophy class. The assignment asked the writer to analyze, interpret, and take a stand for or against Kant's theory of evil.

Dear _____,

I enjoyed reading your explanation of the complexities that arise when the propensity to evil is seen as "sometimes innate." You treat the subject in a very accessible yet scholarly tone, which makes it easy for me as a reader to follow the line of your argument without becoming hindered by the language. Also, you have done a nice job incorporating quotations into the material—doing so helps me to understand more precisely how Kant thinks so that I can compare it with what you say.

Here are some things for you to consider as you revise:

1. *Scope.* You mention that you are concerned with the amount of material you cover in such a small space. It certainly is all very interesting; however, considering the page limit of the assignment, I think that you are correct to say that it may need

to be constrained. How might you condense the material in the first part of the paper (approximately through paragraph 5, perhaps?), while still constructing a complete explanation of propensity to evil and its implications? I think that doing this will focus your argument so that you are not trying to do too many things at once. There were times when in first half of the paper (the analysis of the propensity to evil) when I was not sure how this explanation was relevant, considering that you ultimately show propensity to be flawed.

2. *Quotations.* There are certain places where you use quite a few direct quotations from Kant. After each one, instead of letting it speak for itself, make sure that you sufficiently explain your interpretation of this quote and how it furthers or complicates your argument. For example, paragraph 8 contains almost one quote per sentence—a lot for a paper of this length; it might benefit from you incorporating the ideas into your own by paraphrasing them, or from a short elaboration after each one. Since you seem to agree with Kant at certain points and disagree at others, your readers can benefit from you clarifying the intent with which you use each quote.

3. *Topic sentences.* Many of your topic sentences are already good, but there are places where they could further guide the reader in the journey of your argument. For example, instead of using a question (paragraph 9) or a re-statement of Kant's explanations, take it one step further and explain where this idea fits in within your thesis statement. By relating each topic sentence back to the thesis, and by making each one a mini-thesis for the paragraph, you will ensure that a) each paragraph plays a distinct role in your argument and b) that your reader will easily follow and (more likely) be convinced by your logic.

I look forward to meeting with you and discussing your paper further at our conference—your paper's already got a lot going for it, so through revision it will only become stronger still. Please look over your paper, and bring any questions or ideas you may for us to talk about. See you then!
–Eva

Note how the Fellow, Eva, follows some best WAC practices, offering specific and meaningful praise before critique, and how each paragraph functions as a mini writing lesson, with advice students can export to writing in other classes. Just as importantly, this letter functions as a model for the course professor who may have little dedicated training

in responding to student writing, a point that Mullin notes in "Enlivening WAC Programs Old and New." The Writing Fellow's example makes it, frankly, more challenging for a professor to provide only minimal feedback on student papers. Comments like these encourage a professor to commit more fully to teaching and responding to student writing. For additional examples of Writing Fellows' commenting letters, see Severino and Knight and Soven *(What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know)*.

Holding Conferences

In their training, Fellows also read, discuss, and practice conducting successful conferences with students. Articles by Muriel Harris, Kenneth Bruffee, Catherine Latterell, Paul Kei Matsuda, and others help Fellows to guide productive, revision-based conversations, and to think carefully about how they use their authority in conferences. Like writing center tutors, Fellows learn how to ask smart questions of student writers, how to listen carefully, and how to structure a dialogue to help a student rethink and revise a paper. Unlike writing center tutors, however, Writing Fellows have the unique and sometimes challenging task of leading a conference on a paper they've already commented on extensively. Fellows sometimes feel (as do their students) that a meeting to discuss the comments is extraneous. One Fellow identified this concern in a journal entry: "The major drawback [of commenting] is that it can render the conference moot. Since I have [written out] all my criticism and concern in the response then surely there is no need for its reiteration [in person]." Because Fellows may be required to delve more deeply into a paper's issues than their writing center peers, they strategize in our training seminar about how conferences can build upon and complement comments: what advice can be "held back" from a student until the conference, how a Fellow can encourage a student to begin actively revising in a conference meeting, and how a Fellow should negotiate the fine line between being a peer and being an authority who's written all over the paper. In-class exercises devoted to reading, commenting, and discussing each other's papers in peer review sessions lead to new insights. After one such class exercise, the Fellow who voiced concerns in the journal entry above revised his thinking about the value of conferences: "I've discovered that …speaking about [my written comments] allowed me to explore the issues more in depth and it facilitated a new level of exchange between my peer[s] and me." Having the chance to practice skills in the seminar allows Fellows to appreciate the advantages of particular methods and strategies.

The Role of Theory

Applied readings and activities such as those described above are critical to Fellows' daily work as tutors and to the ways in which they model best WAC and writing center practices

for faculty. However, when practice is combined with a thorough grounding in the theory behind such practice—as well as with theories that question and explore traditional academic hierarchies—Fellows see how their tutoring work fits in to larger social and institutional contexts and feel authorized to assume a more assertive, more nuanced role with the professors with whom they work. While a number of tutor training manuals (such as Murphy and Sherwood's *St. Martin's Sourcebook*) include theoretical readings designed to acquaint tutors with the scholarly conversation that informs writing center practices, none includes texts that encourage tutors to explore and rethink their social, cultural, and academic positions in relation to faculty and institutional hierarchy. Through reading and discussing composition, rhetorical, writing center, Marxist, feminist, and other theories, our Fellows question what it means to be an "expert" and learn to negotiate with students and faculty in confident, new ways. Not only does reading theory help Fellows understand the philosophical underpinnings of the practices in which they engage, it also empowers them to disseminate ideas from writing studies to the professors and students with whom they work. One Fellow, in a paper exploring the relationship between practice and theory in writing fellows tutoring, suggested,

> I believe that my theoretical training as a tutor enabled me to redirect [my] students' [requests for me to 'fix' their papers] into more productive, wide-ranging, creative thinking. Of course, I didn't create this ability for my students, but my open-ended questions and non-directive conferencing style—both gleaned from theory learned in English 316—may have increased their own ability to look at their writing differently.

One can read the influence of Paolo Freire's "problem-posing education" in this Fellow's description of her experience with her student: she clearly reaps tangible benefits from putting theory into practice as a Fellow. And, as Fellows begin to understand their own roles as tutors in new ways, so they begin to view faculty through different lenses. They feel authorized to question professors' pedagogical priorities; they comment on assignments that seem to require regurgitation rather than original, critical thought; they push back when they are being hovered over; and they expect to be taken seriously when they offer opinions.

Writing in the Fellows Course

While readings and discussions in the training course are central to preparing Fellows to work with students and faculty, writing also plays a critical role in their preparation. By doing several different types of writing assignments, accomplished through stages with extensive peer feedback and revision, Writing Fellows expand their repertoires, gaining

critical awareness of writing within and outside of familiar academic genres. At the same time, they study in depth how to produce texts with a clear thesis, focus, and clear plans for arrangement. Fellows write a literacy autobiography, weekly journals, a tutoring-philosophy paper, and a 20-page research paper on a topic related to tutoring or teaching writing. All assignments help Fellows develop a sense of themselves as tutors, as writers, as critical thinkers, and as scholars within a larger academic community.

The research paper, more specifically, affords the Fellows an opportunity to participate in the scholarly discourse on composition, rhetoric, and writing centers in ways different from research they've done in previous courses. In an article that argues for the value of engaging student tutors as producers (and not simply consumers) of theory, Peter Vandenberg claims, "Student tutors must be authorized to author; in an institutional context that depends on written debate to modify ideas and ultimately confer acceptance or rejection, student tutors must become response-able" (71). If we want our tutors to hold their own in conversations about writing with faculty members, they need to be more than readers of academia; they need to have a role in producing and disseminating such discourse. In a recent CCC article, Laurie Grobman makes a powerful case for the importance of undergraduate research, suggesting it has the power to influence, even transform the discipline of composition studies. In our program, we have seen the ways in which our Fellows' research has worked to challenge the faculty/scholar vs. student/consumer opposition both on a programmatic level and on a larger, scholarly level.

The Fellows' seminar capstone assignment, a 20-page research paper on a topic related to writing or tutoring writing, helps fellows accomplish these goals. As part of the project, Fellows pose original research questions, review current states of knowledge, develop research methods, explore conflicts between the data they've gathered and the theories they have read, and develop arguments that deepen our understanding and knowledge of tutoring writing. Frequently, Fellows choose to conduct research on the actual courses in which they are "fellowing," thereby thinking and learning more deeply about their work in the course than they ever would in their practice as Fellows. One Fellow for an atmospheric and oceanic studies course, in which students had complained about the writing assignment, conducted a research study of how he and his co-Fellows functioned as "field reporters" for their professor, providing critical information on student responses to the particular writing tasks. As part of his research, the Fellow, Michael, gathered permissions, read assignments and papers from the class, interviewed his three co-Fellows and the course professor, and compared his original research with theory from composition and rhetoric. As Michael wrestled with the project over twelve weeks, we could see his persona within and outside of the Fellows' course begin to change. His research provided him, in

a sense, with more specific knowledge about the writing in the course than the professor had—a status that seemed to make Michael more confident and vocal in the Fellows' seminar. Even more, his research compelled the professor to think more critically about his assignment (a paper on science and the media) and to clarify (and re-write) its central task. Through his research, then, Michael addressed a local, immediate problem (students' negative responses to a challenging assignment) yet he also generated new knowledge (about the role Fellows can play in helping professors understand student responses to assignments) that he could share with his co-Fellows and abstract to other fellowing situations. His research provided us and other tutors with a new, in-depth understanding of a complex learning situation.

We cannot emphasize enough how valuable the research project is for our Fellows: participating in meaningful, sustained scholarship benefits the Fellows themselves and their work with students but also leads to more collaborative and productive engagement with course professors and can even give undergraduate Fellows a meaningful voice in a larger scholarly conversation about tutoring and teaching writing.

Ongoing Education

We have examined the ways in which our Writing Fellows training seminar equips our Fellows to collaborate and earn the trust of the faculty with whom they work. Even more, we have shown how this training enables Fellows to cross and even reconfigure the boundary between the roles of teacher and student. But it would be easy for the benefits of this training to recede once the research project is complete and the training seminar ends. Thus, we offer Fellows an ongoing education sequence that provides multiple opportunities to participate in intellectually in-depth workshops about writing and related topics. In a given semester, for example, we may offer short workshops on such topics as: "working with highly experienced writers," "the relationship between marginal and end comments," "how (and how much) to praise," and "apply to present your Writing Fellows research at a national conference." Not only do these workshops encourage Fellows to maintain their skills, but they also challenge Fellows to re-think theoretical issues from the Fellows' seminar in light of new practical experiences.

In addition to these group workshops, each fellow is mentored every semester by an experienced Writing Center administrator. These mentoring sessions provide an opportunity for Fellows to receive individualized advice as they write their comments on student papers and prepare to hold conferences. Since professors are absent from the conferences, Fellows' written comments are the most visible evidence the professors see of the Fellows' work and provide the main opportunity for professors to assess their Fellows' work. Well-written comments, as

we suggested above, have the potential to significantly influence professors' practices and to teach faculty to take student writing more seriously. Because of this, individual mentoring creates wonderful opportunities to help Fellows think more deeply and carefully about their comments; to avoid pitfalls (such as boilerplate copying and pasting sections of comments, offering minimal or generic praise, or neglecting to read the assignment carefully enough); and to continue to grow as tutors.

The Results

Our faculty evaluations demonstrate the ways in which our rigorous training of Fellows yields tangible and meaningful results. Repeatedly, professors describe how their interactions with their Fellows persuade them to reevaluate the place of writing in their classrooms and to reconsider how best to teach it. While not all professors change their practices, choose to commit, or even relinquish control, many describe the significant impact that working with a Fellow has had on their teaching. Consider the following example—from a professor in comparative literature:

> I was surprised at the extent to which the Writing Fellows' comments … provided a useful context in which to grade the final products. This additional material really offered valuable perspectives on the students' writing processes…. The involvement of the WFs made me think through the writing assignments, and their place in the course, much more carefully. I think they made me a better 'paper-assigner.'

While she initially requested Writing Fellows in the hopes that they would "clean up" her student papers and save time from her busy assistant-professor schedule, her work with Fellows prompted this professor to think more carefully and critically about her goals for teaching writing and how her assignments fit with her course content. Her students' improved performance on specific papers becomes secondary here to her own development as a more thoughtful and aware writing teacher.

A similar comment from a history professor demonstrates how working with Fellows influenced not just how she assigns writing but also how she teaches it:

> The Writing Fellows comments sometimes really made me think…. I've become in all of my classes now, much more critical of the writing process, I mean, I always look at content, but now I'm very aware, I explain to students I need a thesis statement, need a conclusion, and I'm looking for topic sentences and all those things.

These comments showcase how Fellows can serve as influential and effective WAC professionals, promoting WAC concerns with professors who might never otherwise

encounter them. The quotation demonstrates how working with Fellows can inspire faculty to think more specifically about the criteria they use to respond to student writing and to develop a larger sense of responsibility for guiding their students as writers in all courses.

Finally, reflections from an anthropology professor suggest how the Fellows work can lead to a full reevaluation of typical university roles and positions:

> The writing fellows were wonderful and very effective in helping the students structure their arguments, organize their papers so that they flowed well, and they did such a magnificent job of encouraging the students and offering supportive commentary that the products were far more enjoyable to read than in past semesters. In particular, the writing fellows helped the students find narrative themes that tied each paper together and I found that I enjoyed reading the papers more than in previous years, and I actually felt like I learned things from the students.

This comment seems to recast and refigure typical institutional roles: here, the students have learned from the Fellow and, as a result, the professor has learned from the students. Learning originates with an undergraduate student, not with an institutional authority.

As we have shown, establishing productive working relationships between faculty and Writing Fellows is one of the most challenging and exciting parts of curricular-based peer tutoring. However, with careful, thoughtful screening and preparation of faculty combined with rigorous, self-reflective training of Fellows, wonderful collaborative relationships can develop between Fellows and course instructors. Such relationships, on the most local level, lead to improved student writing and the inclusion of meaningful revision in classes that might otherwise not do so. On a larger level, though, these collaborations between Fellows and faculty promote empowerment and expertise among undergraduate Fellows and help disseminate important WAC principles across the disciplines.

Mailing Inviting Faculty to Consider Working with Undergraduate Writing Fellows

To: Faculty Teaching Writing-Intensive and Comm-B Courses
From: Emily Hall, Ph.D., Director, Writing Fellows Program
Re: Working with Writing Fellows in Fall 2011

Please consider working with a Writing Fellow in your writing-intensive or Communication-B course!

Writing Fellows are talented, carefully selected, and extensively trained undergraduates who serve as peer writing tutors in classes across the College of Letters & Science. The Fellows make thoughtful comments on drafts of assigned papers and hold conferences with students to help students make smart, significant revisions to their papers before the papers are turned in for a grade. Building on the special trust that peers can share, Fellows help students not only to write better papers but also to take themselves more seriously as writers and thinkers.

Here's a faculty comment about the benefits of working with Writing Fellows:

"[The Writing Fellows] were outstanding in their ability to motivate students to adhere to the assignment. In particular, they made sure the students stated and developed arguments in their papers and pushed them to address the readings and important themes from the course."
—*Prof. Katherine Cramer Walsh, Political Science)*

Here's a student comment:

"I found that talking to someone about my paper helped me figure out *exactly* what I wanted to say and how I could do that…. This was the first experience I've had with a Writing Fellow and I thought it was extremely beneficial in improving my writing skills."
— *junior, sociology major*

The Fellows are equipped to tutor writing across the curriculum. In the past, they have worked with students in astronomy, Afro-American studies, history, philosophy, political science chemistry, classics, English, women's studies, sociology, zoology, mathematics, psychology, geography, and more.

You are eligible to apply to work with a Writing Fellow if you:

- are a faculty or academic staff member teaching a course with at least two writing assignments
- will have between 12 and 40 students enrolled in the course
- are willing to adjust your syllabus to allow time for revision and to require that all enrolled students work with the assigned Fellow(s)
- are willing to meet regularly with the assigned Fellow(s) to discuss assignments

If you would like to learn more about the program or apply to work with a Fellow in a course you are teaching …

Talking Points for Initial Meeting with Faculty About Working with Writing Fellows
The Writing Fellows Program
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Having Writing Fellows Assigned to Your Course
For the Writing Fellows Program to help you and your students, you will need to:

1. Be a faculty member teaching either a Communication-B or a Writing-Intensive course, without TAs; the minimum enrollment is 15; the maximum is 40. We assign one Fellow for every 10–12 students in a course, so, for example, a course with 35 students would have three Writing Fellows.

2. Believe in the philosophy underlying the Writing Fellows Program—that is, that writing is best taught as a process that involves revision; that well-prepared undergraduates can serve as role models for their peers and can help their peers improve their writing; and that undergraduates benefit from being placed in positions of leadership.

3. Design *two writing assignments* with which the Fellow will help your students. With each of these assignments, a draft must be due to the Writing Fellow two weeks before the final due date.

4. Introduce the Fellow to your class, stress to your class—throughout the semester—the value of working with a Writing Fellow, and be supportive of the Fellow's work.

5. Articulate clearly your expectations for each writing assignment. Fellows work best when they can help students with well-defined writing tasks; open-ended assignments make it more difficult for Fellows to make suggestions for revision. Remember that the Writing Fellows will not necessarily be familiar with the specific subject matter of your course or majoring in your department.

6. Require all students in the course to submit the draft *and* meet with the Fellow for conferences.

7. Meet with the Fellow periodically during the semester—to get to know the Fellow, to talk about your expectations for each assignment, to discuss the Fellow's responses to some drafts, and to solicit feedback from your Fellow.

8. Be committed to helping your Writing Fellow grow intellectually through this experience.

9. Refrain from asking the Fellow to grade students' papers or teach portions of your course.

Questions? Comments? Please call or write Emily Hall, Director of the Writing Fellows Program (608.263.3754; ebhall@wisc.edu), or Brad Hughes, Director of the Writing Center and Director of the L&S Program in Writing Across the Curriculum (608.263.3823; bthughes@wisc.edu).

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What Difference Do Writing Fellows Programs Make?[1]

DARA ROSSMAN REGAIGNON AND PAMELA BROMLEY

POMONA COLLEGE

IN THEIR INTRODUCTION to the special issue of *ATD: Across the Disciplines* on "Writing Fellows as Agents of Change," Brad Hughes and Emily B. Hall point out that "[s]ince the early 1980s, Writing Fellows programs have influenced how writing is learned, taught, and practiced across the disciplines." Such programs—which go by many different names— typically link peer writing tutors to specific discipline-based courses, often formally designated writing-intensive. Although the arrangements of different programs vary, Margot Soven describes the most common structure is one in which these peer tutors "read the drafts of all the students in the course" to which they are attached and "give both written and oral feedback, usually meeting with their students after having read the drafts" ("WAC" 204; see also Haring-Smith 124–25). Harriet Sheridan and Tori Haring-Smith are typically credited with having developed this approach to writing across the curriculum (WAC) in the late 1970s and early 1980s at Carleton College and Brown University (see Russell 283; Soven, "WAC" 201–5). As the special issue of *ATD* attests, this approach to WAC has been the subject of renewed interest and attention in the last decade; in her essay in *WAC for the New Millennium,* Margot Soven argues that such peer tutoring approaches have become "the new mainstay of many WAC programs" ("WAC" 200; see also Spigelman and Grobman 5).

At the same time—from both outside and within the field of writing studies—there have been calls to support statements about what helps students learn to write with hard data. Following upon Richard Haswell's "NCTE/CCCC's Recent War on Scholarship," Chris Anson called upon writing program administrators of all types to undertake the kinds of research that would help move conversations about writing and writing instruction "from belief to evidence, from felt sense to investigation and inquiry" (12). For writing fellows programs, this charge leads us to a deceptively simple question: Does working with writing fellows—that is, being required to draft and revise multiple papers in light of feedback from trained peer tutors—help students improve as writers over the

course of a single semester? Or, as we put it in our title, what difference, if any, *do* writing fellows programs make?[2]

Much of the work on writing fellows programs to date focuses on the ways such programs can change colleges' and universities' cultures of writing. Assessment of these programs seems to have largely relied on "surveys completed by tutees, faculty sponsors, and the fellows themselves" (Soven, "Survey" 65–66). Such data provide invaluable information. They let us see how writing fellows themselves benefit from having been tutors (see, for example, Dinitz and Kiedaisch; Hughes, Gillespie and Kail). They also let us see how students' and faculty's understandings of writing and the writing process change through their participation in such programs, significant indicators of an attitudinal shift (see, for example, Haring-Smith; Mullin; Severino and Knight; Soven, "Survey"). This approach can also help us learn about collaboration between peer writing tutors and non-writing studies faculty through writing fellows programs, including concrete information about how those collaborations transform syllabi, assignments, and pedagogy in writing-intensive courses (see, for example, Gladstein; Zawacki).

For many years and at many institutions, such data have been essential to demonstrating the success of such programs. But in recent years, conversations about the assessment of WAC initiatives have increasingly emphasized the importance of *direct* measures of student learning (see Anson; McLeod; Kistler et al; Walvoord). It is no longer enough to conclude that students "*believe* that their papers improve" (Soven, "Survey" 66; emphasis added) or to find slowly and impressionistically that "faculty stop complaining about student writing" (Haring-Smith 130) a few years after a writing fellows program has been launched. Instead, we need to formally assess what happens *in* and *to* the student writing itself, documenting to the best of our ability *what difference* this pedagogical structure makes in the writing of individual students.

Like any research question about student learning, the task of identifying how writing fellows programs help students improve their writing is difficult. Such programs rely on two intertwined interventions: they structure a process of drafting and feedback into disciplinary courses; and they rely on the feedback of trained peer writing tutors. The centrality of this approach to WAC pedagogy makes it worth further study; an exploration of how those interventions differentially impact student learning lies beyond our scope. Scholarship in the teaching and learning, second language, and writing center fields has addressed questions about the impact of peer tutors on students' writing processes, showing that trained peer feedback can help students improve, transform, and deepen their writing on a single assignment (see, for example, Bell; Berg; Falchikov; Harris; Min; Stay). But in writing-intensive courses with attached peer tutors, students generally work

with the writing fellows on more than one assignment, and often on several assignments throughout the term. To assess the impact of such an iterative structure, we need data about students' arcs of improvement over the course of the semester. In addition to knowing whether or not students' revised papers are better than their drafts and whether or not they *believe* that experienced peer feedback helps them improve as writers (as shown in Light 63–64), we also need to know whether the writing of students in courses with attached writing fellows actually improves more than the writing of students in comparable courses without attached writing fellows.

We have carried out such a study at Pomona College, an elite liberal arts college with a student body of 1500 and a student-to-faculty ratio of 8 to 1. Pomona has a long commitment to WAC but no corresponding writing fellows program. Although Margot Soven reported in 1993 that Pomona was developing such a program for its first-year seminars ("Survey" 60), this never came to fruition. We were able to take advantage of this absence when we launched a pilot writing fellows program as a new writing-in-the-disciplines initiative of our writing center in 2007 by designing and conducting a quasi-experimental study of the impact of writing fellows on student writing over the course of a single semester. We launched this initiative without the mandate of an explicit writing-intensive requirement; in fact, the college had done away with such a requirement in 2004. It was our hope that a writing fellows program would provide a more flexible, grassroots approach, offering faculty interested in 1) assigning a process of drafting and revision and 2) focusing more explicitly on teaching writing in their discipline additional support for doing so. In conducting the study, we also wanted to better understand the impact of this approach on student writing so that we could, depending on the results, either further publicize the program internally or redirect our energies to other WID initiatives.

Before beginning the research, we received approval from our institution's Institutional Review Board; all participants—faculty, writing fellows, students, and readers—agreed to participate in the study.[3] The study compares time-sequenced portfolios of student writing from two sections of the same course, only one of which required students to turn in drafts of and meet with dedicated writing fellows for feedback on each of the three papers both sections assigned. There were ten participating students in the section with attached writing fellows and fourteen in the section without. Once we collected the portfolios, we hired a team of external readers to assess the essays in both sections, evaluating each paper individually and assessing the improvement of the writer across the portfolio. To assure consistent, objective assessment, we normed the readers at the start of the portfolio evaluation process and made sure that they had no knowledge of the experimental nature of one of the sections.

Our hypothesis, based on the indirect data reported in the literature and on an earlier pilot study by Regaignon, was that all students' writing would improve over the course of the semester, but that the writing of the students in the course with writing fellows would improve more than that of the students in the non-writing fellows course. In this article, we present findings that confirm this hypothesis, offering concrete evidence of the positive impact that working with writing fellows has on student writing. Certainly, our study is small and exploratory; the number of students in each section is small enough that it makes drawing clear conclusions difficult. Despite this limitation, however, we believe that our study helps to demonstrate the effectiveness of writing fellows program pedagogy; in other words, that students who draft and revise in light of feedback from trained peer tutors multiple times over the course of the semester may very well show more improvement than those that do not work with fellows.

In other words, writing fellows programs do seem to make a positive and measureable difference in students' writing.

Methodology

In the fall of 2008, we collected the three papers each student wrote while taking English 67, Literary Interpretation.[4] This is our institution's gateway course to the English major; it demands that students pay close attention to textual and literary analysis and typically centers on discussion, reading, and writing. Sections are capped at eighteen students, and the department offers two each semester. Most of the students enrolled in the course in any semester are in their first or second year at the college. In the fall of 2008, students did not know when they were choosing between the two sections that either would have attached writing fellows; they signed up—as students usually do—based on preferences for time slot or faculty member. We're therefore confident that students interested in focusing on their writing did not self-select into the section with attached writing fellows.

The faculty members teaching the course that fall agreed to participate in the study and to assign a similar sequence of three papers, beginning with two shorter, analytical papers (5–6 pages) and ending with a longer paper (8–10 pages) that required original research. In both sections, the types of tasks assigned in the first and second papers were quite similar: each asked students to use a theoretical text as a lens onto one or two literary texts. The third paper was much more difficult than the earlier papers because it asked students to conduct and integrate their own research while making an original argument about a text, all in a longer format than they had done previously. The control (nWF) section did not require students to draft their papers and no writing fellows were

assigned to work with students. The experimental (WF) section required students to go through a full process of drafting and revision for each of the three papers: After turning in a complete draft, each student received written feedback from one of the fellows, met with her to talk about revision strategies, and then revised the paper before turning it in to the professor.

Faculty at Pomona typically work closely with students, particularly in relatively small classes such as English 67. Both of the participating faculty met with students regularly in their office hours, answered questions about course material and papers by email, and so on. (See Spohrer for an apposite description of how the faculty at many small liberal arts colleges work with students.) However, neither faculty member offered significant or regular feedback on the students' drafts this semester; they primarily commented upon the versions turned in for a grade. Nonetheless, it's quite possible that some of the difference we observed between the two sections can be attributed to differences between the two faculty members' teaching. (Analogously, if both sections had been taught by the same individual, we would have to consider the possibility that the professor's awareness of the study might have affected the results.)

There are several other potentially confounding factors. First and perhaps most significantly, we did not have a third experimental section, in which students received feedback and met with their professor throughout the semester; we cannot therefore speculate to what extent the attached writing fellows structure compares with a structure in which faculty require drafts of each paper, respond with written feedback, and meet with each student to brainstorm revision. Second, students in both sections were not prohibited from visiting the writing center. Our records indicate that six of the fourteen students in the control section visited the writing center for assistance on at least one paper. That said, drafting and revision were not required for students in this section and it's worth noting that no student in this section visited the writing center more than twice that term. Two students in the experimental section visited the writing center in addition to their required meetings with their writing fellow, though these were both drop-in appointments with their regular course fellow to continue working on their papers for English 67. Finally, the design of our study offers no way to identify whether the writing fellows' written or oral feedback was more influential in students' revision plans (and their improvement), if it was the combination of the two, or if perhaps it was simply the effect of drafting and revising, and the requisite increase in time on task.

All students in both sections were asked if they were willing to allow their papers to be collected and assessed anonymously; all but one student gave permission. The participating students also completed a survey about their experience in the course at the

end of the semester (see Appendix A for the student survey). Complete portfolios were collected for all participating students, for a total of ten portfolios from the WF section and fourteen portfolios from the nWF section. We deliberately did not include drafts in the portfolios because doing so would have revealed which final papers were the result of such a process and which were not, possibly skewing the readers' impressions. Once all papers were collected, identifying information was stripped from them and they were assembled into time-sequenced portfolios, each of which was assigned a random number. We wanted the readers to assess the papers individually but also, and more importantly, to comment on each writer's trajectory across the semester. It was this development—or lack thereof—that we were most interested in. While collecting portfolios of time-sequenced writing may result in a bias to show improvement, any bias would have affected both sections equally. Though there is continued discussion of how to improve portfolio assessment, this is a common and accepted technique for assessing learning at all levels of education (see, for example, Davies and LeMahieu; Elbow and Belanoff; Klenowski; Klenowski, Askew and Carnell).

The two fellows assigned to work with students in the WF section had experience both working in the writing center and writing papers in the discipline of English studies. Their writing center training had included an initial day-long orientation followed by biweekly meetings throughout the year to discuss both writing center and composition scholarship and specific tutoring issues as they arose. The fellows had considerable practical experience, as well; both were first-semester juniors and this was their third semester working in the writing center. In addition, since both had taken English 67 (although not with either of the faculty participants) and one was an English major and the other an English minor, they consciously approached their work with the students in the WF section as specialists in the discipline, rather than as the generalists they are in the writing center. Nevertheless, even with specific disciplinary knowledge, they worked with the students primarily on general issues of writing and the writing process. This is standard tutorial practice for writing fellow courses (see Gladstein). Following the usual procedure in our writing center, the fellows wrote up consultation reports—typically within 48 hours—describing and reflecting on their meetings with the student writers. Each writing fellow met with the same group of students for each paper; as a result, each fellow had an ongoing relationship with her group of students and knew how their writing was progressing.

We recruited six outside readers from the writing program faculty at a nearby college to assess the portfolios. Because these instructors aim to assign similar grades across their sections and they participate in a grade norming exercise at the start of each year, we

expected that this would provide us with a set of pre-normed readers. Readers assessed the portfolios both qualitatively and quantitatively, focusing both on the individual papers and on students' arcs of improvement across the semester (see Appendix B for a sample scoring sheet). They wrote thumbnail descriptions of each paper and then scored each on a scale of 0-5, giving each paper scores for five specific criteria as well as a holistic score. (The five criteria were argument, organization, evidence and analysis, use of secondary sources, and style.) The readers then responded to a series of questions to provide a narrative assessment of their impressions of the student's improvement. A score of 0 meant that the paper showed no mastery of the element or assignment, while a 5 indicated that it was a near-ideal example. To help the readers relate these numerical scores to a more familiar scale, we gave each number a rough letter-grade equivalent: 5 was some kind of A, 4 was a B+, 3 was a B, 2 was a B-, 1 was some kind of C, and 0 was some kind of D or F. Finally, we determined that the line between proficient and not-proficient college-level writing was between a 1 (some kind of C) and a 2 (a B-) (see Appendix C for the complete scoring rubric). To meet our standards for proficient college-level writing a paper had to have an argumentative thesis and a focused, progressive structure. Even the best "book report" papers would fail to meet this standard, while papers that were problematic in other ways but did have these features would be proficient, if barely.

Before the assessment of the portfolios began, we had the readers participate in a norming exercise to make sure they would assess the papers similarly. We began by asking them to brainstorm to specify the characteristics of an ideal paper for each scoring criterion. We then asked them to collaborate to assess three individual essays representing the range of writing in these portfolios. After reading and discussing these three essays, we found readers were generally assessing the papers similarly both qualitatively and quantitatively. Two readers were randomly assigned to each portfolio, and the reader pairs assigned to each portfolio changed throughout the assessment to avoid individual rater bias. The readers assessed the portfolios in numerical order, so that they encountered portfolios from both the nWF and WF sections at random. While the readers knew that they were considering portfolios from two different sections of the same course, they had no idea of the primary difference between them.

Portfolios were assessed until two readers agreed within one numeric score on all of the overall and the majority of criteria scores, though they could be two numeric scores apart on no more than two of the criteria scores and none of the overall scores. If scores within this range weren't achieved by the first two readers, we asked a third reader—also randomly assigned—to assess that portfolio. We continued in this way until we had two readers with this level of agreement on the quantitative scores.

Because we ran out of time (and funding) to arrive at this level of agreement for all portfolios, one of the authors (who had previously taught in the same program as the readers, and who likewise did not know which section each portfolio came from) assessed five portfolios. Of the twenty-four portfolios, six portfolios required just two readers, twelve required three readers; five required four readers, and one required five readers. When there were multiple readers, if two sets of readers met this overall standard, we selected the scores from the pair of readers with the fewest differences. Once we had selected the pair of readers with the fewest disagreements, we considered the qualitative and quantitative assessment of only these two readers to examine each student's evolution as a writer.

We were, frankly, surprised that it often took several rounds of scoring to reach the level of agreement we required, especially since the readers take part in norming exercises regularly as part of their teaching responsibilities. There seem to have been several factors at play. First, it is important to note that the readers were almost always in general agreement. Each portfolio required two readers to agree (within one number) on 10 of 12 criteria scores and all three overall scores. Seldom did readers have more than five criteria differences or one overall difference. Second, we had limited time to work with the readers to get them to arrive at similar scores across papers—another morning of norming would have, we think, made an enormous difference but we had neither the time nor the funds. Third, a few portfolios proved especially challenging to assess, which is clear from the readers' own narrative evaluations: one reader commented on the portfolio that required five readers that it was "a really hard portfolio to get a handle on. A flawed but promising first essay gives way to two subsequent papers of high style and intellectual vacuity. What happened here? What to do?" (JN: P387).[5]

This is a small-study of what happened to student writing over the semester in two sections of a single course, taught by two faculty members during a given semester at a particular institution. Nonetheless, the methodology and findings may well be transferable to other contexts.

Results and Discussion

For proponents of writing fellows programs—and, indeed, of peer tutoring more generally—our results are encouraging. We find that working with the writing fellows multiple times over the course of the semester results in a positive and measurable difference in students' writing: The overall writing scores of students in the section with attached fellows shows statistically significant improvement, while the writing of students in the section without attached fellows does not.

Both our quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrate that students who worked with writing fellows as part of their course improved more than students who had not. Results from the student survey demonstrated that students in the section with writing fellows learned about the importance of writing as a process and writing in the discipline, while students in the section without writing fellows did not. Results from the portfolio assessment demonstrate that the writing of students in the section with writing fellows improved significantly over the semester, while the writing of students in the section without writing fellows did not.

The findings from our end-of-the-semester survey of students corroborate the indirect evidence of student learning reported in the literature (see Soven, "Survey"; Zawacki). In our end-of-semester evaluation, all but one of the students in the study reported feeling that they had learned writing skills that they would use after they completed the course. However, the responses of the students in the nWF section to the question, "Do you feel your writing has improved through taking this course? In what ways?" were less enthusiastic than those of the students in the WF section. Only three (30%) of the latter group gave negative or lukewarm responses to this question, ranging from "I don't think we wrote enough to have really improved" to "I think it has. It's hard to tell." By contrast, eight (57%) of the students in the nWF section gave negative responses, including a blunt "No" and several tepid "Not really"s.

Even more striking is the fact that students in the WF section exhibit a metacognitive understanding of the relationship between the disciplinary mode of analysis they learned that semester and their writing skills. (This kind of metacognition is being increasingly understood as essential for the transfer of knowledge from one context to another; see the discussion in Rounsaville, Goldberg, and Bawarshi; see also Fraizer.) In their response to the end-of-the-semester survey question about writing, these students frequently connect critical thinking, literary analysis, and writing skills: "I think I've gotten better at developing interesting ideas," wrote one student; another wrote that she was "more conscious of connecting my ideas back to my thesis." Some of these students also exhibited an increased awareness of their own writing processes and a greater sense of their ability to evaluate and improve their own writing: "I have a more clear idea of where I need improvement"; "getting feedback … has improved my writing by making me more aware of what I need to work on"; "I learned to plan my writing." By contrast, four students from the nWF section make a clear distinction in their responses to this question between so-called writing skills and the discipline-specific skills of the course: "Not my writing style," one student writes, "but overall experience in the field of literary interpretation"; another

comments, "No. Critical thinking has improved."

The quantitative data from the external readers confirm the students' own impressions about their development as writers. Because this is an exploratory study, we set our p-value to 0.10, an accepted value for this kind of study (see Cohen, "Power Primer" and *Statistical Power*). Figure 1 shows the average overall improvement scores for each paper, separated by section.[6] At first glance, it seems that

Figure 1: Improvement in Overall Assessment Scores for Student Writing Portfolios

student writing in both sections improved across the semester, with the WF writers showing more marked improvement overall. The average score of students in the WF section improves 0.60 points from the first paper (P1) to the second paper (P2) and then regresses somewhat on the third paper (P3) for a total 0.35 gain. Students in the nWF section show a steadier arc of improvement—from 2.57 on P1 to 2.79 on P3—but for a smaller total gain of 0.22 points.[7]

However, we find that the gain by students in the nWF section is likely not, in fact, statistically significant. The average improvement from P1 to P3 was not significantly greater than zero (M = 0.21, SD = 1.19, N = 14). These results are confirmed by two-tailed t-tests comparing the overall scores of P1 with P3 (p = 0.51). In contrast, we find that the improvement in writing across the portfolio seen in the WF section is statistically significant. In the WF section, average student improvement was 0.35 levels between P1 and P3 (SD = 0.58, N= 10). (In the WF section, even though there appears to be a regression in overall scores from P2 to P3, this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.10 level.) Again, these results are confirmed by two-tailed t-tests comparing the overall scores of P1 and P3 (p = 0.089). Furthermore, the p-value is less than 0.10, which means that it meets the standard for statistical significance in exploratory studies (see Cohen, "Power Primer").

These results allow us to state that requiring students to submit drafts, receive written feedback from, and then talk through their work and their plans for revision with trained
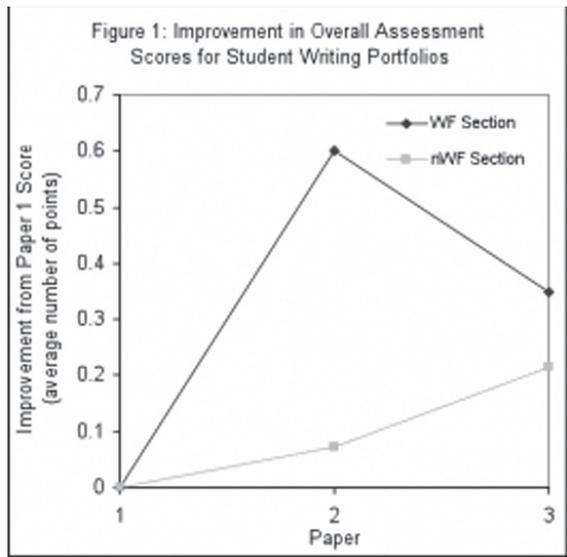
peer writing fellows results in a statistically significant improvement in their overall writing score over the course of the semester *even when the final assignment is more difficult than those that preceded it.* Students in a different section of the same course, with similar assignments and expectations but without attached writing fellows and required revision, did not show statistically significant improvement in their writing across the semester. It's worth noting that when assignments were similar—as in the case of P1 and P2—the results were even more dramatic. Students in the WF section improved by 0.60 levels between those two papers (p = 0.024), while students in the nWF section improved only 0.07 levels (p = 0.686).

Richard H. Haswell argues that "[d]evelopment in writing involves a change in status not from beginner to finisher but from experienced to more experienced" (*Gaining Ground* 18). It seems that writing fellows may be particularly helpful when students are consolidating their understanding of a particular type of assignment or genre of writing, that they may help students gain experience more quickly. In Haswell's terms, this could well be because working with peer tutors multiple times over the course of the semester helps students understand themselves as learners (see *Gaining Ground* 16–20). As we saw in the students' own evaluations, students in the WF section gained important insights into their own writing processes and into the relationship between the "content" of the course and discipline-specific writing skills they learned in it. The writing fellows' reports of their consultations with students also support the contention that these meetings help students better understand the expectations of the assignment and of the genre. Reflecting on a meeting with a student on the first paper, the fellow noted that "there were two key problems we both felt needed to be dealt with: 1) her argument—she hadn't really made an explicit argument because she didn't know how to tie all of her ideas together, and 2) her use of her poem—instead of using her poem as a lens to better understand theory (the assignment), she had done the reverse, and she had set up a parallel comparison between the poem and the theory when she really wanted to use the poem to complicate the theory" (ER: P387–1).[8] In her draft for P1, then, the student had not yet made an explicit argument nor addressed the assignment completely. Reviewing the meeting with the same student on the second paper, the fellow noted that the student "was more comfortable with this essay than her last…. Her argument was all there, we just had to reframe it in a way that highlighted how she was building upon [the author's] ideas" (ER: P387–2). As a result, we expect that if, following P3, a second research paper has been assigned as P4, we would see a trajectory of improvement similar to what we saw between P1 and P2, as students begin to fully understand the new assignment and consolidate their skills.

Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

In some ways, our findings simply confirm what many faculty, WAC directors, and writing center directors have known for a long time: writing fellows programs do make a difference in students' writing. This approach to WAC makes both faculty and students across campus more conscious of the expectations of discipline-specific writing; installs a process of drafting, feedback, and revision at the heart of courses in many diverse disciplines and interdisciplinary fields; and—we argue here—helps students make more progress as writers in discipline-specific courses than they do otherwise.

Although our sample size is small, the similarity of our research context to other programs and the statistical significance of our primary conclusion—that student writers improve more markedly over the course of a semester with required rounds of revision in light of peer feedback than without—suggests that our findings may well be transferable to different fields and courses, as well as to different types of institutions. Transferability depends on the degree of similarity among specific contexts (see Mertens; Lazaraton); conclusions from small quantitative studies conducted in particular research contexts in many fields have been found to be transferable to other, similar situations (see, for example, Duff). Indeed, our research context is quite similar to that of many institutions—not just small liberal arts colleges: we have a relatively new writing fellows program; our fellows had some basic training working in the writing center and taking courses in this specific discipline, but they had not taken a formal course in writing theory and pedagogy; the faculty across the institution care about student learning but have only limited additional time to spend responding to student writing; and the ongoing challenge for our WID initiative is to foster a pedagogy of drafting and revision beyond the first-year seminars.

There are at least two reasons to be cautious about the transferability of our findings, however. First, both sections of this course were small and, as a result, students in both sections received considerable attention from their professors. Still, students in the writing fellows section also received considerable attention from the attached fellows, including one-on-one meetings to discuss each paper draft. We believe that this model might transfer well to other contexts, including classes with more students where the professor might have less time to spend with each student. Indeed, having more fellows attached to each course could, perhaps, assure that students get the feedback they need on each paper draft. Second, the study was conducted with students taking the introductory course to the English major. As a result, it is unclear whether these findings might be applicable to students taking courses and writing papers in other disciplines. However, WAC literature argues extensively that assigning a process of writing and revision allows students to

dig more deeply into material in any discipline or interdisciplinary field (see Bazerman; McLeod, "Pedagogy"; Hilgers, Hussey, and Stitt-Bergh). We are therefore cautious but optimistic that our findings may transfer to other contexts; as we discuss in conclusion, we encourage these kinds of additional research.

But there are also important limitations to our results. The results of this study tell us nothing about students' longitudinal development as writers, given that we followed them only for a single semester. In addition, we do not know what difference the discipline (English studies) of these courses may or may not have made. Finally, we cannot speak to whether it was the additional rounds of revision or the peer feedback that was the decisive factor in students' improvement, since in writing fellows programs those two are intertwined. We hope that writing center and WAC directors at other institutions will find our results useful in advocating for the establishment or maintenance of writing fellows programs on their own campuses. (We have certainly found them helpful at our own institution.) In many ways, this is a pilot study that offers empirical evidence for one of the central claims of WAC pedagogy: that revision in light of feedback not only improves individual papers, but helps students become more accomplished writers in the field. Larger studies could further investigate this contention, examining (for example) a wider disciplinary array of courses in order to learn to what extent this findingtransfers beyond English studies. Subsequent studies might also answer questions we could not address here: Is it the requirement to revise or feedback that has the greatest impact? Does the author of the feedback—faculty or peer tutor—matter? Does the form (written or in conference) matter?

Our focus in this article has been on the product, the actual papers the students wrote for English 67 in the fall of 2008. That focus has been necessary because our goal has been to see if mandating that the students incorporate certain steps into their writing processes made discernable differences in their writing over the course of a single semester. For better or worse, it's often useful to be able to point to specific, measurable improvements *in student writing itself.* What we've found is that writing fellows programs do, indeed, seem to make a difference: students who were required to work with writing fellows in an introductory English course wrote papers that showed measurable and statistically significant improvement over the course of the semester, while students who were not required to work with writing fellows in a different section of the same course did not (see Figure 1).

There are a number of implications to these findings, as well as avenues for further research in this direction. The connection we've found between process and product can help faculty in writing studies and across the disciplines think about ways to incorporate

revision with feedback into their courses with the concrete promise that it will directly help students' learning. Our future research will deepen our understanding of what happened in these writing fellows courses. One area we explore in more detail in a different article is whether working with writing fellows most helps students struggling in the discipline or those students who are already quite accomplished writers in that field. In addition, we hope to design a follow-up study to explore the extent to which working with writing fellows seems to enhance students' metacognitive understandings of writing and critical thinking. In addition, our findings offer writing centers and WAC programs concrete, replicable evidence of the impact trained peer tutors can have, contributing to the growing body of studies that this is both an efficient and effective way of supporting student writers. It's our hope that further analysis of our data will allow us to see the connections between the writing fellows' training, what they focus on in their consultations with students, and the specific areas in which students improve. Writing fellows give us a way to do WAC that is productive in many ways, providing writing centers and programs with "ambassadors" (Severino and Knight) who work from the ground up to promote shifts in institutional culture. The fact that writing fellows offer the faculty and students who work with them immediate benefits may—at many institutions, and certainly at ours—be the crucial incentive to let them in the door and into the course.

ENDNOTES

1 We're grateful to Pomona College's Dean of the College and Board of Trustees for funding for this project, both the pilot writing fellows program and the accompanying study. Jennifer Rachford helped with the statistical analysis; Andrew Ragni '11 provided research assistance; Jill Gladstein and our anonymous *WAC Journal* readers provided helpful feedback on earlier drafts. In addition, we'd like to thank all our participants: Kathleen Fitzpatrick and Kamran Javadizadeh, who taught English 67 in the fall of 2008; Anne Allhoff '10 and Erin Reeves '10, our writing fellows; Jennifer Cotter, Chris Guzaitis, John Norvell, Rosann Simeroth, Katherine Tucker, and especially Kimberly Drake, our external readers; and—most importantly—the students in the two sections of English 67 who agreed to participate in this study.

2 We use the terms "difference" and "improvement" interchangeably to refer to a statistically significant, positive change in student writing. See below for a full discussion of our approach to assessing this.

3 Complete data and Institutional Review Board materials are available from the authors on request.

4 In the *Pomona College Catalog,* the course description of English 67 reads: "Training in certain historical, theoretical and methodological dimensions of literary study in relation to a topic chosen by the professor. Special attention to close textual analysis and to writing effectively about literature" (117).

5   We cite readers' comments on student portfolios using the initials of the commentator followed by the portfolio number. Further information on portfolio commentary is available from the authors on request.

6   We should note that students in both sections began with slightly different starting points: 2.25 on paper 1 in the WF section, compared to 2.57 in the NWF section. However, using a t-test, we find that there is no significant difference between the strting points of these two samples (p=0.48).

7   This result is strikingly similar to the result in the pilot study (Regaignon). Translating these improvements into grades, this means that the average overall scores of students in the WF section moved from a low B (2.25) to a high B (2.60), while the high average overall scores of student in the nWF section moved from a high B (2.57) to a near B+ (2.78).

8   We cite readers' comments on student portfolios using the initials of the commentator followed by the portfolio number. Further information on portfolio commentary is available from the authors on request.

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APPENDIX A: END-OF-SEMESTER STUDENT SURVEY[†]

I feel I am developing writing skills that I will use even after I complete this course.
- ☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Somewhat disagree

Compared to my classmates, I am a highly competent writer.
- ☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Somewhat disagree

How much of each essay do you read over again after meeting with your Writing Fellow?
- ☐ All of it   ☐ Most of it   ☐ Some of it   ☐ None of it

How much of each essay do you read over again when your Professor returns it to you?
- ☐ All of it   ☐ Most of it   ☐ Some of it   ☐ None of it

How many of the *Writing Fellow's* comments and suggestions do you think about carefully?
- ☐ All of it   ☐ Most of it   ☐ Some of it   ☐ None of it

How many of the *professor's* comments and suggestions do you think about carefully?
- ☐ All of it   ☐ Most of it   ☐ Some of it   ☐ None of it

How many of the *Writing Fellow's* comments and ideas involve:

Organization	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Content/Ideas	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Grammar	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Mechanics	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
(i.e., punctuation, spelling)				

How many of the *professor's* comments and ideas involve:

Organization	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None

	A lot	Some	A little	None
Content/Ideas	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Grammar	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Mechanics	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None

(i.e., punctuation, spelling)

How much attention do you pay to the comments from your *Writing Fellow* involving:

	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Content/Ideas	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Grammar	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Mechanics	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None

(i.e., punctuation, spelling)

How much attention do you pay to the comments from your *professor* involving:

	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Content/Ideas	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Grammar	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None
Mechanics	☐ A lot	☐ Some	☐ A little	☐ None

(i.e., punctuation, spelling)

Generally, I learn the most when my *Writing Fellow*…[check all that apply]

☐ Comments mainly on my ideas
☐ Comments mainly on the organization of my essays
☐ Comments mainly on my writing style
☐ Highlights mechanical mistakes (i.e. punctuation, spelling)
☐ Talks with me about the questions I have about the essay
☐ Helps me think through my own ideas

Generally, I learn the most when my *professor*…[check all that apply]

☐ Comments mainly on my ideas
☐ Comments mainly on the organization of my essays
☐ Comments mainly on my writing style
☐ Highlights mechanical mistakes (i.e. punctuation, spelling)
☐ Talks with me about the questions I have about the essay
☐ Helps me think through my own ideas

What specific writing skills do you feel you have learned successfully? What specific skills do you feel you would still like to improve? Why?

- What do you feel you have gained from writing the essays assigned in this course?
- Do you feel your writing has improved through taking this course? In what ways?
- Describe what you do after you meet with and read your Writing Fellow's comments on your draft.
- Do you think your writing has improved because you met with and got feedback from a Writing Fellow on a draft of each paper? Why or why not?

- Do you think it would be beneficial to have more courses at Pomona with attached Writing Fellows, like this one? Why or why not?
- Does it matter that you received early feedback on your papers from a peer Writing Fellow, rather than the professor? In what ways?

† We developed this survey by adapting questions from those in Ferris and in Hedgecock and Lefkowitz.

APPENDIX B: READER'S REPORT FORM ‡

Reader: Portfolio Number:

Please rate each text on a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 is poor and 5 is excellent, according to the following criteria.

Criteria	P1	P2	P3
Argument *(statement of problem & thesis)*			
Organization *(structure and coherence)*			
Evidence & Analysis			
Use of Secondary Sources*			
Style *(grammar/clarity as well as stylistic flair)*			
Overall *(please assign a letter grade as well)*			

* Write "N/A" if not applicable.

Comments

In your comments, please describe each paper in terms of the above criteria, and then assess the portfolio as a whole. You may wish to use the following questions as a guide: What were the qualities of the writing at the beginning and at the end of the semester? What has the writer learned about writing? Where did the writer backslide or hold steady? What does the writer still need to learn?

‡ We developed this scoring sheet on the basis of a scoring sheet developed for the Princeton study of Writing (see Walk et al.)

Quantitative Scoring Criteria

Please try your best to assign a whole number for each category and each paper. There is more room for nuance in the assigned grade. Slash grades (B/B+) are perfectly acceptable.

	Number	Grade
	5	A range
	4	B+
Papers above this line meet acceptable	3	B
standards for college-level writing	2	B-
Papers below this line fail to meet these	1	C range
standards	0	D / F

Qualitative Scoring Criteria

The best papers have these qualities …

Argument: Statement of Problem (throughout the paper) and Thesis

- Argument provokes meaningful disagreement
    It pushes against something
    Ambitious arguments are valued more than safe ones
- It demonstrates depth and complexity of thought; it is multidimensional/nuanced
- It is an argument of some kind of consequence; it has some significant effects or implications
- It engages with a real problem
- It shows a clear sense of investment by the author
- It proposes a kind of solution / conclusion / response
- It is developed over the course of the paper; it has movement
- It is appropriate for the scope of the paper, the sources, and the student
- It has a wow factor: something original, fresh, truly independent

Organization: Structure and Coherence

- It develops the argument in complex ways over the course of the paper
- There is a clear, logical progression, conceptually and structurally
- The structure is apparent without being intrusive
- The structure is not formulaic but organic, stemming from the content of the paper
- It demonstrates knowledge of and engages with counterarguments /counter interpretations/ contrary evidence
- It anticipates questions from readers and answers them
- It guides the reader through the paper towards the conclusion, in an honest and non-manipulative way
- There are, throughout, clear topic sentences, concluding sentences, and focused paragraphs; the paper hangs together as a unit.

Evidence and Analysis

EVIDENCE	ANALYSIS
• Appropriate kind of evidence	• There is no evidence without analysis; without analysis it is just raw data
• Appropriate amount of evidence	
• Evidence is well chosen: it is appropriate in content and length	• Not just summarizing the evidence but articulating its connection to the argument
• Balance of good evidence and resistant evidence	• The analysis pulls nuance from the evidence
• Evidence is duly contextualized	• The analysis is comparative

0 = Absence of evidence or analysis

1 = Presence of some evidence

2 = Presence of some evidence that is related to the argument; if you read the author's mind, you might be able to see how it relates

3 = Presence of good evidence that is relate to the argument; the author has given you enough clues that you can read into it and determine how it relates

4 = Presence of good evidence that is related to the argument; the author has shown you how it relates to the argument pretty well, though you may have to think about it a bit

5 = Presence of good evidence and analysis that is related to the argument; the author has shown you how it relates to and moves the argument forward

Use of Secondary Sources

- We shouldn't think of the primary theoretical texts as secondary sources in this case; they are generally serving (or should serve) as a primary text
- The paper puts multiple sources into genuine dialogue with one another
- The paper makes a clear distinction between the secondary sources and the writer's own argument
- It showcases a wide representation of sources and range of perspectives
- It shows an awareness of the scholarly debates with which it is engaging
- The sources are integrated into the argument
- The sources are introduced clearly
- The sources have functions beyond simply fulfilling the assignment's requirements or supporting the writer's claims. They might define key terms, address counterarguments, etc.

Style

- It does not distract from the argument
- It is appropriately academic
  Not so scholarly as to be unintelligible
  Not so colloquial as to be inappropriate
- The style matches the substance of the paper

- It is argument-driven
- It is appropriate to the paper
- It is clear and concise
- It is mature, confident, and elegant at times
- It is a pleasure to read
- Signposting guides the reader skillfully through the argument
- There is appropriate punctuation, grammar, and mechanics
- The paper cites sources appropriately

Genre Awareness, Academic Argument, and Transferability

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THE NATURE AND PURPOSE of the first year writing course continues to generate scholarly debate, and current administrative pressures concerning assessment and accountability raise questions about what content areas should be emphasized. At present, considerable discussion focuses on the question of "transfer," a term that refers to the extent to which the writing taught in the first year writing class can or should help students write more effectively in other courses and disciplines. Given increased understanding of differences in writing needs across disciplines, can the writing that is taught in a Freshman Writing course, which is often a form of academic argument, help students approach writing tasks in various disciplines with greater insight?

In this essay, we discuss the results of a pilot study derived from a project titled "Academic Argument and Disciplinary Transfer: Fostering Genre Awareness in First Year Writing Students," a study that raises important questions and possible new directions for understanding the issue of transfer. The goal of the project was to develop a curriculum aimed at helping students acquire what is referred to as "genre awareness," the idea being that a metacognitive understanding of genre can help students make connections between the type of writing assigned in the Composition course—that is, academic argument—and the writing genres they encounter in other disciplines. The basis of the project was that when students understand writing as a genre, when they learn to view a text in terms of its rhetorical and social purpose, when they are able to abstract principles and concepts from one rhetorical situation and apply them to another, they will not only write more effectively in their composition course, but will also acquire the tools they need to address new writing situations. Our goal was to construct a curricular direction that would teach students to examine texts for what Perkins and Salomon refer to as transfer cues, so that they would be able to apply what they know to other writing genres they might encounter in other courses.

Genre Awareness as a Threshold Concept

Our focus on genre awareness as a means of enabling transfer suggests that awareness itself can be understood as a "threshold concept," a term deriving from economics but which has been embraced by many other disciplines. According to Meyers and Land, a threshold concept may be considered "akin to passing through a portal" or "conceptual gateway" that opens up "previously inaccessible ways of thinking about something" (Meyers and Land 9). A number of features associated with the idea of a "threshold" are in accord with the idea of genre awareness, in particular, transformativity, troublesomeness, and liminality. In terms of its transformative potential, a threshold concept will change the way in which a student understands a discipline, and, according to Perkins, is likely to be "troublesome," when it is "counter-intuitive, alien, tacit, ritualised, inert, conceptually difficult, characterised by an inaccessible 'underlying game', characterised by supercomplexity or perhaps troublesome because the learner remains 'defended' and does not wish to change or let go of their customary way of seeing things" (x). The term "liminality" too seems relevant here, defined by Meyer, Land, and Baillie as:

> A suspended state of partial understanding, or 'stuck place', in which understanding approximates to a kind of 'mimicry' or lack of authenticity. Insights gained by learners as they cross thresholds can be exhilarating but might also be unsettling, requiring an uncomfortable shift in identity, or, paradoxically, a sense of loss. A further complication might be the operation of an 'underlying game' which requires the learner to comprehend the often tacit games of enquiry or ways of thinking. (38)

These three features of a threshold concept (i.e. transformativity, troublesomeness, and liminality) correspond to the insights into genre that students participating in our pilot study reported at the end of the semester, particularly in their reflective comments.

Genre Awareness Versus Explicit Teaching of Genre

It is important to clarify here that "genre awareness" is not the same as the "explicit teaching" of a particular genre. Explicit teaching, as Freedman and others have noted, means teaching students to write in a particular genre, and often the pedagogical approach is formulaic—a sort of "do it like this" method. Teaching students to write using a particular structure can be effective in a limited context, as the fixity with which students retain allegiance to the five-paragraph essay has demonstrated. Genre *awareness* is quite different. When students acquire genre awareness, they are not only learning how

to write in a particular genre. They are also gaining insight into how a given genre fulfills a rhetorical purpose and how the various components of a text, the writer, the intended reader, and the text itself, is informed by purpose (Devitt). Through explicit teaching of a particular genre, students may be able to create a text that imitates its form and style—sometimes quite successfully. But without genre awareness, they will not understand how the text "works" to fulfill its purpose, and when they encounter a new genre in another course, they may lack the tools to engage with it effectively, which explains why students fall back so fixedly on the omnipresent five-paragraph essay. Explicit teaching of a genre may enable students to replicate that genre; fostering genre "awareness" enables students to gain a "threshold concept."

A related clarification is needed for the term "genre." "Genre" in the context of this project derived from rhetorical genre theory, which defines genre not simply in terms of the formal features of a text, but also by the *function* for which texts are used (Miller ; Russell ; Devitt). Many genres are easily recognized, and we can readily understand their function because they are part of our everyday world—bills, advertisements, invitations, for example. Academic genres, however, are often unfamiliar to students (Graff; Clark).

The Controversy over Transferability

The extent to which the genre of academic argument, as it is taught in a stand-alone writing class, can transfer to other writing venues has generated and continues to generate considerable debate. Essays in Joseph Petraglia's 1995 collection, *Reconceiving Writing, Rethinking Writing Instruction,* suggest that general writing skills instruction or GWSI is unlikely to enable transferability. For instance, David Russell's piece, "Activity Theory and Its Implications for Writing Instruction," claims that although FYC courses have the potential to make students "more aware of the uses of written discourse in higher education" (51), the goal of teaching students how to write in the genres of various disciplines is "over ambitious." Russell maintains that instructors should not feel the need to teach students how to write in other disciplinary genres, because one learns by participating in the activity systems of a particular discipline. In other words, unless the students are immersed in a discipline, they cannot learn how to write in the genres of that discipline. All they will be doing is mimicking a form, not really engaging with the genre.

Thais and Zawacki's 2006 study *Engaged Writers, Dynamic Disciplines* affirms the difficulty of defining academic writing and notes the problem of attaining agreement about the requirements of writing across the disciplines, a perspective that is echoed in Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle's 2007 article "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re)Envisioning First Year Composition as 'Introduction to Writing

Studies.'" Although Downs and Wardle acknowledge that transfer of writing knowledge can happen, they maintain that it is difficult to achieve. More recently, in "'Mutt Genres' and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?", Wardle argues that the first year writing class is unlikely to prepare "students to write at the university and beyond" (765). Referencing a number of Composition scholars, Wardle affirms that genres are context-specific and "cannot be easily or meaningfully mimicked outside their naturally occurring rhetorical situations and exigencies" (767).

Actually, even if one supports the notion that writing is situated and can only be learned through incorporation in a particular discipline, the term "discipline," itself, is difficult to define, given the burgeoning of new disciplines and sub-disciplines in every field. In their discussion of the term "discipline," Thaiss and Zawacki cite Toulmin's definition of discipline as "a collective human enterprise" in which a "shared commitment to a sufficiently agreed set of ideals leads to the development of an isolable and self-defining repertory of procedures" (359). However, Toulmin also notes the variation in the relative stability among disciplines. Some disciplines, he maintains, are "compact," meaning that there is a high level of agreement about the processes of intellectual inquiry. Toulmin asserts other disciplines are diffuse, meaning that concepts are still evolving, while others are "quasi," with unity and coherence preserved across ever changing techniques (qtd. in Thaiss and Zawacki 14). Moreover, disciplinarity does not necessarily correspond to traditional departmental designations or majors, which are, themselves, being redefined, another factor that complicates decisions about the first year writing course and about what it means to teach students to write.

Scholars who highlight how writing differs between and within disciplines dismiss the possibility of teaching students to write in a stand-alone course and emphasize the necessity of teaching writing in a disciplinary context. But if teaching writing in a disciplinary context is not possible, given the types of writing that occur even in one discipline and the lack of preparedness (and sometimes willingness) of disciplinary faculty to teach writing, how should writing be taught?

A possible response to this question may be found in the concept of genre awareness as a means of facilitating transfer from one writing context to another. Anne Beaufort maintains that students need to acquire a metacognitive understanding of how the elements of a familiar writing context can transfer to another less familiar one. In her longitudinal study of one writer's transfer of skills, Beaufort advocates the importance of "genre knowledge as one of the domains or mental schema that writers invoke as they analyze new writing tasks in new contexts—a domain that can bridge rhetorical and social knowledge" and argues that "talking about genres can facilitate students' meta-cognitive

reflection" (188). Amy Devitt also calls for helping students acquire genre awareness, defined as "a critical consciousness and ideological effects of genre forms" (192). Devitt argues that the concept of genre awareness can not only benefit students in first year writing classes but also students in all disciplines. Finally, in "Pedagogical Memory: Writing, Mapping, Translating," Susan Jarratt et al. recommends helping students translate discourse about writing from one site to another. Jarratt and her colleagues conducted a research study at UC Irvine that involved interviews with students several semesters after they had completed a first year writing course to determine the extent to which they were able to transfer what they had learned to other writing tasks. What Jarratt discovered through the interviews is that although many students across the disciplines had "internalized the idea of writing as a process and a mode of learning . . .even the most successful … lacked fluency in basic writing terminology" (2).

As we will discuss, the students' perspectives obtained in this project provide evidence for both sides of the controversy over transferability and raise a number of questions and potential new research directions. While some student perspectives are concerned primarily with surface and relatively superficial levels, on the positive side, a number of the students' reflections indicate developing genre awareness. Moreover, responses to surveys distributed to students at the end of the semester indicate that they all found their understanding of genre useful for approaching writing tasks in other disciplines and that this understanding made them less anxious about writing in general.

Subjects and Assignments Used in the Project

The project involved a first year writing class of 24 students, all of whom had declared History, Political Science, Psychology or Sociology as a major. The project utilized several assignments designed to maximize transferability through genre awareness. The first assignment was an academic "argument" essay on a subject of general interest, the goal of which was to enable students to develop a metacognitive understanding of how writer, audience, text, and rhetorical situation interact with one another in constructing a genre. Students were asked to compose an evaluative argument of the effectiveness of two texts based on a particular set of criteria. The second assignment required students to select a genre associated with another discipline, preferably one they plan to enter, analyze the features that characterize that genre, and write a text in that genre focused on the topic of censorship in the form of banned books. Half of the class was assigned to write a historical analysis and the other half were assigned a sociological literature review. The third assignment was a reflective essay in which students compared the disciplinary genre to the genre of academic argument of the first assignment and discussed the insights they had gained into genre transferability.

How does a piece of writing demonstrate an awareness of genre? As Downs, Wardle, Russell and others have noted, a definitive answer to this question has yet to be discovered. Indeed, we too found the process of determining whether a particular text exhibits genre awareness to be quite complex, and we, therefore, focused exclusively on students' *perceptions* of the extent to which they felt that genre awareness had occurred.

Methods

At the beginning of the semester, the students completed a survey that included questions concerning the students' past writing experience, both in and outside the academic setting. Students were asked about writing genres in which they had previously written and the extent to which they predicted that these genres would be of use in college. The students were also asked to rank their ability as academic writers and the extent to which they experienced anxiety when they were asked to write for a class.

At the end of the semester, students completed another survey in which they were asked about which genres they had found most useful for them in other courses and to indicate the usefulness of the genre based curriculum. They also wrote a reflective essay in which they commented on how useful the genre based curriculum had been for them in other courses and to identify additional insights into genre transferability. In these reflections, students were instructed to comment on the similarities and differences between the two assignments and to discuss the knowledge they had gained about writing in another discipline.

Results Obtained from the Surveys

Students' responses to surveys distributed at the beginning and end of the semester are indicated in three tables included at the end of this article. However, because of the limits of the sample, we do not claim that these results are statistically significant or generalizable. Moreover, because several students were not present in class when the surveys were distributed at the end of the semester, there were fewer responses at the end than there were at the beginning. Such a decrease is not unusual in survey research. However, since the study was concerned with only one class, the decrease is apparent.

With these qualifications, the most thought-provoking information obtained from the surveys is as follows: Table I shows that 50% (10 of 20) of the students predicted that the 5-paragraph essay would be useful or very useful for them in their college courses, whereas at the end of the semester, 8 of 13 indicated that they had found it useful, an increase of 11.5%. Table II indicates that at the beginning of the semester, 21 of 22 students or 95% predicted that the genre of argument would be very "useful," a percentage that

was substantiated by 100% of the students' responses at the end of the semester, 9 of 13 students indicating that it had been "very useful," and 4 of 13 indicating that it had been "useful." Table III indicates that students' understanding of genre has been helpful in their becoming less anxious about writing, 11 of 13 students indicating that it had been "helpful" or "very helpful," and 2 of 13 indicating that it had been "somewhat helpful." Despite the limited sample, one might make the case that a decrease in writing anxiety, unto itself, is likely to contribute to students' ability to grapple with writing tasks in other classes, a research direction worth exploring.

Comments Obtained From Particular Students' Reflections

The beginning and end of semester survey results offer some insight into the extent to which students perceived the genre of argument taught in the writing class to be useful in other courses. However, we found additional and perhaps more interesting observations pertaining to the issue of transferability in the comments students made in their reflective essays, some of which we cite below. These comments represent reflections from *particular* students and are not intended to be indicative of *all* students in the study, or, indeed, of students in general. They are included here because they may indeed reflect ideas that other students share and suggest interesting directions for further research.

AUDIENCE

The reflections of three students out of thirteen demonstrated an awareness of the concept of *audience* (Bartholomae; Berkenkotter). One student wrote, "Understanding your audience is crucial when doing any sort of writing because you'll most likely change the way you write according to who is going to be reading it." A second student similarly wrote, "Before this class, I was still writing at a high school level where I didn't really consider the audience. Now I force myself to consider whom I am writing to, what level the vocabulary of my audience is, and how I can convince them of what I am trying to say." Speaking of Assignment #2, a third student cautions other writers to "keep your audience in mind. They are expecting to read a legitimate paper written about a certain topic from a historical point of view. Meaning it is unbiased, and full of past or present facts."

AUTHOR PERSONA

Similar to how the concept of audience was perceived, the comments of two students focused on the importance of taking on a more disciplinarily appropriate writing stance or author persona for Assignment #2 than was necessary for Assignment #1. When referring to Assignment #2, the first student states, "As a writer you have taken the position

of a historian, be aware of how you are presenting this information to your reader." Adding to this sentiment, a second student similarly claims, "When writing a paper from a sociological point of view it is essential to keep a formal tone. You must write your paper as a sociologist."

PURPOSE

While the course emphasized that all writing genres have a purpose, the comments of three students indicate that they did not grasp that different genres could have similar purposes. For example, one student referred to Assignment #1 as "opinion" based, while Assignment #2 was considered "fact" based. When discussing how the two assignments differed, this student wrote, "In a historical essay you're not really being argumentative and trying to be persuasive as possible to convince the reader to your side, but you're just giving a historical analysis of what issue there is to show the reader why you should agree with your viewpoint." Another student adds:

> The rhetorical situation was different in both essays primarily because they had different purposes. [In Assignment #1] our mission was to persuade our reader to agree with our conclusion … it wasn't too research focused as our second essay was. [Essay #2] had to support [the thesis] with research and facts. The second essay's purpose was mainly to explain and inform.

What seems to be the case with these statements is these students did not view information-based or informative texts in terms of argument. They equated the purpose of persuasion with opinion-based or reflective writing but felt that genres outside of English were not "persuasive" because they required research. Apparently, these students were of the opinion that genres outside the discipline of English were given legitimacy in different ways. As a third student notes:

> Papers in other fields rely much more heavily on research. The writer doesn't take risks in the same way. Although there may be controversy, the controversy is backed up by scientific evidence and not just by logical reasoning.

EMPHASIS ON FORMATTING AND CITATION

Whereas the comments cited above focused on audience, author, and purpose, the comments of five other students (5 of 13) referred to the differences between the two genres primarily in terms of the formal elements of documentation styles without

evincing an understanding of why certain disciplines follow particular conventions. One student wrote:

I learned that when writing in APA, you'll write mostly in the third person point of view and will usually write actions in the past tense. I also learned that because APA style is used when writing papers on projects or experiments, it's important to make sure that you're being very clear and concise. I also learned that it is crucial to use scientific language to avoid coming across as too casual or poetic.

Another student lamented:

Each discipline has its own citing techniques; a history paper is required to be written in Chicago style…Trust me when I say the internet is great for many things, but it is not helpful for learning the Chicago citing style.

In their reflective essays, these students discussed formatting at great length and seemed to think that each genre could be defined by their documentation style alone. When considering how Assignment #1 and #2 differed, a third student plainly states, "A history paper is very different than an English paper just for the simple fact that it is not MLA documentation." These three students placed so much importance on documentation that they seemed to believe that formatting conventions alone would ultimately lead to a well-written paper. As a fourth student claims:

When writing an essay of another genre, it is significantly important to focus on the requirements, characteristics and conventions of the essay. By focusing on these, your essay will be properly written and significantly more likely to be passed by your instructor.

Similarly, a fifth student remarks, "Following the conventions of the discipline you are writing in is key to developing a clear paper."

STRUCTURE

Three of these five students also commented on structure. But their comments suggest that they did not realize that formal features have a rhetorical purpose rooted in disciplinary issues. One student wrote: "Papers in the sciences tend to have paragraph headings to highlight purpose. The headings tend to be standard and the sequence of the headings is also standard." When comparing the structure of both assignments, another student notes:

Both had a solid thesis statement, an intro paragraph, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. All of these things make an essay. The similarities aren't that big, but are little things that most essays have in common. For the most part they were pretty different.

A third student claimed:

The only thing … that was similar is the way it was formatted. What I mean by that is that they were both in an essay format. They both had paragraphs and in those paragraphs they both explained how they related to the thesis statement. They both explained their thesis statement throughout the essay. They both had an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion.

THE 5-PARAGRAPH ESSAY

Perhaps the most significant finding in regards to structure was the tenacity with which a significant percentage of students held on to the 5-paragraph essay form (Crowley 1990). Table I presents students' predictions at the beginning of the semester about how useful they thought the 5-paragraph essay would be for them in their college writing versus how useful they found it to be. At the beginning of the semester, 50% of the students (10 of 20) predicted that the 5-paragraph essay would be "useful" or "very useful," 2 said it was likely to be "somewhat useful," and 8 or 40% predicted that it would not be useful. Since the emphasis in the course was to wean students away from the 5-paragraph essay, one would have expected that the percentage of students indicating that it had been useful would have decreased significantly, particularly if one expects students to respond as they think their instructor expects or wants them to respond. Yet, at the end of the semester, 8 out of 13 or 61.5% said that it had been "useful" or "very useful," 5 students felt it had been "somewhat useful," and no student felt it had not been useful.

One explanation for this result is that writers of all levels, but particularly novice writers, have a great need for form. The history of rhetoric suggests the role of form in helping students craft an effective text, and Kerri Smith in her article "In Defense of the Five-Paragraph Essay" notes that students like the 5-paragraph essay because it is safe. Another factor may be the necessity for students to take a timed essay exam, the Writing Proficiency Exam, in order to graduate, and it may be that they view the 5-paragraph essay as a useful tool in fulfilling this task. Finally, we realized that although Compositionists overall disdain the 5-paragraph essay and an emphasis on form or formula for its own sake, colleagues in other departments may value the 5-paragraph essay for its easily discernible structure and ease of processing.

Argument, Genre Awareness, and Transferability

TROUBLESOMENESS

The comments of several students indicate that they found the disconnect between academic argument and writing tasks in other disciplines to be "frustrating," a term associated with the troublesomeness characteristic of a "threshold concept." One student wrote that, with Assignment #1, it was "easier to understand what had to be written in order to complete the paper's purpose, while the essay in another discipline left me confused at the beginning of the writing process." Another student finds little connection between the two essays. "The first essay of the semester was an argumentative, persuasive essay," this student wrote. But "the second essay of the semester focused on writing in a different discipline, this essay was very difficult and confusing. We had to basically forget all we had learned about writing and learn to follow new conventions."

A third student expressed discomfort with learning how to write for a discipline other than English. One student wrote, "Writing varies from discipline to discipline. After writing in a different discipline, I find that writing the English discipline is easier for me. I find it easier because it's a type of writing I'm used to." Still, another student welcomed the exposure to genres from disciplines other than English, noting, "We have been taught how to write English essays for the most part of our education but I thought it was really interesting to learn how to write in a different field." From these comments, one might make the case that however "troublesome" students found the differences between assignment 1 and assignment 2, they were at least beginning to think about those differences, a dawning awareness that might become useful for them as they develop as writers and students.

POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The comments from the reflective essays cited above support what Russell and others have noted—that when students are taught genres outside of their context, they will focus more on surface and structural elements rather than rhetorical features. Also of potential relevance here is the caution noted by Russell and Wardle and Downs—that the instructor's own lack of expertise in writing in other disciplines may have resulted inadvertently in the genres being taught as a set of conventions, divorced from content. The comments cited above thus focused primarily on the surface features of these genres, rather than on more substantive disciplinary differences.

We recognize that the sample was limited and that a great deal of additional work needs to be done. Still, we were fortunate to be able to work with a cohorted group of students, a structure that allowed us to focus on particular disciplines. In the more usual

first year writing class, students' majors are far more diverse, and, indeed, many students enter the university without having selected a major at all. Would a genre/rhetoric based curriculum yield similar results with this more varied group? And do the insights at least some of the students expressed in their reflections result in their being able to write more successfully? As Artemeva and Fox maintain, "students' ability to successfully identify and characterize rhetorical and textual features of a genre does not guarantee their successful writing performance in the genre" (476).

The results of this pilot study raise many questions and suggest a number of possibilities for further inquiry. Is self-reporting a valid indication of what students really think? Is self-reported insight associated with enhanced ability? Is it possible to discern genre awareness from a given text? The self-reported decrease in writing anxiety noted in this pilot study is an avenue worth exploring. But is the ability to grapple with new genres due, at least in part, to emotional or psychological factors as well as to a student's level of maturation, as Perry's scheme suggests? These are exciting new research questions which may lead to redefinitions and understandings of transfer. At present, the results of the surveys and the glimmer of genre awareness evinced in the comments of individual students in their reflective essays suggest new directions for refocusing the first year writing course and for further research. In fact, it may be the case that genre awareness, unto itself, constitutes a threshold concept that is necessary for students to master before they can proceed to write effectively in other contexts.

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TABLE I

PREDICTED USEFULNESS OF **5-PARAGRAPH ESSAY** VERSUS HOW USEFUL STUDENTS FOUND IT IN THEIR COLLEGE COURSES

Predicted N=20

End Responses N=13

	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Useful	Very Useful
Predicted	8	2	4	6
End Responses		5	2	6

TABLE 1I

PREDICTED USEFULNESS OF**ARGUMENT** VERSUS HOW USEFUL STUDENTS FOUND IT IN THEIR COLLEGE COURSES

Predicted N=22

End Responses N=13

	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Useful	Very Useful
Predicted		1		21
End Responses			4	9

TABLE III

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF GENRE HELPED YOU BECOME LESS ANXIOUS ABOUT WRITING?

N=13

	Not Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful
Predicted		2	4	7

Using Grounded Theory in Writing Assessment

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IN *What We Really Value: Beyond Rubrics in Teaching and Assessing Writing,* Bob Broad (2003) argues, "Very rarely do rubrics emerge from an open and systematic inquiry into a writing program's values" (p. 12). This may be especially true of the rubrics and writing assessment activities of departments, since it is often a single individual or a small committee that is charged with writing assessment. Broad encourages those tasked with writing assessment to "discover, document, and negotiate their evaluative landscape before they move to standardize and simplify it…." (p. 126). In *What We Really Value,* Broad cites the qualitative methodology of grounded theory as a useful approach to writing assessment and builds on grounded theory in his own approach. In "Grounded Theory: A Critical Research Methodology," Joyce Magnatto Neff (1998) also argues for the value of grounded theory as a way to research writing. Magnatto Neff feels grounded theory "is a promising methodology for composition studies" because it doesn't require us to simplify the complex acts of writing and teaching (p. 126).

Brian Huot (2002) states that "many writing teachers…feel frustrated by, cut off from, and otherwise uninterested in the subject of writing assessment" (p. 81). This can be doubly true for faculty members in the disciplines, especially if writing assessment is a top-down task. A grounded theory approach is one way to work against this feeling of being cut off from writing assessment. We feel that grounded theory is promising not just for the writing assessment conducted by compositionists but also for writing assessment across the curriculum. In this article we discuss the grounded theory approach, provide an example of the use of grounded theory in a writing assessment activity for a sociology department at a large state university, and review some principles of the grounded theory approach that we believe could be useful for writing specialists who are working with departments across disciplines and for instructors in the disciplines who have been tasked with writing assessment for their department. As a research methodology that emphasizes dialogue, context, and a relationship between analysis and theory building, grounded theory aligns

with interpretive, constructivist trends in writing assessment (Broad, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Huot, 2002), and it can be presented to departments across disciplines as an alternative to the more traditional, positivist approach of formulating a rubric, scoring essays, and writing up a report to gather dust in an administrator's file cabinet.

The Grounded Theory Approach

Grounded theory is a systematic generation of theory. It is patterns of social occurrences that often can be derived from the analysis of qualitative data. It is a set of rigorous research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories, allowing qualitative data to be analyzed in a particularly succinct manner (Rhine, 2009). It is also a methodology that ensures that the findings, and subsequent theories derived from those findings, are accurate to the data and not limited by previous research. Pouring your data into someone else's framework offers "little innovation and also may perpetuate ideals that could be refined, transcended or discarded" (Charmaz, 1983, p. 111). The focus and intention of grounded theory is to understand "what is going on" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2), not to determine if data can fit into predetermined categories or theories.

While this methodology was established to offer "a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24), the approach to analyzing data can be useful to a host of paradigms. While not explicitly created for writing assessment, the approach lends itself perfectly to the analysis of writing, as it allows researchers to assess department-specific writing more clearly (although it can be used for any level of writing assessment and not just limited to department assessment). By utilizing grounded theory for assessing writing, researchers can gain a clearer picture of what is occurring in student writing as well as how faculty are evaluating student writing.

Grounded theory is about discovery (Strauss, 1987), characterized by four primary criteria: fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998). These four criteria help to reference the utility of grounded theory in assessing writing. First, "Fit" is determined by how closely the concepts relate to the incident being analyzed. In other words, how well the concepts and categories developed relate to understanding and assessing writing. Since the data is actually faculty reviews of writing, fit is whether the commentaries offered by faculty members are useful in assessing writing in the department. To help with fit, systematic sampling is important to make sure that students who fit the assessment need are a part of the analysis, which in this analysis were sociology majors.

The second component, "Relevance," is an extremely important aspect of assessment. It focuses on the importance that all involved are interested in the conclusions. Simply,

students, faculty, and the researcher analyzing the data must all be interested in the assessment of student writing, establishing its relevance for all involved. Another key aspect of relevance is that writing assessment findings should be useful beyond just research. When utilizing grounded theory, conclusions drawn from writing assessment should have an applied component, such as developing responses to student writing issues and/or writing rubrics that are department specific.

"Workability" is the ability to explain and use the findings through variations, which in the context of writing assessment involves developing categories and themes that apply to all levels of writing. If a paper is of a higher or lower quality, the conclusions derived from the assessment should work for all categories. This is a key component of writing assessment, to be able to compare and contrast a range of student writing by recognizing common strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, workability can include both fluid and qualitative understanding of writing, such as descriptive explanations of student writing, or the development of rubrics, which is much more common in assessment. This leads to the final aspect, "Modifiability." An important aspect of assessment is the constant evaluation of the findings, including reevaluating the rubric. A major component of grounded theory is to consistently review the data and continually evaluate the process. For writing, this means both developing rubrics to continue assessment, as well as constantly reassessing student writing using a grounded theory method to make sure the ideas are consistent and to identify any new ideas or issues that arise.

In this context, grounded theory offers an excellent perspective for conducting assessment of writing. Even more important, using grounded theory procedures lends itself to assessing writing specific to a group, such as a department, program, or even general education area. For this discussion, we will elicit key components of the grounded theory methodology that lead to a more formative assessment of student writing within a department, offering explicit examples from student writing assessment in a sociology department.

The Grounded Theory Approach in a Writing Assessment for a Sociology Department

Beginning fall 2007, one of the authors was charged with conducting an assessment of student writing in the sociology department of a large state university. The assessment of sociology student writing resulted from a culmination of factors, including faculty concerns over student writing within the department. Beyond that, the choice to focus on writing was predicated by the department assessment coordinator's interest in student writing, which stems from a university-wide emphasis on writing development and

assessment, led by the recent hiring of a Writing Across the Curriculum faculty member in the university, the other author.

Methodology

First, it is important to identify the systematic methodology used to compile the data that was analyzed using grounded theory. Over the last three years, choosing different core classes in the sociology program, ten randomly chosen papers were reviewed by five different faculty at the end of each semester. Each paper was assessed twice by different faculty, compiling a total of 60 papers assessed, with a total of 120 individual assessments conducted. The assessments were open-ended evaluations of student writing in which faculty were informed that they should assess the quality of the paper but not grade it. The choice to direct faculty away from "grading" the papers was to limit the emphasis on quantifying assessments. Instead, faculty conveyed, in as much detail as was needed, the quality of the writing and descriptions of both positive and negative components of each paper. It should be noted here that the grounded theory analysis is of faculty assessments of student writing, and not simply student writing itself. A grounded theory assessment is about establishing writing issues and concerns based on what faculty within the department recognize as core issues, both positive and negative. The accuracy of how well students are writing is defined by the faculty, and so a grounded theory analysis is important, for it is the data that will inform the conclusions rather than preconceived notions of writing, whether in the department, the university, or institutions of higher learning in general. As Magnatto Neff (1998) points out, grounded theory includes the subjects of the research as agents (p. 133). In this case, the faculty voices were important since they were primary subjects in the assessment.

Preliminary assessments of student writing helped the first author (who is also the department assessment coordinator) identify important areas of writing that should be the focus of faculty assessments, including five general writing issues (organization, thesis, evidence, grammar, critical thinking) and two issues specific to sociology (sociological imagination, social concepts). Continual evaluation of the data and ultimately the assessment process is important in grounded theory as it helps to inform the analysis and keep the data focused on the relevant and important concepts and ideas. Evaluating which areas were needed to focus on when assessing helped to direct the assessment process for faculty to make sure they were focused on similar ideas that are commonly assessed in writing. It should also be noted that the systematic sampling allowed the findings from the analysis to be applied to all sociology majors at this university, and not just to the sample of students. Using grounded theory to analyze the assessment data of student writing in

the sociology major allowed for faculty to gain a better understanding of "what is going on" with student writing, which would benefit students and the department as a whole in their attempts to teach writing.

Using Grounded Theory: Coding

One of the key aspects of grounded theory is to allow the data to inform us and help determine an accurate portrayal of what is happening. Data-driven understanding, or determining patterns by analyzing the data, is made possible by following a systematic approach to coding the data. This allows researchers to be simultaneously scientific and creative (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 44–46). For writing assessment, grounded theory allows the researcher to accurately recognize the struggles and strengths of student writing within a specific department. The first step in the process is to "code" the data, which differs from traditional quantitative forms of coding that require assigning numbers to each answer given. Coding, in grounded theory, is about developing conceptual categories to summarize, synthesize, and sort the observations that derive from the data. By not relying on previously established expectations, the researcher allows the codes to fit the data, as opposed to having the data fit codes. "By doing so, they [researchers] gain a clearer rendering of the materials and greater accuracy" of what is being analyzed (Charmaz, 1983, p.112). For writing assessment, this means not relying on a standardized rubric to determine writing in a department, especially when conducting preliminary writing assessment.

The coding process in the study of student writing involves a systematic analysis of faculty assessment of writing. For the assessment of sociology writing, the "initial coding" entailed a focus on one writing area at a time (organization, thesis, evidence, etc), reviewing all of the comments about each topic in each of the 120 assessments. In doing so, the researcher was able to identify common patterns within each area. As Magnatto Neff (1998) points out, in grounded theory research it is important to practice "open coding" and let patterns emerge before examining relationships between patterns and concepts (p. 129). Once initial categories were established, a more "focused coding" revealed core issues of writing for students that were pervasive throughout the sample of faculty assessments. In order to accomplish this, common themes were analyzed throughout all of the faculty reviews, to better determine the categories of issues that defined student writing, by revisiting and analyzing faculty assessments several times. The representative sample allowed for an even more systematic process, quantifying the writing issues among sociology students. When over 25% of the papers made a similar comment about student writing, both positively and negatively, that was coded as a common issue for student

writing. There is no definitive percentage to be used to identify an accepted pattern, but instead, researchers should rely on the data to inform them of an acceptable percentage to determine patterns. It is up to the researcher to set the standard, as grounded theory is about understanding and then responding, and not about having an explicit criteria met.

Refining the Understanding

To further develop these common codes, memos—thematic ideas or phraseswere established to make the common issues more coherent. "Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data, and during memoing" (Glaser, 1998, p. 54). Simply put, memos are more explicit descriptions of the codes that have been identified through the early part of the analysis. In the sociology writing assessment, memos helped to clarify and articulate the positive and negative writing issues identified through the coding. In this analysis, using the memos helped to clearly identify student development of a thesis. While it appeared that many of the papers did not have a thesis, faculty identified that often students introduced a thesis toward the end of the paper, which gave the appearance of no thesis. This negatively impacted the paper throughout. The memo that derived from the codes was "Struggle to clearly identify thesis at beginning of paper." Furthermore, the memos helped to clarify that "A strong thesis at the beginning would help with other organization and writing issues throughout, including for stronger papers." These same memos helped in the design of a sociology-specific rubric.

Developing the rubric was not just about creating categories of analysis, but, considering the concept of "workability," also led to more explicit development of rankings within the categories. Drawing on the data (comments by faculty) within the "evidence" section of the rubric, what became apparent is that what was missing in the original rubric was the appropriate use of sources and correct ASA citation of the sources throughout a paper. The data not only identified a focus within a rubric, but displayed appropriate language to be used at the different levels of the "Evidence" category. For example, the data revealed that for a paper to have good, albeit not great, evidence (a score 3 out of 4 on "evidence" in the rubric), the paper contained "correct use and ASA citation of sources throughout, but heavy reliance on one source to support major points in the paper." Using grounded theory methods, the data was able to inform the explicit needs and eventual rubric of the department, as opposed to relying on a preconceived deduced framework (Strauss & Glaser, 1967).

Another example of how the data informed us about department understanding of student writing, as well as impacted the structure of the rubric, concerned critical thinking

skills. Students displayed an ability to analyze ideas beyond basic description, often engaging in abstract discussions, but only when they applied concepts to their own lives. However, when attempting to apply the concepts to less personal experiences, students struggled to go beyond description. This applied well to a key concept in sociology, the "sociological imagination," which was also assessed. In the assessment, it was determined that students were able to apply social concepts to the "personal," but not the "social" (Mills, 1959). Or, in another context, students were able to recognize their place in the social world (micro applications) but struggled to understand the larger social context or macro applications. After noting this pattern throughout the faculty assessments, it was identified that a part of the rubric needed to address student application of both macro ideas and micro applications.

The assessment of critical thinking and the sociological imagination also revealed that faculty considered these two ideas along a similar vein. The majority of faculty, in their assessments of papers, utilized similar comments and evaluations of student papers when commenting about both critical thinking and the sociological imagination. Often, faculty stated plainly "see above in critical thinking" when referencing the sociological imagination. Relying on grounded theory of the assessment of papers revealed not only important information about student critical thinking but also revealed a common perspective from faculty about critical thinking. As a result, the two (critical thinking and sociological imagination) were combined into one component in the sociology writing rubric.

Relying on pre-established rubrics might force the assessment of areas not relevant to a department. Such rubrics allow for comparison across multiple groups, but do not express key components of writing that are major specific, or even department specific. In the analysis of sociological writing, data helped to refine a general rubric created for the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, which was part of a university assessment project. By using the findings from grounded theory, we were able to redesign the rubric to be specific to sociology, and this sociology department explicitly. Now, even when using the rubric, we are able to assess writing that is relevant to sociology. For example, within the general rubric, audience is a key component of many departments' writing assessment, so it is a category on many standardized writing rubrics. Within this sociology department, "audience," while an important issue, is not relevant enough to be considered its own category in a rubric. In assessing papers, faculty did not offer any commentary about audience, positively or negatively, even though consideration of audience was included in the clarification notes given to faculty, which are mentioned in the section below (Interactive Analysis section). This was done to allow faculty to consider

audience throughout all seven sections, as it can impact numerous aspects of a paper, and is not limited to a specific assessment area. Sociology faculty, when asked, claimed that the majority of papers written in sociology are for an academic audience, thus making the audience category unnecessary.

Interactive Analysis

While systematic coding helps in the determination of patterns, a key component of grounded theory is for the data collection to occur simultaneously with the analysis so that each informs the other (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This interactive analysis ensures that the assessment of the writing is as accurate about "what is going on" as possible. The key is to consistently evaluate the data while gathering it to determine if new information is necessary. For example, in developing the sociology assessment, following the first set of evaluations (10 papers), the data collection was refined based on comments and questions from faculty. The intention was to offer faculty more explicit information to direct them in their assessment of the papers. These clarification notes, as mentioned in the above section, presented ideas or topic issues to consider when reviewing the papers, such as audience or feasibility of any claims made in a paper. The additional information also focused faculty in their analysis of the papers. Faculty were informed in the additional notes that while they could use more quantifiable labels about student competence in each area, such as *excellent, passing,* or *weak,* they needed to describe in greater detail why they used the term. This cued faculty to relay the more in-depth qualitative data needed to conduct the grounded theory. Refining the analysis also occurred in the preliminary analysis discussed above in the methods section when it was determined that the analysis would be organized around seven general topic areas, as opposed to leaving it open-ended. Essentially, refining the analysis throughout the process is an important aspect of grounded theory, as it allows for a better and more truthful finding from the data. All additional directions were to focus the data so that a more accurate understanding of issues in student writing could be reached during the analysis. Focusing data collection "serves to strengthen both the quality of the data and the ideas developed from it" (Charmaz, 1983, p. 110).

Comparative Sampling

Another key aspect of grounded theory is the idea of comparative sampling, which means making sure that data is consistent across different groups. This will allow an accurate claim regarding what is being assessed. If, for example, the findings from this sociology department assessment do not accurately apply to findings in other sociology departments

at other universities, then we can only claim to have assessed student writing in this department. Similarly, if assessing general education writing by reviewing student writing in a writing intensive course, one might then compare the findings to student writing in courses from other general education areas. If the findings in the initial assessment do not apply to the comparative assessment, then one cannot claim true assessment of student general education writing, as the findings do not apply. The issue might be that students focus more on writing in writing intensive classes or that they are given more direction in those classes, but they do not apply this knowledge to their other classes. Truly, the reason for the difference would need to be studied in greater depth to determine why they are not comparable.

The key is to constantly evaluate the data and the analysis of the data (Glaser, 1998). This can be accomplished in a number of ways, such as comparing transfer students to native students, different grade levels, or even students with different abilities, demographics, or double majors. For the sociology analysis, comparative sampling was established by analyzing papers from different core classes to determine if different course topics or faculty would impact student writing, which would limit our ability to accurately assess sociology student writing. If student issues and/or abilities in writing differed across courses and/or faculty, then our analysis would be limited to courses or faculty. Upon comparison, we concluded that there were no differences in the themes that were identified across classes, thus allowing us to claim assessment of sociology student writing in general. We also compared assessments of the same papers across faculty members, which allowed for inter-rater reliability and established more systematic claims from the grounded theory process. Such systematic sampling is useful in grounded theory as it can help to make claims about the findings that apply to a larger population.

Using Grounded Theory

Although grounded theory is familiar to most sociologists, compositionists may not be as familiar with the research methods and processes we described in this essay. In order to review the most important aspects of grounded theory for writing specialists and faculty members in the disciplines conducting writing assessment, we end this essay with some practical advice about deploying grounded theory. When utilizing a grounded theory methodology when assessing writing, here are some considerations that will assist in obtaining the most accurate data:

1. *Sample:* Design a systematic sampling procedure that will allow the faculty to generalize findings to all of their students.
2. *Be interactive:* Try to avoid being stagnant throughout the process, as it is important

to allow the data to inform which direction to focus assessments. This is especially important early on, as it can help to direct the data gathering and the assessment process. While it can be useful to ask faculty in a department what are important areas in writing that they use to evaluate their students, oftentimes it is easier for faculty to identify these in the process of assessing papers. Obviously it can be difficult to get faculty to commit to a completely open-ended assessment process, as there are workload considerations. This is one more reason why it is important to refine the process throughout, to aid faculty, while not quantifying it.

3. *Code:* Systematically code the assessments, each time further fine-tuning the concepts that are being identified about student writing.

4. *Memo:* Using the codes, describe the concepts that have been consistently noted by faculty. This is the identification of positive and negative writing issues. Don't just identify the issue, but the range of competence concerning the issue. Rely on words and phrases shared by faculty, as it can help to create a more explicit rubric that is department or even discipline-specific.

5. *Design:* With the findings, develop not just a plan for responding to student writing but also a rubric that measures student writing in the department. This means plan for future assessment. This might include creating a baseline about student writing before implementing any changes that will address student writing. Since the rubric derives from the findings of this assessment, and the changes to the curriculum are also predicated on this idea, they should be closely associated when assessing changes to student writing.

6. *Reevaluate:* Regularly evaluate student writing (as with the rubric) and also the assessment process. In other words, be prepared to conduct another assessment using grounded theory to identify changes that have occurred with student writing or adjustments to the rubric.

7. *Be flexible:* While grounded theory is based on the idea of being systematic, one aspect that is important is to constantly be open to altering the process, tools, analysis, data, etc. Make it work to fit the needs of your department.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the grounded theory assessment, several suggestions were brought to the sociology department to address the specific student writing concerns. One such suggestion is to extend the use of the rubric beyond the department writing assessments. Faculty will discuss adjusting the rubric to fit all papers that are assigned in sociology classes to establish consistency across student writing. Furthermore, considerations of how to utilize the rubric to assist with student writing will be discussed, including using the rubric for peer writing assessments. In an attempt

to address citation concerns, the department will consider the requirement in all core sociology courses, or potentially all sociology classes of several specific links that identify how to cite using ASA citation format as well as why students would cite references. The biggest consideration will be educating students on paper editing and thesis construction. One proposal will involve the potential development of a one-unit writing adjunct to be taken in conjunction with a core sociology course, and possibly required during the junior year by each sociology major. The writing adjunct may be facilitated by a faculty member or potentially a sociology graduate tutor. At this time, these are the general suggestions presented to the department; other suggestions may be offered as the department develops responses. All suggestions will be evaluated and discussed by the department to determine the best course for responding to the identified struggles. Ultimately, what can be determined is that any responses that address any of the findings will be dealing with the explicit issues that sociology students struggle with in their writing, as determined through the grounded theory assessment.

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Building Better Bridges: What Makes High School-College WAC Collaborations Work?

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Introduction

TO BETTER PREPARE STUDENTS for writing across the curriculum in higher education, some high school teachers and college professors have formed partnerships. The idea is that a cross-pollination of ideas from the teachers, who know the students best, and the professors, who know the expectations and forms of college writing best, could greatly benefit students, teachers, and professors.

Success with such partnerships has so far been mixed. Some programs have flourished and continue to be successful, while others have failed to work and sustain. Why do some programs fail and others succeed? What in successful partnerships might be replicated by others?

To explore these questions, we led a half-day preconference workshop at the 2010 Writing Across the Curriculum Conference at Indiana University. This workshop reflected on past and present high school-college partnerships through writing centers and WAC programs, then challenged participants to design plans for collaborations that would last into the future.

After the workshop, participants emailed us final drafts of their plans, which we shared with all who attended the workshop, and we asked for updates almost one year later. We also conducted a small survey to discover other partnerships around the country and how they work. This article examines workshop and survey responses to highlight successful and sustained collaborations that might be replicated by others.

Extending the Partnerships Beyond the Workshop

Both of us have worked with WAC and writing center partnerships over the years, so we have learned from our own experiences as well as those of colleagues at a variety of secondary and post-secondary institutions. In designing our workshop, we wanted to give participants a taste of some of the partnerships that had and had not worked and why. We

also wanted them to work collaboratively to consider how they would start a partnership, design a possible step-by-step start-up plan, and answer a list of partnership-forming questions (Appendix A). During the brainstorming time at the end of the workshop, many worked with partners from their institution to create a list of ideas to share beyond the workshop.

To add to what we learned from workshop participants, we also questioned others to determine their perspectives. We created a survey on Survey Monkey (Appendix B). Of our 30 respondents surveyed through the WAC, WCenter, SSWC-L, and WPA listservs, 50% were relatively new partnerships (0–2 years), while 40% have existed for 3–10 years, and 10% were established more than 10 years. Approximately 77% of the partnerships have existed only 0–5 years, which isn't surprising given the recent national emphasis on greater collaboration between K–12 and post-secondary education.

One current push affecting all levels of education is the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), already adopted by 48 states. The CCSS is "an initiative of the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers [to refocus] attention on reading and writing across the curriculum" (NCTE 18). According to Lynne Weisenbach, Vice Chancellor for the University System of Georgia, post-secondary institutions can play a key role in implementing the standards because of their role in the professional development of teachers, so they know best the expectations of postsecondary education (Weisenbach). Like the University of System of Georgia, many post-secondary institution missions involve outreach (See Timar, Ogawa, and Orillion; Spoth et al.), including outreach to K–12 schools, and a simple Internet search will find a profuse number of links to the push and pressure for high schools to send graduates to college (See National Center; Kirst and Venezia).

Increasingly, with pressures from initiatives such as the CCSS, institutions are trying to create seamless transitions between high school and college. More and more institutions are creating dual enrollment programs, early colleges, outreach programs, and recruiting tools that provide college preparation activities for prepared and under-prepared high school students. For many of these programs, writing is a key component (often because of first-year writing requirements), and writing centers and WAC programs are well situated to support these efforts.

In fact, since we completed our survey, a high school-college partnership group has formed and met at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Atlanta (April 2011). They established a listserv, proposed a workshop for next year's conference, and continued to plan more collaborative activities to involve K–12 through post-secondary colleges and universities.

Michael Thomas, president and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education, sees higher education playing a vital role in implementing CCSS. He claims the "most pressing issues [are] how to define and assess what it means to be *college- and career-ready*" (9) and that defining and assessing those things will best happen through collaboration with K–12 teachers and leaders. Thomas writes that higher education and K–12 education should have detailed conversations about how "both entities can work together charting specific avenues, strategies and next steps in the process" to ensure student success (9).

David Conley also points to communication and collaboration as key to student success in transitioning from high school to college: "A key problem is that the current measures of college preparation are limited in their ability to communicate to students and educators the true range of what students must do to be fully ready to succeed in college" (3). The communication problem is not new to education or to the potential benefits and pitfalls of educational trends or mandates. Conley states, "Ideally colleges will work with feeder high schools to create scoring guides, assignments, and even courses that help students diagnose their level of preparation for college" (11). A well-documented key measure for post-secondary success is writing (See Conley "Understanding"; College Board) and collaborations like the ones presented here can serve as models for those collaborations and conversations, and later in this piece we discuss what some features of successful models look like.

With 50% of reported collaborations we surveyed being fewer than two years old, one has to wonder how many initiatives have come and gone. Fortunately, as evidenced in our survey results, there are at least a small number of programs that have been running for over a decade, and those programs can serve as models for newer programs to emulate. From those long-running programs, some of the broader lessons learned include the need for bridges to be built between student expectations for high school and for colleges. As one respondent noted, "There exists a disconnect between the requirements for high school graduation and what colleges and universities expect from their freshman students, [e]specially in the areas of reading comprehension, writing skills and basic mathematics." Additionally, these programs enhance community and collaboration between teachers and college faculty, and, as simply stated in one response, help everyone "to value the work of teachers." None of these results from the longest standing programs in our survey are surprising. The answers reveal the respectful, collaborative nature of the partnerships and point to some of the factors that have made these programs successful.

Two key trends emerge from the programs that have existed six or more years. First, in all but one case, the collaboration was started jointly between the secondary and postsecondary institutions. Both institutions wanted to work together, so no one was foisted upon another.

This joint commitment cannot be overstated. Frequently, secondary school teachers complain that university people want to "come down" and tell them how to teach writing. Gerd Bräuer, Writing Center Director at University of Education, Freiburg, Germany, emphasized the need for a clear partnership, rather than a one-sided effort. However, as reflected in his survey response, his experience shows another aspect of this:

> I gained many insights over the [3–5] years but this is my most important lesson: no high school partnership anymore without the willingness of high school teachers to further train themselves in the topic of the project. The current situation is that this particular high school profits greatly from the outside help through our student teachers but still doesn't have a single expert on writing pedagogy among its faculty. In other words, if we from the university writing center would end this project, this high school would probably lose its writing tutors within the next semester.

Therefore, both partners need to uphold their end of the bargain to make it work effectively. In the successful, long-standing programs, many stakeholders helped develop the programs, so they understood the need while helping shape the program to benefit all involved. Lucille M. Schultz, Chester H. Laine, and Mary C. Savage support Brauer's claim in their survey of the history of school-college collaborations in which they analyzed what worked and what didn't. Among their findings, they learned that many programs failed "not because the colleges were deliberately trying to dominate the schools, but rather because the participating parties were not critically conscious of the dynamics that affected their interactions" (150). The authors recommended that all parties set the agenda and understand their role in the interaction (151). Also, all or part of the funding in many of the successful programs came from schools or school districts and colleges, representing a kind of commitment that can live beyond the life of a grant or the goodwill of one individual willing the program into fruition.

The second key trend was that all of the programs were integrated into the institutional fabric of all institutions involved. Stakeholders, then, have a voice in the programs, and everyone involved sees tangible benefits that show up on administrator and granting agency radars. Responses indicate that two programs offer high school students credit for first-year writing courses in college and two more programs provide direct feedback to students and teachers about student progress as preparation for college courses. In addition, two more involve teacher preparation, one pre-service and the second through the National Writing Project (NWP). All six of the programs discussed here indicate information sharing as a real benefit for all involved.

In the case of the pre-service teachers, the respondent notes, "Pre-service students are able to observe master teachers in action. Students analyze teaching strategies and gain a better grasp of what teaching is like as a profession." This is the kind of analytical experience teachers want for their students, and the analysis that students do gives them real classroom experience that they can bring back to the college classroom to inform their classmates and teachers. A secondary benefit is that 90% of the pre-service teachers who participate in this program are hired by schools they visit. That is a measurable goal that benefits the students, teachers, schools, and university involved. And the communication fostered by the program serves to strengthen it. The schools see future teachers and, based on the hiring rate, like what they see.

More broadly, though, from the survey and our workshop, what we have found is that all of the successful partnerships have formed around local contexts and needs—using a kind of systems thinking to integrate their programs within the fabric of the institutions and the community. Those integrations range from outreach in rural areas to development of support services in urban schools. They involve teacher preparation and professional development programs. They tie into existing programs such as the NWP. Although the kinds and levels of support from schools and post-secondary institutions vary greatly, participants have found ways to work within the local confines to make links that benefit all parties involved. Some partnerships have no funding, some have NSF or Carl D. Perkins grants or support from the NWP, and one partnership isn't sure where their funding comes from.

Based on our work and findings, there is good news. Many of the newer programs are modeling themselves after the long-lived ones. From these programs, we believe, we can develop a set of best practices. Below is an attempt to categorize the results of our survey, young and long-standing programs, and our workshop participants' work. The categories are by no means definitive and they blur, but for discussion, they can be helpful. In all of the results, three basic models or components of collaboration appear repeatedly.

1. **Programs reporting collaboration note some form of information exchange, and some involve the NWP.** Workshop attendee Michelle Cox of Bridgewater State University describes her WAC Network:

    > I invite teachers from a different local school each year to join the WAC Network, a program I run that brings together teachers, part- and full-time faculty, administrators, and staff to learn more about teaching with writing, share this knowledge with colleagues through monthly themed WAC Discussion Groups, and attend steering meetings for WAC. The Network currently includes five high school teachers from two school districts, and teachers from a local middle school

are joining next year. Once a school joins the Network, they can attend all WAC events (and many other faculty development events) for free.

Similar collaborations occur from experiences of teachers who are involved in the NWP through local and regional sites. Based on our survey, one respondent indicated that New Mexico State University, in conjunction with the NWP, offers "professional development in writing and a collaborative community through a 4-week institute, professional development days, and fall and spring teacher inquiry seminars." In support of this kind of work, "Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum: A Policy Research Brief from the National Council of Teachers of English" emphasizes the benefits of collaboration in professional development to effectively transform teaching (17).

Also, a survey respondent describes how the University of Arizona and Sunnyside and Tucson Unified School Districts have a model, long-standing program called Wildcat Writers (http://wildcatwriters.weebly.com/). The program's first goal is for teachers to "better understand and address the gap between high school and college writing." From this goal grows the second: "students will develop stronger motivation for and understanding of college writing." In this program, secondary teachers collaborate with college teachers to better understand first year writing courses. But an excellent additional feature is that college students collaborate with high school students, providing them with feedback on their papers and projects. The high school students can also ask questions about college and visits to campus.

2. **Programs involve students in their collaborations, either in some variation of a writing center or a writing fellows program.** Twelve of the thirty survey respondents specified developing or supporting high school writing centers as a primary purpose of the collaboration. Clearly there is a trend for writing centers to reach out and collaborate with others—in this case across the divide of K–12 to college. Writing centers and writing fellows at both secondary and post-secondary institutions have been collaborating for decades (Farrell; Farrell-Childers, Gere, and Young; Barnett and Blumner; Childers), so it is not surprising that this work is influenced by collaborations among members of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA).

Kirsten Jamsen and Katie Levin at University of Minnesota participated in our workshop and developed some ideas. Jamsen had attended the first IWCA Summer Institute, and she and Levin created an E(arly)–12 Writing Centers Collaborative of 30 people who have led or are interested in starting/supporting E–12 Writing Centers. They describe that it "needs to be a supportive, informal, listening and learning together group" (Jamsen), and they already have plans for future meetings at the

NCTE annual conference with Chicago area high school writing center directors. They are also planning to invite the tutors of Minnetonka High School to Jamsen's tutor developmental class.

3. **Post-secondary institutions provide support for middle and secondary schools consisting of post-secondary consultants in the secondary school classrooms, post-secondary institutions providing resources (i.e. financial, training, or staffing) to middle and high schools, and some form of dual enrollee or early college programs.** For example, Jackson Brown at Stephen F. Austin University describes their program:

> This past summer, Stephen F. Austin's WPA and the dual-credit English teacher at Nacogdoches High School collaborated on a proposal to implement a preliminary writing fellows program that would supplement classroom instruction for freshman and dual-credit composition courses. Their idea was to hire and train fellows to lead weekly writing labs for six sections of freshman composition—two dual credit classes at the high school, two at a local community college, and two at SFA. They would then assess these courses' effectiveness in helping students become better writers. I offered insight and advice into what training fellows for this project might involve, and they applied for a grant from NCTE. They didn't receive the grant, but they have tentatively found an alternate source of funding; SFA's WPA plans to move forward with the initiative this summer. (Brown)

Conclusion

Across all responses the strongest theme is collaboration, faculty and students across institutions working together to improve student writing and learning. For instance, through a summer seminar for high school teachers, Passaic County Community College opens the dialogue with a series of questions prior to the seminar (Appendix C). Tapping into the institutional fabric of both schools and colleges allows them to integrate these programs into the larger institutions that will help them survive administrative and institutional changes. Through many of these collaborations, we see students and teachers providing feedback for one another. Keys emphasizes how student learning in science, for instance, can be enhanced by strategies that include multiple forms of feedback such as peer responses to writing and one-on-one conferences. Combined with traditional teacher feedback, these strategies help students develop their metacognitive capacities (120). Partnerships such as we have been describing have an impact on writing and learning beyond English classes. In fact, one of the survey respondents who has had a partnership for more than ten years describes two collaborations: one between the school and university and another between individuals at each institute. He explains how the partnership benefits the secondary school:

Teachers improve their classroom techniques and experience meaningful, sustained professional development; students improve in writing skills (documented through quantitative research); students perform better on standardized tests (anecdotal); teachers become trained to be school leaders in developing and implementing literacy goals.

These collaborations are not often easy, but as another respondent with several years' experience with a partnership says, "Collaboration is a fantastic learning tool for students and faculty. Logistics takes a huge amount of time. Change is slow and needs good PR [but] that's a start." So, maybe it takes longer than anticipated to start and sustain such partnerships, but the results seem to more than justify the patience involved in developing a long-term collaboration between K–12 and post-secondary schools on writing across the curriculum.

Survey participants all said how important it was to both institutions and their students, and one stated he has learned "the value of exchange of ideas and working together to benefit students." Through communication among all involved, partnerships enable our students to benefit from these sustained attempts to learn from one another for the benefit of our students and faculty at the institutions involved. We hope to continue to be part of this ongoing dialogue as more schools realize the value of these partnerships between K–12 schools and post-secondary institutions.

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APPENDIX A

Questions for Starting a High School-College Partnership

1. What kinds of institutional mission/support is there for such projects?
2. Where is this support coming from? Who will represent each institution?
3. How will they collaborate? How do you designate and delegate?
4. How do you find someone in the schools to participate?
5. How can you have a WAC Workshop with a cross section of volunteers to help find a connection?
6. What is the administrative involvement? What is the grass-roots involvement?

7 How can we develop K–12 professional development points to encourage collaboration?

8. How can we develop person-to-person collaboration by offering graduate students to volunteer in schools?

9. How can we incorporate skills students will need in college?

10. Who initiates the program?

11. How do you grow the program organically?

12. What are models for peer tutoring across levels? How do we get students' voices involved? What are ways to tap into student-peer associations?

13. Is there a way for college students to get release time from teachers?

14. How do we invite high school faculty to our faculty development workshops?

15. Are these collaborations done with disciplines other than English and Education?

Survey Questions

1. What is your role in the partnership?

2. Describe your partnership.

3. How long has the partnership existed?

4. Who started the partnership?

5. What is the purpose of the partnership?

6. How does the partnership benefit the secondary school?

7. How does the partnership benefit the university?

8. How is the partnership funded?

9. What have you learned from this partnership?

10. If you are willing to answer follow-up questions, please enter your name, institution and email address here. Thank you.

Seminar for High School Teachers

We ask each participant to bring to the seminar on day one these materials to share and use with the group.

1. Your writing activity greatest hit. A lesson that always seems to work. It can be anything from a pre-writing activity to a follow-up to a larger assignment. It should be something that can be done in 1 or 2 class periods (not a long term assignment such as a research activity). Bring any materials you use for the lesson (handouts, resources…), if possible.

2. A writing lesson-in-progress. Bring a lesson that you have used less successfully but believe has potential, or a lesson that you are hoping to develop but need some help creating.

Amongst the topics we will discuss during the seminars, please consider your answers to these prior to attending:

1. What are the top 5 things PCCC should know about what your school and students are doing in regards to writing?
2. Does your school have: a writing center; writing across the curriculum program; portfolios; or writing magazine?
3. What technology works and doesn't work in your classroom?
4. What would you like to know about the expectations that PCCC has for entering students?
5. What might a college (PCCC and others) offer to your school that would improve your ability to use writing?

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

CAROL RUTZ, CARLETON COLLEGE

RITA MALENCZYK AND I MET—and bonded—at the workshop for new writing program administrators (WPAs) at the 1998 National Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference in Tucson, Arizona. In July. The heat was devastating, especially for a wimpy northerner like me. Rita did better than I, which is a testament to her overall toughness. At that time, she was an assistant professor at Eastern Connecticut State University; now, in 2011, Rita has been a full professor for some years, with a host of professional accomplishments to her credit.

Back in 1998, both Rita and I were part of early conversations that eventually led to the Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition, a document that has seen wide distribution and adaptation since its adoption by the WPA organization in 2000. Rita was one of the co-editors of a collection based on the debates leading to the outcomes statement as well some notable applications to higher education beyond first-year composition. I am willing to bet that more than a few WAC faculty have come to know the statement through faculty development over the last decade.

Rita's vita (that's rather fun to say three times in a row) reveals that she has taught courses in writing, rhetorical theory, and more, including several courses that speak to connections between rhetoric and literature. She has directed the University writing program since 1994 and is the founding director (as of 2008) of the ECSU writing center as well as serving a term as associate chair of the English department. She has chaired several important committees at her institution, served on many more, reviewed for several national publications, and has recently been elected president-elect of the WPA.

Before coming to ECSU, she earned her B.A. at St. Louis University, her M.A. at Washington University (St. Louis), and her doctorate at New York University—all in English. Her conference presentations are always well attended, and her articles, book

chapters, and co-edited collection hold worthy places in the composition-rhetoric-writing center-WAC-assessment realms. That last sentence speaks just a bit to the range Rita brings to the profession.

What follows resulted from an extended conversation at the Conference on College Composition and Communication's annual convention in Atlanta in April 2011, plus some e-mail correspondence over several months.

CAROL RUTZ: Your doctorate from NYU is in literature. How did you end up as a WPA?

RITA MALENCZYK: I taught in the Expository Writing Program at NYU, which produced a large number of WPAs who are currently active. There was no composition/rhetoric major at that time, only English education, which was not possible to pursue in the arts and sciences school.

At that time NYU's Expository Writing Program was under attack. TAs essentially ran it while the director fought for the program's existence. Therefore, under some duress, several of us learned WPA moves. My colleagues developed a whole curriculum for the program, and their initiative was respected. When I finished, I deliberately sought a writing program position.

CR: Your work stretches the definition of WPA, given your teaching, writing center, and other responsibilities. Yet you fit WAC in somehow. How do you define WAC in your professional context?

RM: I'm at Eastern Connecticut, a state university with 5,000 undergrads and a department-based WID program that is defined for me, although I've made some big changes in the last two years. After students take first-year comp, where the emphasis is on writing in different genres—the term WAC is not used—every major requires courses that feature writing in the discipline (WID).

CR: Would you call this sequence a Trojan horse approach?

RM: Absolutely. We see a lot of programs in, for example, psychology and sociology, with a lot of writing in advanced classes. That kind of expectation allows me to validate the writing-to-learn approach in faculty workshops. In upper division courses, faculty build on those skills in large classes as well as the smaller WID courses. You could describe the program as vertically strong, and I'm pretty happy with that.

CR: It's great that you're happy. I'm wondering, though, what the most difficult challenge might be that you face as a WAC director.

RM: It's odd: faculty know so much more than they think they do about teaching writing. They write as scholars themselves, they review. Some may not be strong writers, but most are. I am amused when some faculty define writing as an "essay," overlooking the many kinds of writing they are already doing that they could teach within the major.

CR: So when you present them with evidence that they are not only competent writers but promising teachers of writing, how do they respond?

RM: It takes them a while to believe it—and claim that identity. Our biologists claim it, but our earth scientists do the work but do not claim the teaching expertise. But if even one person in a program sees him or herself as a writing teacher, the whole program benefits through a useful kind of contamination.

CR: I agree that faculty teach each other, whether deliberately or accidentally. What's most rewarding for you as you work with faculty?

RM: I love it when, in a workshop, you see a resistant person say something truly insightful about grammar. Or their responsibility for students' writing. I enjoy working with disciplinary faculty on writing, acknowledging disciplinary conventions, and finding ways to help students understand the disciplines.

I provide copies of Gottschalk and Hjortshoj[1] to faculty in workshops, which has proven to be an effective resource. It's just great to get people together to talk about teaching and be a community. I learn a lot about what people do in class as well as their ideas about where writing fits in their pedagogy. Even though we have good verticality, as I observed a minute ago, I feel pressure as a WPA to make sure that writing really is going on in all of the places it makes sense.

CR: I have often said to my dean that WAC is like fluoride in the water: once it's established, writing pedagogy gains ground even if a segment of the faculty doesn't actively participate.

RM: True, and it also means you have to offer a continuous WAC message, because you can't afford to lower the energy among faculty. Fortunately, more of our new hires are coming to us with WAC and WID experience before they are hired—some even have

writing center experience. Regardless, we need to reward participation in WAC/WID, making it a visible part of our general education program.

It's a funny problem to have, but as WAC is subsumed, promoting it becomes more difficult. How do you sustain a program that is fully integrated?

CR: In that connection, you have just been chosen president-elect of the Council of Writing Program Administrators—congratulations. Do you have goals for your presidency? Where does WAC fit into the work of the CWPA organization?

RM: First I'll be vice-president for two years, and my goal for that is to support whatever Duane Roen (who will be president while I'm VP) wants to accomplish and help him in whatever ways I can. I also want to sustain a lot of the great work Linda Adler-Kassner has done; during her presidency we've seen a lot of great work from the WPA Network for Media Action, for instance, and we've seen that network become established as a WPA committee and take on a life of its own. Then we also have, now, WPA-GO, the graduate organization, which I think is a great thing because I was a grad student WPA myself.

For my part, I want to revive WPA's diversity initiative. When I was on the Executive Board a few years ago, there was a lot of talk and seeming commitment to diversifying the organization, but I don't think anyone ever knew how to fully approach that, and so it hasn't really happened. Plus, it's kind of a weird thing: what does "diversity" mean in this context anyway? When we used that word in WPA we talked both about more representation on the Exec Board from both WPAs from community colleges and WPAs of color, and those are different kinds of diverse. The former, for example, is about institutional diversity, and the latter about getting more representation from historically underrepresented groups. What I want to explore is how to diversify the organization institutionally (the former) and therefore (possibly) bring about the latter. For example, I've been going through the membership list and the number of members from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is very, very low compared with, say, the number of members from Research1 schools. (And I think maybe we have one member out of nearly 600 from a tribal college, though I'd have to double-check that figure.)

There are ways of diversifying an organization—for example, the National Writing Project did it, when they realized that the leadership of the NWP was mostly men and the teachers of writing were mostly women—and I want to explore those possibilities (i.e., see what other organizations have done) and see what resources and time WPA is willing to commit.

As far as WAC goes, I don't know that it's in the ascendancy right now as an up-front concern of WPA, though certainly WPA has a lot of members who are college and university WAC directors. I think that right now one of the most important concerns of the organization may be with how to legitimately prepare high school students for writing in college—for example, there's the "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing" which WPA co-authored with NCTE and the NWP. I can see WAC in high schools becoming an important part of discussions about said preparation as time goes on (though right now the discussion does tend to be focusing on such FYC-related matters as dual enrollment and AP).

CR: I noticed on your vita a book chapter under review titled, "WAC's Disappearing Act." What can you tell us about that?

RM: Well, Carol, that means that both you and I aren't really here. No, but seriously. You and most readers of this journal will remember Barbara Walvoord and Sue McLeod, both around 1996 when WAC was 25-30 years old, talking (Walvoord, for instance, in her *College English* article "The Future of WAC") about how WAC was in danger of being knocked off the academic playing field by other initiatives that were more trendy (what Kathi Yancey referred to memorably at one WPA conference as "shiny objects").

We all know how that works—for example, right now colleges are all about general education reform, while a couple of years ago they were about first-year programs. And WAC got started in the first place because deans everywhere freaked out over the appearance of "Why Johnny Can't Write"—there's a memorable chapter by Elaine Maimon about this, in McLeod and Margot Soven's book, *Composing a Community,* which I highly recommend. Anyway, both McLeod and Walvoord worried about what would happen to WAC once other things caught people's attention, McLeod more than Walvoord at the time, I think.

What I'm arguing in this book chapter is that what they predicted may, in fact, be coming true (and I stress the *may*) but if so, it's not a bad thing but a sign of WAC's success. For example, Marty Townsend has talked on the WPA-L listserv about how Missouri—where the Campus Writing Program is very strong and well-established—is moving toward a model that combines WAC with general education; this model essentially eliminates the writing-intensive tags for courses but rather infuses writing throughout an entire curriculum. So in the one sense, WAC is disappearing from that program, because you're not seeing the "W"; on another, this programmatic revision suggests that the WAC movement may have succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams. Writing in all courses?

COME ON! As I said earlier, it raises the question of keeping a WAC program going when it is fully integrated into the university curriculum.

Anyway, there's other stuff in this chapter, but I don't know how much I'm free to talk about that because it's pre-publication. But I will say that I think a lot of the most interesting work in WAC is that which questions existing definitions of things. Chris Thaiss' and Terry Myers Zawacki's book, *Engaged Writers, Dynamic Disciplines,* for instance, talks about their work asking faculty to examine when they violate disciplinary conventions, what those conventions are in the first place, how much we should be teaching them to our students.

CR: We're having this conversation at the largest national conference for composition and rhetoric scholars. What have you heard about WAC that's new?

RM: I heard some interesting stuff about research on the early days of WAC via grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Education Association. I've also appreciated the continuing interest in knowledge transfer and how that applies to writing, particularly WAC.

CR: Your teaching, administrative roles service, and scholarship range widely: from courses on rhetoric and critical thinking to roles in writing centers and writing programs to service on the athletics advisory council and the local chapter of AAUP to articles on institutional change and learning outcomes. How do these many interests and experiences blend in your professional life?

RM: Well, the athletic advisory council thing is sort of interesting. I have three kids (16, 13, and 12) who are all hockey and lacrosse players, and I got interested in student athletes for that reason. Eastern belongs to NCAA Division 3, and our athletes tend overall to have higher GPAs, plus involvement in athletics at ECSU correlates positively with retention. When an opening for a faculty member appeared on that council, I volunteered for it because I thought it would be interesting to see an aspect of university life that faculty don't usually see unless they're in the Physical Education dept. And I think WPAs, especially WAC directors, should get involved in non-writing-related matters where possible. I mean, we ask faculty to do our stuff, after all.

CR: On that note, I will change the subject. You and I have commiserated over the past few years about the demise of our favorite television series, *The X-Files.* Alas. For those

unfamiliar with the program, please describe the premise (if you can) and tell us about your favorite episode from this nine-year series—and why it is your favorite.

RM: The show was about two FBI agents—Fox Mulder and Dana Scully—who were assigned to investigate incidents of paranormal activity, a/k/a the X-Files. Mulder was an Oxford-trained expert in the paranormal and Scully a medical doctor originally assigned to keep an eye on him, though eventually they become friends and (before the end of the series) lovers.

I have two favorites, actually. One was a hilarious parody of *Cops* that appeared late in the show's run; both shows were on Fox, and the *Cops* parody had the cameramen following Mulder and Scully around investigating a mutating monster. It was very dry and parodied the conventions of both shows in a very funny way.

My other favorite episode, though, was one called "All Souls." I actually found (and I know I'm in the minority here) Scully to be a more interesting, more subtle character than Mulder for any number of reasons; she grows and changes throughout the series, and in addition to being an MD she was also a practicing and devout Catholic, yet the connections between her faith in God and Mulder's in the paranormal were never explored, really, except I think in this episode.

Scully consults a priest to ask if there's anything in Church teaching that might shed light on the supernatural features of a disturbing case. The priest says, well, sure, there's an apocryphal story, but he also warns her that this story isn't an official part of church teaching and therefore not "real."

How the episode resolves and plays out is interesting, but the most interesting things to me are the themes it pokes at. First, how reality is determined by what institutions (or discourse communities?) acknowledge—e.g., what Scully's priest tells her about the apocrypha is a reminder that reality, at least in Catholicism, is mediated by the Church.

In addition, I think Chris Carter (the director/writer/creator of the X-Files) is poking at some feminist issues here. Anyway, I periodically teach a seminar in Rhetoric and Popular Fictions in which we look at popular genres through the lens of various rhetorical theories, and I like to show this episode in the feminist-theory module.

CR: As a fellow X-phile, I have to admit that it's refreshing to participate in that discourse community once again. It's a good reminder that "truth" is contextual. We in the WAC business learn early on to respect the intellectual ground of our colleagues' discourse communities as we help them teach students to participate in and navigate those communities. Thank you!

ENDNOTE

1   Gottschalk, Katherine, and Keith Hjortshoj. *The Elements of Teaching Writing: A Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines.* Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

Notes on Contributors

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