WAC/WID Campus Concerns: "Growing Pains" or Perspectives From a Small Branch Campus

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Abstract: This article draws primarily from theoretical frameworks of critical literacy, pedagogy, and race to investigate the specialized discourses, missions, politics, constraints and the development of Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID) at a branch campus. The authors narrate their experiences within these settings to convey the challenges encountered, and their theoretical approaches set the groundwork for making sense of their experiences within their local and greater institutional context. Their narratives address how they respond to politics within their context, define their roles, strive to meet programmatic and student needs, and work with colleagues throughout the university system. The authors share their unique experiences to demonstrate the complexity of their situation and emphasize the need for change.

In this article, we present a critical examination of one branch campus' efforts to translate and implement the university's (the larger institution) well-established and fully-integrated set of writing programs, policies, outcomes, and assessments for a branch campus that recently initiated lower-division undergraduate education. Through the theoretical frameworks of critical literacy, pedagogy, and race, we describe the challenges we encountered in developing and implementing infrastructural components necessary for providing writing instruction and support on the Tri-Cities branch campus[1] of Washington State University: Andréa as the regional campus WPA and Vanessa as the Multilingual Composition Specialist. Critical literacy, pedagogy, and race provide the means for thinking flexibly about our institutional contexts while considering issues of agency for us as WPAs and for our students. These theoretical frames provide lenses for considering both the process of adapting university-wide expectations to meet the needs of our specific student population and local community, and for the subsequent effects on our students. We have deliberately crafted our narratives—at times more personal than academic—to invite readers into our experiences and challenges because we are aware that many rural or small branch campuses face similar circumstances. Specifically, our narratives address how we respond to politics within our regional context, define our roles as administrators, strive to meet our programmatic needs, and work with our colleagues throughout the university system. We believe that describing and discussing the complexities and "material circumstances of [our] work lives" will contribute to the growing body of scholarship exploring the affordances and constraints that rural WAC/WID programs face in the twenty-first century (Trimbur, 2008, p.ix).

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Critical Frameworks and Institutional Context

In "The Politics of Administrative and Physical Location," Carol Peterson Haviland, Carmen Fye, and Richard Colby (2001) asserted, "although location is not everything, it too is important, for material spaces have political edges that are costly if ignored. Location is political because it is an organizational choice that creates visibility or invisibility, access to resources, and associations that define the meanings, uses and users of designated spaces" (p. 85). Location becomes even more complicated when considering a single branch campus of a multi-campus university system. Learning how to adapt and implement an existing set of writing programs with their attendant goals, outcomes, and ideologies for our local branch campus necessitates a critical awareness of the material cultures of writing within our institutional context. As Jill Gladstein and Dara Rossman Regaignon (2012) explained, a writing program "is the courses, people (administrators, faculty, and students), offices, positions, centers, policies (written and tacit), and customs that make up how writing is taught, learned, and practiced on a particular campus" (p. 36). It is with this understanding, and the need for establishing our historical and material conditions, that we offer a brief snapshot of our branch campus and its larger institution.

Washington State University (WSU), established in 1892 as a land-grant university, began as the Washington Agricultural College and School of Science "with 13 collegiate and 46 preparatory students" (Extension). Today, WSU is ranked among the top 60 public research institutions, and enrolls approximately 25,000 students worldwide. The university operates as a single system, geographically dispersed. In other words, across the system's four campuses (Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver) and various extension programs located throughout Central and Eastern Washington State, we share one President, one Provost, and so forth. We share the same course catalog, students may attend any of our campuses interchangeably, and graduates receive their degree from "Washington State University," without reference to campus location(s). The main campus is located in Pullman, Washington, on the eastern border of the state. The Pullman campus is a traditional residential campus serving approximately 19,000 of the university system's students. The only autonomous aspects of WSU's branch campuses are the local administrative structure and the budget, which is locally generated and maintained.

Located approximately 145 miles southwest of Pullman is the Tri-Cities branch campus (WSUTC) in Richland, Washington. The Tri-Cities[2] branch campus became part of the WSU state system in 1989. At that time, our campus supported only upper division undergraduate programs and a limited number of graduate programs. In fall 2007, WSUTC admitted its first lower-division cohort of 35 FTE (Campus Facts). In 2009, WSU Tri-Cities began "Phase II – Expansion of Undergraduate Programs," admitting 100 FTE freshmen (Master Plan). Today, we offer 18 bachelor's, 10 master's, and 6 doctoral degrees at our urban campus location. Our branch campus is the only four-year university campus in the Mid-Columbia and Southeastern state area and is supported by several community colleges (About). We highlight these particular aspects of our university's history not only to provide a broad context for our discussion, but also to emphasize the pace and nature of change and adaptation in which we operate.

In addition to our university system, changes in our Tri-Cities community plays a dynamic role in the focus of our branch campus. Located near the Federal Hanford Nuclear Site, the Tri-Cities campus is "immediately adjacent to a national laboratory and some of the world's largest engineering firms and globally-competitive private businesses" (Vision). Our campus is also located in the Mid-Columbia wine region of Washington. This proximity allows us to leverage community partnerships to provide industry-ready graduates, but it also means that we focus heavily on the STEM disciplines and wine science. Our students, often already lined up for industry positions, expect practical, hands-on

training and education that will benefit them in their careers. The expectation that students have for practical and pragmatic instruction affects WAC/WID program structures and pedagogical strategies at the local level.

Adding to this complexity, the Tri-Cities area of Washington State supports a large Hispanic population[3] and, thus, WSUTC is currently in its certification process to become the state's only four-year public institution designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic Serving Institution[4]. We seek this federal designation to support and enrich our culturally diverse student body. Federal funding available to HSI designated institutions is to support not only culturally diverse students, but also those who are first generation college students. More than half of WSUTC's approximately 1500 commuter students are first generation college students. Nearly one third of our students attend the university part-time in order to support families and part- or full-time jobs. Our regional undergraduate students tend to be a bit older than those at the main campus; the average age of Tri-Cities students is 26, compared to 23 at the main campus. Furthermore, approximately 40% of our students are designated "low income," and more than 10% of our student population consists of military veterans (Campus Facts). The student population of the Pullman campus—a predominantly white, middle-class student body with a handful of international students representing some 91 different countries—contrasts sharply with the Tri-Cities student population—a fairly diverse, working-class population, including a large number of students who fall into the ESL category of "immigrant" in terms of their language proficiencies. The small number of international students at the Tri-Cities campus represents only 7 different countries. As these demographics illustrate, the diversity of students bringing their myriad strengths and experiences to higher education continues to increase, requiring WAC/WID programs to respond to "a global panoply of local knowledge and cultural specificity" (Hall, 2009, p. 35). In Hall's (2009) discussion of WAC/WID in what he calls the "next America," he cited an increase of 118% over 20 years in Americans who speak a language other than English in the home—a reality that we are already witnessing at WSUTC with nearly 30% of the most recent first year cohort identifying as multilingual.

The University-Wide Writing Programs at WSU

The demographic differences between the Pullman (main) campus and the Tri-Cities branch campus provide the greatest challenge in developing and administering WAC/WID at WSUTC. In his introduction to *Beyond Outcomes*, William Condon (2001) described WSU's system-wide writing programs as:

> an unusually systematic set of programs that move students from entry-level assessment through first-year composition and a writing-rich General Education program; through the portfolio, which assess writing at mid-career, into a writing-in-the-disciplines model of (WAC) Writing Across the Curriculum; and, finally, through end-of-program assessments in the students' home departments. (p. xiii)

This set of programs includes components from many different departments, committees, and offices from across the university system all working in concert.

As with many universities, our Composition Program is housed in the English Department and includes the sequence of courses from basic writing through advanced writing courses. However, WSU also has an award-winning Writing Program housed in the University College (undergraduate education), and includes placement and mid-career writing assessment, WAC and WID development and support, and the writing center services and support. The Writing Program works in concert with the Composition Program; based on results of writing placement exams and mid-career writing

assessments, some students are required to attend 1-credit writing studios through the writing center concurrently with either their freshman composition course or their first writing in the major course respectively. These writing studios are designed to help students gain confidence and proficiency with their writing. The set of writing programs at the main campus is now well-established[5] and has helped shape university-wide student learning outcomes[6], WAC/WID, and expected foundational communication competencies throughout all of the programs of the university. The challenge of implementing this set of programs at the branch campus level is that the student literacy skills at WSUTC do not often parallel placement criteria or program assumptions of the main campus even though we must use the same writing placement examinations and assessment tools. Specifically, criteria that raters use to identify speakers of English as an additional language for placement in appropriate instruction options were developed with Pullman's international ESL population in mind. Therefore, the writing placement exam usually misses the 30% of WSUTC students who are multilingual. However, as Andréa and Vanessa explain in the sections that follow, resolving this issue is not a simple matter of adjusting placement criteria to address different student populations. Critical analysis of the way politics of location and language shape possibilities for translating and implementing the complex set of writing programs for the Tri-Cities campus highlights inherent ideologies that ultimately result in misconceptions about WSUTC students' literacy skills and needs.

Andréa's Experience as the Writing Program Administrator

With the rapid growth and expansion of lower-division undergraduate enrollments at WSUTC in 2009, I was hired to develop and serve in a WPA position that would include translating WSU's set of writing programs (Composition, Writing, and WAC/WID programs and assessments) for the Tri-Cities. When I first arrived, I was a newly minted PhD in Rhetoric and Writing. I did, however, already have five years of teaching experience at the undergraduate level, and three additional years working in writing centers. I should also note here that in addition to my rhetoric and composition training, my MA in TESL with an emphasis on multilingual learner (MLL) populations met a hiring criterion for the position. The two institutions where I taught previously were vastly different. One was a commuter campus in a West Coast state system with a very diverse student population. The other was a large Midwest land-grant university with a traditional student population—mostly white, mostly twenty-something, mostly resident students. I believed that this eclectic teaching, training, and writing center experience would prepare me for any institution in which I might work, but I was wrong. On any given day, the students who constitute my "rhetorical audience" at WSUTC are more diverse than a combination of the two institutions I taught at previously.

Learning my position meant I relied heavily on NCTE, CCC, and CWPA position statements and support documents, such as "The Portland Resolution" and "Evaluating the intellectual work of writing program administration." These professional organizations set the standards of intellectual work, assessment, and administrative outcomes. However, as Debra Frank Dew (2009) cautioned us, "These standards do not simply exist *a priori* at an institutional site, nor are they implemented upon an institution's 'discovery' of their disciplinary sense or ethical value; rather, they are produced, delivered incrementally as inquiry across time" (p. 48). The body of writing program scholarship helped me to prioritize implementing important programmatic infrastructure, such as regulation of schedules and procedures for writing assessments, composition course offerings, and writing center services and support. WSUTC had yet to develop these infrastructure even though more than 120 students were enrolled in first-year writing and writing program support courses.

Implementing Infrastructure

Lower-division undergraduate education at WSUTC was fairly new and WSUTC was small. Placement exams were offered "on demand" through the writing center. But, lower-division enrollments were growing at approximately 10% a year, which meant we needed a streamlined process. Our administrative assistant and I made date changes for placement exams and contacted our academic advisors as well as recruitment specialists. We asked our marketing department to update information on the web. We hired and trained exam proctors and created flyers for student orientations. This simplified the process considerably and made our use of university-wide writing program resources more efficient. When students enrolling at WSUTC took their placement exams, batches of exams could now be sent to Pullman where faculty and graduate TAs normed in the rating process, and who taught the courses into which students were placed, rated exams in a two-tier system[7] and had the results back to us within a few days. There was a similar process in place for rating mid-career writing portfolios.

Next, in order to better support our new first-year cohorts, I set out to address our course offerings. WSUTC had sparse offerings: only one or two sections of English 101: Introductory Composition were offered each year. After meeting with advisors and recruiters who helped me assess enrollment demand, I increased English 101 to three sections in fall and began offering one section in spring. These filled immediately. I also increased offerings for two of the other courses in the composition sequence. A year later, we were able to add the remaining course in the sequence to our schedule. In a mere year, WSUTC went from a total of four sections in the sequence to nine sections per year across the four courses in the composition sequence. The growth was unprecedented.

With a growing student population and additional writing course offerings, the writing center needed substantial restructuring to support campus needs. As part of strategic planning, I also wanted to establish the writing center as the locus for WAC/WID initiatives at WSUTC. Consulting with colleagues across the country through email lists for WPAs and writing centers[8], I gained a wealth of knowledge. With their help, I developed a new application form, implemented a hiring process for new tutors, began using an online appointment system, and eventually learned how to argue for budgets, hiring plans, and training resources for all newly hired peer consultants. Collaborating with the acting writing center director, we changed tutor titles to Peer Writing Consultants, hired from across the campus to diversify and emphasize WAC/WID concerns, and limited sessions to 30 minutes.

This infrastructure allowed us to rebrand our writing center as a central part of the writing programs on our campus. Students began to use the Center more often. I began publicizing the work of the writing center and had new posters created in our marketing department. I emailed faculty across campus explaining the purpose of the writing center, stressing the process of collaborative peer review and feedback and how this could support students in the writing process. In conversations with my campus colleagues, I discovered that many faculty members were not aware that we even had a writing center.

All of these changes and additions were made with development and support of writing across the campus in mind. While my long-term goals included faculty development for WAC/WID through the writing center, we first had to align the processes and procedures of WSUTC's writing center with those of the main campus so that we could better support WSU's system-wide learning outcomes and expectations for students.

While many of the changes taking place were positive steps, they were not without drawbacks. In many ways, the rapid changes taking shape in the writing center and writing programs on our

campus were just too quick for some faculty members. Thomas Amorose (2002) warned that new WPAs, particularly at small schools, have to assess how quickly changes in a writing program can be implemented since the WPA is likely to encounter resistance to change (p. 101). I erred in this sense and failed to account for the discomfort that rapid change can cause, unintentionally bringing turmoil for the acting director of the writing center—a non-tenure stream faculty member on a fixed term contract. In perhaps my first experience with political hierarchies and issues of status in the academy, campus administrators informed me that since the acting director had "only" a master's degree, she could only serve in *acting* capacity—a placeholder for when WSUTC could hire a tenure-track faculty member. I was also told that she knew this was the case. Although I collaborated with her and made sure she was part of the decision-making process for the changes taking place in the writing center, what I later realized was that she appeared to agree with me and support the changes in our initial work together because she did not believe she could do otherwise. I did not realize the extent to which she lacked agency in her tenuous position and some very hurt feelings ensued.

As we made wholesale changes in rapid succession, the acting director began to resist. She argued with me openly about changing the titles for our Peer Consultants. She resisted hiring students outside of the work-study program because she was unclear where budgetary authority lay in that process. She sensed that her knowledge of writing center theory and pedagogy was different from my own and dug in her heels to continue doing things as they had always been done. Without meaning to, the changes I was hired to bring to the writing program rendered this particular faculty member obsolete, and ultimately she reevaluated her career goals and chose to vacate her contract a year early. The fact is, she no longer felt supported in her position and could not keep apace of the infrastructural changes. In a branch campus like ours, the reporting lines are often quite streamlined and the kind of infrastructural changes I describe here occurred within the space of a single semester. It is very easy for anyone to feel unsupported in that kind of environment. I regret the discomfort I caused, but at the same time, I felt obligated to respond to the challenges I was hired to resolve.

Diversity and Assessment

Once these three basic components of programmatic infrastructure—regulation of writing assessments, bolstering composition course offerings, and restructuring the writing center—were in place, I had the opportunity to reflect on program needs and to reevaluate long-term strategic goals. It was in this process of reflection and evaluation that various issues related to WSUTC's multilingual learners (MLL) came into focus. In the two years it took to focus on the infrastructure issues detailed above, challenges in supporting our growing population of multilingual students continued to be pervasive. In his advice to WAC/WID professionals for working with MLLs, Jonathan Hall (2009) suggested, "As we develop WAC support services, in concert with the writing center or other entities, make sure that the needs of MLLs are addressed centrally, not just as an add-on" (p. 39). Having systematic and consistent reporting in place to review enrollment trends, writing placement reports, and writing center usage trends allowed me to more clearly see some of the issues, but it was through my first-hand experience that I was first able to identify challenges in serving this particular segment of WSUTC's students.

When I taught our first-year writing course, I realized immediately that the majority of my students were multilingual learners and that they were struggling more than their placement exams indicated they should be; this trend continued each semester. I noted that, on average, approximately 25-30% of freshmen students were failing English 101, supporting my suspicion that they had been somehow placed incorrectly. WSU's writing placement exam is meant to provide flexible options within the sequences of courses available. For example, students might be placed into English 100: Basic Writing, English 101: Freshman Composition, or they might be placed into one of the "ESL" versions

of these two courses: English 104 and English 105, respectively. Another possibility is placing students into one of these four options with the additional requirement of a 1-credit writing studio attached. And, rarely, it is possible for a student to receive an exemption from the university writing requirement. However, the placement reports for WSUTC showed *none* of our students were being placed into 100, 104, or 105. These placement results didn't correlate with the preparedness I witnessed among my students.

Other investigations supported my growing concerns about WSUTC's placements. Conferring with other faculty on campus provided a wealth of anecdotal evidence with respect to diversely prepared writers in writing intensive courses across disciplines. Additionally, the writing center usage reports showed just over 20% of students using the center self-identified as multilingual. That a student identifies as multilingual does not automatically suggest the need for specialized instruction in writing. Hall (2009) reminded us that "We must be careful not to lose sight of the particular experience of MLLs as they move through our writing courses—but we must also be careful not to essentialize or stereotype their supposed cultural presuppositions" (p. 39). I wanted to be careful not to essentialize diversely prepared students, or marginalize them, but I was also concerned that our campus was failing to meet their needs and was preventing them from obtaining an education.

Assessment is always a fraught issue. The copious body of scholarship in writing studies addresses all aspects of assessment. Because WPAs easily recognize that one size does not fit all, a variety of assessment instruments from timed writing to portfolios to directed self-placement exist to address the always-problematic issues of standardized testing. In almost all scholarship devoted to assessment, we are reminded that assessment must always be based on local contexts. "Like everything in WAC," Hall (2009) reasoned, "none of these models can be adopted off the shelf, but need to be adapted to local conditions at each institution" (p.42). Luckily for me, the assessment director in Pullman, Diane Kelly-Riley, was eager to work with me and anxious to consider ways of revising the Writing Program to meet the needs of the branch campuses. Diane proved to be one of the most valuable mentors I have had with respect to learning the WPA craft.

Diane and I had exam raters consider the full range of course placements over the next three exams (one semester's results) given at the Tri-Cities, even though we could not yet change which courses were available. Results for the approximately 50 total students we reviewed, placed only one student into English 105: Introductory Writing for ESL. Ann Johns (2001) explained that many different groups of students

> may fall under the ESL rubric at our universities, though they may respond differently to our classes and face very different obstacles to attaining their degrees. For these reasons, it is important that WAC administrators, and the faculty with whom they work, be aware not only of the variety among the "ESL" groups but also know something about the literature on second-language acquisition, error, and contrastive rhetoric. (p. 145)

By now it was evident to Diane and I that the criteria used to determine "ESL" placement only addressed one of the many different groups of students who fall under the ESL rubric—international students. In Vanessa's section, she details some of the differences indicated by different ESL labels and explains their damaging effects for students.

To address assessment, Diane and I began to meet with members of the Composition Committee, including Nancy Bell, the ESL Composition Coordinator, and with faculty who taught English 101 and English 105 at Pullman and at the Vancouver branch campus. As Ann Johns (2001) noted:

> WAC administrators can help faculty recognize the variety of needs, language proficiencies, and cultural contributions among linguistically diverse students, and to understand that linguistically diverse students' notions about academic writing and writing in the disciplines may differ from those of the dominant university culture. (pp. 148-149)

Over the course of several group sessions, we revised the rating criteria used to identify "ESL" placements so that it might be more inclusive of multilingual students as well. Diane and Nancy suggested that I also initiate diagnostic essays given the first day of class to all first-year composition students at WSUTC. This way, we would have additional writing samples and contexts for reviewing placement data over a longitudinal study that will allow further adjustments down the road. Richard Haswell (2001), one of many faculty and WPAs at WSU who collaborated to design the writing programs and exams explained:

> Maintaining the spirit of locally constructed programs over time requires the same creative elasticity that went into constructing the programs to begin with. Just as the test arose out of mutable local [Pullman] conditions and was shaped by them, it should continue to be shaped as those conditions change. (p. 40)

Indeed, since 1991 when the placement exam component of WSU's system-wide writing programs went into practice, the writing programs and the exams themselves have undergone several adjustments[9]. With the Tri-Cities branch campus moving into a four-year configuration, the additional layers of local conditions meant that I was able to observe and participate in the kind of elasticity and reshaping that Haswell described. Participating in this process, and the mentoring I received along the way, reciprocally shaped the manifestation of the writing programs at Tri-Cities as well.

Hiring Needs

It would take time to see the results of reshaping the writing placement assessments, so I retuned my focus to the Tri-Cities campus. Working with Diane, Nancy, and other colleagues from across the university system helped to clarify my role and provided insights for reshaping WSUTC's manifestation of the writing programs. This, in turn, allowed me to think strategically about the ways that future growth might impact writing programs and writing instruction at all levels for our branch campus. It was clear that our campus needed a Multilingual Composition Specialist who would parallel Nancy Bell's role as ESL Composition Coordinator at Pullman. In the next iteration of our campus strategic planning process, I martialed the knowledge I had gained about WSU's system-wide writing programs, about the needs of our campus, and the language and agency I had gained through WPA scholarship and mentoring. Through the strategic plan, I argued for a tenure-track position supporting multilingual composition that would meet several campus needs at once—staffing courses to meet growing enrollments, language support for our multilingual students, faculty development opportunities for WAC/WID, and additional training resources for Peer Consultants in the writing center. Because of the many changes and implementations outlined above, I was able to provide statistical information supporting each of these assertions as well. Despite the fact that hiring plans have their own special processes—consensus and ranking among the college, additional ranking among faculty senate, and so forth—campus administrators interpreted the tenure-track position as I outlined it as a campus-wide need and approved the line. The next year, we hired Dr. Vanessa Cozza as our Multilingual Composition Specialist.

Because of her expertise, Vanessa was able to help our campus identify and define some of the major confusion about the literacy skills and educational needs of our MLL students. With blessing from the English Department and stakeholders in placement assessments, Vanessa was tasked with revising the curriculum for English 105 for use on our campus to meet MLL needs. She also assisted me with the WPA work of our campus by communicating with faculty, advisors, and administrators the ways that our MLL population would continue to shape the writing programs for our campus. In her section that follows, Vanessa outlines some of the major challenges she encountered in her position and the implications for these challenges for meeting WAC/WID at Tri-Cities.

Vanessa's Experience as the Multilingual Composition Specialist

As Andréa explained in the previous section, I was specifically hired to work with WSUTC's student population and to help make English 105, the first-year writing course for multilingual writers, meet their literacy needs. When I started my new position as the Multilingual Composition Specialist (MCS), I had recently graduated with my PhD in Rhetoric and Writing from a public university in the Midwest. Similar to Andréa's experience, I too arrived with teaching experience, having worked with a diverse group of students. In fact, during the last two years of graduate school, exploring how academic culture affected the literacy practices of Latino/a students became one of my main research interests and dissertation focus. My personal experiences as a second-generation[10] Latina have also influenced my teaching and scholarship. I, too, believed that my experiences prepared me for the new position as the MCS; in fact, I thought that the job description was specifically written for me. I was prepared to develop the course, to teach, to work with the students, but I wasn't ready to address my colleagues' concerns.

Composition for Multilingual Writers

Eventually, I realized the need to define my new position as I began collaborating with colleagues and working with students. While most of my first year working at WSUTC is a blur—which probably describes the experiences of most recent doctoral graduates who transition into faculty positions—I can recall an important meeting during my second year, which fully captures my efforts to define my role as the MCS. Several advisors, a professor from the sciences, the program assistant, and I sat in the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Arts and Sciences' office to discuss details about the first-year writing course for multilingual writers. Some of the advisors seemed confused about the logistics of English 105, the first-year writing course for multilingual writers, and English 101, the other first-year writing course. Whether true or not, I had heard that the advisors' misunderstanding about English 105 led them to discourage students from enrolling in the course. The program assistant asked me to explain the differences and similarities between English 105 and English 101, hoping that the discussion would heighten understanding of English 105's structure and objectives, as well as increase enrollment and interest in the course. I intended to argue that I did not design English 105 with ESL in mind because our regional campus' population, as detailed in the introduction, includes mostly second and third generation multilingual students. The ESL label has become associated with English 105 due to its function on the main campus —as Andréa described in the previous section— and the original course's title: "Composition for ESL Students." During the meeting, I mistakenly compared English 105 to English 101, which caused more confusion rather than clarification. Toward the end, I gathered that most of the group questioned why we did not offer a basic writing course or why we offered English 105, questions or concluding thoughts that I did not anticipate. Afterward, I realized how essential it was for me to define my role as the MCS on our regional campus, not only for myself, but also more importantly, for my colleagues.

Student Needs

Aside from the placement issues that Andréa detailed previously, I also faced the challenge as the new faculty hire to change my colleagues' misconceptions concerning our student population. Racial and institutional labels can not only negatively impact multilingual students' perceptions of themselves and their educational abilities, but also they can cause faculty across the disciplines to misunderstand the literacy skills and needs of diverse student populations. As the MCS on our branch campus, I quickly learned that our students' needs differed from the students' needs on the main campus. Additionally, I also learned that some of my colleagues held misconceptions about our students' literacy skills. Therefore, I realized that recognizing our students' needs, much like Andréa did as the WPA, became essential not only for their retention, but also for their academic achievement across disciplines. Professors of Education, Patricia Gándara and Frances Contreras (2009) highlighted the "critical aspects of language learning that … contribute to [student] underachievement" (p. 124) in *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies*. While Gándara and Contreras' book focuses on Latino/a education, some of their findings still help explain the struggles that multilingual student populations encounter in higher education. Specifically, they note two factors that can affect student success: the effect of labels, which perpetuate the dichotomy that "one is either an English learner or a fluent English speaker" (p. 124), and the focus on ESL students to attain language proficiency. The misunderstanding of labels and their effects on students seems to have contributed to some of the problems that Andréa details in the previous section. In fact, some students on our campus, for instance, have resisted or challenged placement in English 105. In addition, some faculty have questioned their multilingual students' writing abilities, expecting exceptional academic proficiency after just one semester of English 105.

While I understand that sometimes it is difficult to refrain from using generic markers or categories as well as educational and institutional labels to describe our student population and literacy skills, I immediately learned that some educators who do use them are unaware that these labels do not accurately represent our multilingual student population. My awareness increased my understanding of our need, as Andréa mentioned, to address multilingual issues on our campus. In his research on teaching academic writing to multilingual populations, Mark Roberge (2009) pointed out the use of "generic categories such as 'immigrant,' 'non-native,' or 'minority'" and "educational and institutional labels, such as" ESL, Standard English Learners (SEL), and Generation 1.5, used to "understand and describe the diversity of students from multilingual/multicultural immigrant families" (p. 3). As I continued learning about our student population and getting acquainted with my colleagues, I noticed that "non-native," for instance, became a frequent term used to describe bilingual speakers. Bilingualism, in some cases, seems to mark a speaker's birthplace or citizenship. If a student speaks both Spanish and English, a teacher may assume that the student is a non-native speaker of English, born outside of the U.S. However, I have worked with bilingual students who do not neatly fit into neither this category nor, for the most part, any of the educational and institutional labels normally assigned to them. Specifically, I have met a few third-generation students who speak both Spanish and English fluently; their educational needs included learning to acclimate to the college campus, workload, and academic writing expectations, which are needs that most first-year students require. Knowing, specifically, what our students need has led me to realize that addressing educational and institutional labeling is an important part of writing program administration and curriculum development.

Beatrice Méndez Newman (2007), Gándara and Contreras (2009), Roberge, Meryl Siegal, and Linda Harklau (2009) further defined the educational and institutional terms. English professor, writing center director, and First-Year Writing (FYW) coordinator, Newman (2007) explained that ESL "implies that the student is relying predictably and consciously on competence in an established first

language (L1) to achieve competence in a second language (L2)" (p. 23). Gándara and Contreras (2009) noted that SEL refers to students "who come from non-standard English backgrounds who have many of the same needs as English learners" (p. 126-127). Roberge and linguistic scholars Siegal and Harklau (2009) described Generation 1.5 as "a term that typically refers to English language learners who arrive in the U.S. at an early age, obtain much or all of their education in U.S. K-12 settings, and arrive in college with various patterns of language and literacy that don't fit the traditional, 'institutionally constructed' profiles of Developmental Writing, College ESL, or Freshman Composition" (p. vii). Such labels do not represent our diverse student population. In fact, our students' experiences do not reflect the experience of the students at the main campus. For example, while our campus is still predominantly white, the second largest student demographic is Latino/a. Generational differences show that Latino/as' language skills are diverse, ranging from the first-generation of Spanish-speakers, the second generation of bilingual-speakers in both Spanish and English, and the third generation of English-only speakers.

Native American education scholars Teresa L. McCarty and Lucille J. Watahomigie (2001) acknowledged language differences and how institutional labels obscure these differences to the point where they may become a non-existent part of one's identity. McCarty and Watahomigie (2001) added that "[within] major language groups, people often speak distinct dialects, some so different they merit being treated as separate languages … But linguistic labels mask the immense differentiation that exists with regard to *proficiency* in indigenous languages" (p. 492). Second-language writing scholar, Tanita Saenkhum, and Paul Kei Matsuda (2010), founding chair of the Symposium on Second Language Writing and of the CCCC Committee on Second Language Writing, further explained the literacy practices of student writers labeled as ESL, SEL, and/or Generation 1.5:

> [Multilingual students] speak English as an additional language. Some of them are fluent in spoken English but may transfer features of spoken language to written language. Others may be highly literate in their first language, but their rhetorical assumptions and practices may be quite different from those that are familiar to users of dominant varieties of English in the United States. (p. 1)

Such categories may give faculty across disciplines the impression that they have an accurate representation of their students. In reality, however, too many factors, as Saenkhum and Matsuda noted, complicate our understanding of students' educational experiences, cultural backgrounds, and literacy practices. Furthermore, composition scholar Christina Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) highlighted the problems and difficulties with grouping all students into one or several similar institutional labels without taking into account their diverse experiences. She explained that "[the] wide range of origins, immigration status, prior education, prior experience with ESL courses, feelings about home language and culture make these students difficult to box into a single definition" (Ortmeier-Hooper 2008, p. 412), and the institutional labeling does not consider or reflect these type of experiences that students may bring with them to college. Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) also added, "[W]e do not want to 'box' students into an ESL identity category of which they want no part" (p. 412).

Perhaps unintentional "boxing" is part of the reason students have been misplaced into English 101, as Andréa pointed out; some of the placement raters may have predetermined notions of what an ESL student's writing looks like. Our student population certainly challenges some of the raters' preconceived notions. Despite the use of these different labels, Roberge (2009) pointed out that some "scholars have become aware that" these labels "can serve to highlight or conceal, validate or invalidate, and define or convolute the histories, experiences, and educational needs of individual students" (p. 4). I have learned that some of our colleagues – who are unaware of the complexity of these labels – unconsciously make assumptions based on the category attributed to the student. In

doing so, some of them seem to have made automatic assumptions concerning the student's academic performance and needs in the classroom.

Filling the MCS Role

As a scholar, I realize how difficult it is to refrain from using educational and institutional labels; I find myself referring to these labels from time to time when trying to discuss students' literacy practices. While this is the case, I am aware of their effects and I try to make it apparent in the work that I do. Nonetheless, I feel that my efforts are minimal compared to the work that is still necessary, involving pursuit of a common ground with other faculty and administrators, a similar task that Andréa faced as a WPA. During my first year at WSUTC, my efforts began with the students. First, I immediately changed English 105's original title from "Composition for ESL Students" to "Composition for Multilingual Students" on my syllabus. On the first day of class, I addressed the ESL label on the course catalog, explaining its omission from the syllabus' title. Second, I ensured that my course description reflected the type of pedagogy and classroom environment necessary to challenge educational and institutional labels, emphasizing the value of students' existing knowledge and varying experiences with language. Additionally, I added discussing social issues related to language use, challenging standard notions of language learning, and learning how to negotiate diverse literacies.

I also discussed my own personal experiences with students, highlighting the fact that my knowledge not only comes from my education and scholarship, but it also derives from my experience growing up in a bilingual home. Since Spanish was my first language, I struggled with English in elementary school; some of my teachers viewed my home language as deficient, obstructing my ability to attain English proficiency. Because of this, I let students know that I am aware of the effects of educational and institutional labels and understand their diverse experiences with language. As Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) explained, "[the] institutionalized labels that are placed on second language students clearly have profound effect on how they define themselves in the college classroom and in their writing," (p. 393) including their place in the university. Students who view these institutional labels as negative markers, especially when they desire to progress toward English fluency upon their college arrival (Ortmeier-Hooper 2008), oftentimes feel disengaged if placed into English 105 or avoid enrolling in the course. As a result, some students at our branch campus may refrain "from seeking academic assistance" (Ortmeier-Hooper 2008, p. 393) and from engaging or enrolling in English 105 because they do not want others to view them as inferior. Some students reject these labels because they feel inadequate or incompetent. Others realize that these labels do not reflect their literacy skills and diverse experiences. While having this dialogue with students is important, I have learned that the conversation needs to continue with faculty, advisors, and administrators working across disciplines.

Aside from addressing my students' concerns and recognizing their needs, I have realized that part of my role, as the MCS, has become to help faculty, advisors, and administrators understand the effects of educational and institutional labels placed on our multilingual student population. Unfortunately, my efforts to address the misunderstanding of these labels among faculty, advisors, and administrators have been minimal. During my first year at WSUTC, I explained the misrepresentation of English 105's ESL designation to some colleagues who asked about it. I noted that I took a similar approach to English 101, emphasizing diverse literacies more so in English 105. I also discussed my own personal experiences with some of the faculty, advisors, and administrators, through which I tried to demonstrate the complexity of limiting student identities into one, neat category. However, I know that more work is necessary, especially in communicating with faculty at the main campus. Therefore, one of the biggest constraints that I face working at a small branch

campus that is held to the standards of the main campus involves minimal awareness among tenured or senior faculty regarding my efforts and our campus concerns. Due to limited placement in English 105, miscommunication between our campus and the main campus (as Andréa points out in the previous section), course needs, and pre-tenure responsibilities, I have not had the opportunity to teach at least one section of English 105 each semester. My future goals, however, include further developing English 105's curriculum, communicating more frequently with faculty, advisors, and administrators across disciplines, and seeking assessment opportunities.

Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) stressed that it is important for "composition instructors … to [not only] understand the fluidity of the ESL descriptor" including other labels, "but also to understand what the experiences of these students are in the composition classroom" (p. 391). Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) added that when students reject these labels, composition instructors may get the impression that their classroom is a monolingual space. Consequently, if writing teachers and faculty across disciplines are unaware of the effects of educational and institutional labels, then some advisors and administrators may also view the classroom as a monolingual space. As a result, they may fail to see students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and literacies that reflect "the reality of the first-year composition course" (Ortmeier-Hooper 2008, p. 413). Fortunately, Andréa recognized the needs of our diverse student population, which helped gear us toward change. I see myself as an extension of her efforts, especially since some faculty, advisors, and administrators, particularly those who are unfamiliar with the field of composition studies or those who have had different educational experiences, may have misconceptions about students' academic performance. Once an educator has placed a student into an educational and institutional category, others may assume that the student's literacy practices will have an effect on his or her academic abilities and learning. Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) pointed out that institutional labels, such as ESL and English Language Learner (ELL), become status markers that leave outsiders with the impression that these students are deficient in English. Such markers may lead some educators to ignore students' unique and diverse experiences as well as prior knowledge, all of which may contribute to students' learning. These negative or "misinformed attitudes" (Newman, 2007, p. 23) have led some faculty, advisors, and administrators to place all multilingual students into one category, viewing them as "'foreigners' linguistically and culturally in the academy" (p. 23). To avoid this misunderstanding among colleagues, education scholars such as Roberge (2009), Newman (2007), Ortmeier-Hooper (2008), McCarty and Watahomigie (2001), argued against labeling the literacy skills and educational abilities of diverse student populations. While I agree with Roberge, Ortmeier-Hooper, McCarty and Watahomigie, it seems that educators rely on educational and institutional labeling, and therefore, the first step is to ensure that faculty, advisors, and administrators across disciplines recognize that these labels compartmentalize students' diverse identities and literacy practices.

Conclusion

As we conclude our narratives, what we hope to have offered is but one set of the "unique material and/or philosophical constraints" facing our branch campus writing program, including our efforts to establish and develop WAC/WID. We also hope to underscore the value of administrators involved with writing programs at urban or branch campuses in providing such narratives and contexts. Our introduction began with Trimbur's (2008) contention regarding the lived experiences of program administrators; Similarly, we conclude with Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) who noted:

> [I]n addressing the issue of professionalization, we underscore the ways in which the university preference for tenure lines may misunderstand a small college WPA position, and how that position is moving an institution toward a robust structure for its culture of

> writing. Attending to the local context, after all, means working with institutional norms and histories in order to help that culture develop organically. (p. 39)

Thus, we offer our local contexts, histories, and norms as a means to professionalize our programs, and, by extension, our discipline.

New as we are, we hope not only to provide the confirmation and solidarity of experience that others in similar situations may have, but also to offer a heuristic for considering the development of WAC/WID and writing program administration for other branch campuses by tracing the issues of specialized discourses, missions, politics, constraints, and development. Vanessa's experiences as the campus MCS, addressed the unique constraints of coping with the specialized discourses of educational and institutional labeling that can both empower and constrain our programs. The lesson to be learned from Vanessa's experiences with such discourses is the necessity of obtaining buy-in and building relationships with faculty, staff, and advisors across campus as an important component of infrastructure that will eventually bring the program success. The value of such relationships can be matched only by the amount of time, effort, and energy it takes to establish and maintain these relationships, particularly in light of the high turnover rates at branch campuses.

Andréa's efforts as the campus WPA to align programmatic, campus, and even university outcomes with the profession reflects the importance of attendance to institutional histories and politics. Breaking out of "how things have always been done" is hard, but through incremental changes, over time, they can be accomplished. The WPA must always look for opportunities to publicize and professionalize the program, whether that is through individual tenure and review documents and annual reviews, or through opportunities to provide workshops, speak to stakeholders, or even include information in the department newsletter. Rebranding the writing center as a central component of the writing program and situating it as the place where WAC and WID develops on campus, as Andréa did, is not always an option, but plenty of opportunities are available for such program "face time."

Additionally, we highlighted the types of challenges that impact the WAC/WID context of curriculum development and administrative practices. As Debra Frank Dew noted, "Writing programs are rhetorical systems reconstituted daily through claims of policy and practice" (p. 42). Therefore, within our institutional context we have shown our struggles to accommodate our branch campus' needs, and at the same time, meet the main campus' policies and expectations and, reciprocally, to help them understand our "urban campus" context and constraints. As we continue to navigate through these obstacles, particularly our efforts to address recruitment, retention, and advocacy for our students, we prepare to constantly define and redefine our roles in our attempts to develop and grow our program, provide for our students, and work with our colleagues throughout the university system as well as across the disciplines. By having shared our experiences, we hope to extend the growing body of WPA narratives that enable us to theorize the intellectual work of these complex positions.

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Notes

[1] Throughout this article we use the terms "branch," "urban," and "regional" interchangeably to describe our campus.

[2] "The Tri-Cities is the fourth largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the state of Washington. With a population of 253,340, the major communities are Kennewick, Pasco, Richland and West Richland" (Tri-Cities Development Council).

[3] While the Tri-Cities overall average Hispanic or Latino population is approximately 30%, individual communities such as Pasco projected an Hispanic or Latino population of 56.26% in 2012 (Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division). Additionally, the 2010 census data reveals, "The fastest growing minority group is Hispanic (71.2% increase since 2000) for the state overall" (OFM, 2010 Census Fact Sheet).

[4] The Tri-Cities campus seeks this designation alone among the four campuses of the WSU system.

[5] For a thorough history of the development and implementation of the current set of writing programs at WSU, see *Beyond Outcomes: Assessment and Instruction Within a University Writing Program*.

[6] At WSU, all bachelor's degree requirements are expected to address Seven Learning Goals and Outcomes http://ugr.wsu.edu/faculty/7goals.html.

[7] See Richard Haswell (2001) "The Two-Tier Rating System" in *Beyond Outcomes.*

[8] Primarily, I referenced Writing Program Administration WPA-L@asu.edu and Writing Center Mailing List wcenter@lyris.ttu.edu

[9] In addition to Haswell's discussion in *Beyond Outcomes*, William Condon and Diane Kelly-Riley's 2004 article "Assessing and teaching what we value: The relationship between college-level writing and critical thinking" discusses additional insights into limitations of WSU's Writing Assessment Program based on studies done between the two publications.

[10] The Pew Research's report (2013) defines second-, and third-generation immigrants. Second-generation includes "U.S. born adults who have at least one immigrant parent," and third-generation includes "adults who are the children of U.S. born parents."

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