More Useful Beyond College?: The Case for a Writing in the Professions Curriculum in WAC/WID

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Abstract: Drawing on interviews with faculty and administrators across the curriculum, this article argues for a new approach to WAC/WID that I call writing in the professions (WIP). A WIP curriculum emphasizes writing with/for audiences outside the university and in genres that are intended for use beyond the classroom, rather than in simulated genres written for the professor. In its emphasis on preparing students for their writing lives beyond the university, WIP works from four primary concepts that emerged categorically during interviews with faculty. First, students must learn to compose visually and orally, in addition to alphabetically. Second, students must learn to write in a team-based, collaborative environment that requires effective project management. Third, students must learn to develop clarity in their writing. And fourth, students must learn to write in ways that are accessible to non-expert audiences.

In the first couple weeks of the semester, Fernando, a Latino Assistant Professor of Political Science in his second year at Southern Research University (SRU), began working with the university writing program (UWP) to "completely change" his writing curriculum, as he started asking himself if there was a way to "teach his students writing in a way more useful beyond college."[1,2] Fernando scrapped his syllabus for an upper-level, writing-intensive Politics of Mexico class that emphasized research-based, academic-style essays in favor of having students practice the writing genres that they would likely encounter in the workplace as researchers and consultants. Fernando's new assignments include a series of op-ed pieces—to be posted publicly on a class blog, with the hope that students will "be creative" rather than "writing in a dry academic style,"—and two policy memos. The series of op-ed blog posts asked students to focus on a contemporary problem or contingent event in Mexico for a newspaper or magazine-like venue. These assignments attempted to engage students in public writing for a wide-range of potential readers. Students would also be evaluated on how they responded to one another's blog posts.

In one of the policy memos, Fernando envisions a job in the "market research division" of an oil and gas company and asks students to write for this imagined company, addressing concerns raised by the directive board. He requires students to incorporate information from their reading and research and to make a recommendation. The "rubric," which displays a breakdown of how students would be evaluated, seems to work from generalist writing concepts with little attention to the particularities of the disciplinary genre, although other details from the assignment suggest that Fernando was indeed looking for students to think and write like political scientists, especially given the imagined audience he created. These assignments, which all still required researching and writing like political scientists, seem quite

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removed from the traditional, academic research essay. The blog post assignments, like the policy memos, asked students to write in a non-academic genre for an imagined workplace audience.

Fernando's rationale and genre choices show that he anticipates the likely writing forms and audiences for whom his students might write in the real world. This attempt to create a workplace scenario within the classroom is an example of a writing in the profession (WIP) focused curriculum: it does not necessarily give students actual, workplace writing experiences, but it asks them to imagine and write as if they were in them. Similarly, interviews and review of curricular material from faculty across ten different disciplines indicate a shift toward WIP curriculums that range from new assignments to scaffolded, semester-long writing projects that include real-world, outside audiences and genres, giving student writing a life and purpose beyond the classroom. In this way, writing assignments have the potential to become more public and outward facing. Within this WIP curriculum, the two major elements that contribute to this shift are genre and audience. Simulated workplace genres can exist solely within the classroom, whereas more authentic, workplace writing is composed in conversation with/for outside audience members and in genres that are intended for use beyond the classroom by people in an organization or business (i.e., the kind of work that may occur in a service-learning curriculum or through an internship). Figure 1 attempts to map out this range of WIP in practice.

Genre-based:

(simulated)

Professor and students invent a professional/ workplace scenario as a context for writing.

Ex. Fernando in political science (pg. 1)

Other WIP practices: professor consults with professional audience on assignment design; guest speaker from workplace attends class and/or provides feedback on works-in-progress; examples of authentic, workplace writing genres are circulated as models for writing and/or assignments are designed to mimic these genres; non-expert audience beyond the professor (i.e., WAC fellow) reads and responds to writing

Non-academic/workplace audiences:

(authentic)

Professor and students work in collaboration with stakeholders outside the university to create and/or inform the professional/ workplace scenario, thus providing a location and audience for writing outside the classroom

Ex. Engineering (pg. 22)

Although conversations about writing pedagogy in political science are not often connected to those in

Figure 1: WIP Curriculum Continuum

disciplines as different as engineering, law, math, and biology, WIP was present across a wide range of fields that share the purpose of making curricular changes that motivate students to understand the connection between writing and their lives as working professionals. WIP pedagogy runs complimentary to the field of professional writing in terms of its focus on workplace contexts and primarily business and technical writing genres, yet differs in that this particular kind of WIP emerged directly from the writing pedagogies of disciplinary faculty. WIP is also highly contextualized within each unique field. So, for instance, as Fernando's policy memo assignment shows, students need to know both the genre of a policy memo as well as disciplinary content knowledge about relocating a business internationally, and how to balance the economic and social concerns of a directive board with market expansion. In this example, what differentiates Fernando's assignment from what we traditionally consider to be writing-to-learn (i.e.,

writing to express understanding) becomes also about learning and mastering a professional writing genre: the policy memo. In this case, Fernando is imagining a workplace scenario and asking his students to do this as well via practicing a simulated genre.

This example aligns with the well-known, university writing practice of "inventing the university," first identified by David Bartholomae (1986), whereby student writers imagine and write for a perceived academic audience. Bartholomae (1986) then argues that, given students are already writing for this imagined audience, we can and should help prepare them to do so more effectively by making academic moves explicit in our writing instruction. Yet, in the case of professional writing, professors in the academy are inventing the workplace scenario alongside their students, even though neither party is capable of actually reading or writing from this perspective. Still, I want to argue that this kind of simulated, professional writing genre should be used alongside other educational genres that we integrate into university writing, especially across the disciplines, and that highly authentic WIP curriculums will move toward writing for authentic, workplace audiences in locations beyond the university (see Figure 1).

David Russell (2007) has long recognized the relationship between writing in the disciplines and business and technical communication (BTC) and argues that BTC writing courses date back to the 1920s, giving them as long an institutional history as WAC/WID courses. In this way, BTC "is always already the teaching of writing in the disciplines" (Russell, 2007) and our writing lives always already include some degree of professional writing (Russell, 2020). Still, as Deborah Bosley (2000) points out, WAC has tended to focus on writing in academic environments and within the major disciplines, while BTC emphasizes preparing students to write in the workplace. The need for both academic and professional writing has been acknowledged by both disciplinary faculty and writing studies scholars (Schuldberg et al., 2007; Logan & Slater, 2018), alongside the need to write for audiences beyond the classroom (Croft et al., 2019; Erwin & Zappile, 2013), instead of within "stand alone" writing courses that exist outside of disciplinary content courses. WIP curriculums seek to integrate BTC pedagogies within content courses over time via support from WAC fellows.

However, little research has explored how or to what extent WID courses contribute to students' development of a professional identity (Croft et al., 2019), even though the ability to write well in the workplace is more important now than ever (Droz & Jacobs, 2019; Jackson & Wilton, 2016). The disciplinary faculty and university administrators interviewed for this research indicate a strong awareness of the need for students to develop a professional writing identity within the disciplines and imply that their writing pedagogies attempt to do just that. Thus, the field of WAC/WID's attention to intersections with BTC seems necessary for moving forward as we work with faculty and students. In particular, this research indicates that WAC/WID programs, specifically through WAC fellows' models, are well positioned to support WIP curriculums. I argue that, in order to do so well, WAC/WID administrators need to more explicitly integrate BTC into their pedagogies and professional development with faculty and WAC fellows. Further, this study has important implications for first year writing (FYW) programs and mandatory writing course requirements that seek to teach generalized writing courses outside of any particular discipline. BTC offers a viable approach for these general education writing courses that is meaningful both to students in their understanding of how writing connects to their future workplace selves (Eodice, Geller, & Lerner, 2017) and to faculty in the disciplines seeking to prepare students for their eventual professional lives.

Yet, a WAC/WID framework that more formally integrates BTC, for which WIP is a starting point, is not meant to replace writing program initiatives that emphasize academic writing genres. Rather, a WIP pedagogy can further support traditional writing program goals—emphasizing the rhetorical nature of writing, recognizing writing as a social act—while increasing writing proficiency. WIP also expands these goals by creating opportunities—both simulated and/or authentic—for students to write with audiences outside the university in mind. In that sense, WIP is meant as a complimentary additive to common best practices in writing across the curriculum, like teaching writing as process-based, and WIP includes writing

to learn and learning to write, or writing in the disciplines. As Dan Melzer's (2014) large-scale study of over 2000 writing assignments across the curriculum from 100 universities indicated, instructors have primarily asked students to write for the "teacher as examiner" in either research paper or short answer exam format. Melzer calls for a need to reform these approaches. Evidence from my study indicates that some faculty across the curriculum are moving away from these practices as well. WIP offers a possible approach for the kind of reform for which Melzer calls, encouraging a shift toward imagining writing beyond the classroom context.

In this scenario, the UWP becomes an important site for this kind of curricular development by helping faculty think through assignment design and genre choice as part of their conversations about how collaborative partnerships can best work to support student writers. Further, WAC fellows are well positioned to play the role of external audience member, oftentimes outside both the classroom and the discipline. This helps prepare students to interact with stakeholder audiences beyond the university, rather than just writing for the professor as hypothetical, alternative audience. While creating imagined audiences is a well-intentioned move, part of the limitation is that such a context does not really activate genre knowledge because, as Christine Tardy has pointed out in *Building Genre Knowledge* (2009), the activity is likely not real for students. She argues that, for students to fully learn and activate genre knowledge, the motives and texts must become real for their users. In her longitudinal research that traces the experiences of four multilingual graduate students in engineering and computer sciences, Tardy acknowledges that performance of genre knowledge is also deeply connected to identity, and that to use genre knowledge— even when mastered—students also must feel authorized to do so. Thus, not only is a WIP curriculum valuable, but the WIP classroom, where students have the opportunity to discuss their experiences with writing in workplace genres with peers, WAC fellows, and their professor, as well as (at times) workplace audiences, can also significantly contribute to helping them develop the authority and confidence to write outside the university.

WIP also acknowledges the complex communities in which students will need to learn and communicate over the course of their lives post-graduation, in particular, the kinds of heterogeneous literate practices that will develop over the span of their lives, as part of what Paul Prior (2018) has called their "trajectories of semiotic becoming." Prior uses this phrase to describe a story about his daughter's embodied, mediated, dialogic learning that happened across many moments of life and within messy discourses, rather than within settled domains. Writing that takes place both within and outside the classroom, across academic and community audiences, in response to shifting genres, helps students move across discourses in a dialogic process that may better represent their post-graduation writing and learning lives. Thus, more strongly integrating service-learning, experiential learning, and internship-like writing experiences into writing in the disciplines courses will better prepare students for their later writing lives.

As was the case for Fernando (political science), many disciplinary faculty turned to the UWP not only because it functioned as a de facto WAC/WID program, but also because of his particular interest in having students work with WAC fellows who could provide an outsider perspective on their writing. Similarly, Linda (math) teaches writing-intensive courses for math education students who need to be able to explain complex math concepts in simple, understandable language for middle and high school students. Linda considers the WAC fellow's role in helping her students become better writers as absolutely necessary and different from what she offers as someone with an advanced degree in math. In addition to valuing an outsider perspective, faculty also emphasize basic writing concepts that they believe are universal, such as clarity and analysis, as well as somewhat new assignment components, like requiring students to compose across modes and write in teams.

In its emphasis on preparing students for their writing lives beyond the university, WIP works from four primary concepts that emerged categorically during interviews with faculty. First, students must learn to compose visually and orally, in addition to alphabetically. Second, students must learn to write in a team-based, collaborative environment that requires effective project management. Third, students must learn to

develop clarity in their writing. And fourth, students must learn to write in ways that are accessible to non-expert audiences. Although attempting to understand the UWP's exact role in supporting and developing this curriculum is not the focus of this article, it is worth noting that the common factor across a wide range of disciplines that operate from a WIP curriculum is their UWP partnerships and connection to WAC fellows. This is not surprising, given that the UWP is well-positioned to work with writers and faculty who are composing with a non-expert audience in mind that requires attention to clarity.

Methods

This research is part of a larger, ethnographic project that took place in the UWP at Southern Research University (SRU), a large, research university in the South ranked the second most ethnically diverse in the country with a high percentage of first-generation college students.[3] This particular UWP functions as both a writing center and a WAC/WID program, separately from the English Department. With no official Writing Program Administrators (WPAs), the UWP serves as the administrative hub for writing support on campus. At the time of this study, the staff was made up of 11 full-time administrators, including a director and associate director, and both graduate and undergraduate WAC fellows and writing consultants. The UWP facilitates approximately 60 discipline-specific partnerships annually that move beyond one-off workshops to offer unique, integrated course, program, or department-specific support, similar to WAC Fellows programs or course-embedded tutoring models.

Participants

The findings in this study draw primarily from interviews with ten disciplinary faculty who hold a variety of different positions on campus (including tenured/tenure-track faculty, instructors, department chairs, and deans) and have worked with the UWP for anywhere from one to 15 years. Participants were selected for this study according to recommendations from the UWP staff. Table 1 provides additional information about the study participants and their use of WIP concepts in their talk about teaching writing:

Table 1: Disciplinary Faculty and Administrators

Name	Position/Discipline	WIP Concepts Discussed
Fernando	Assistant Professor, Political Science	1; 3; 4
Charley	Former Associate Dean and Endowed Chair, Hospitality and Restaurant Management;	2; 3; 4
Tara	Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Law Center	3; 4
Kyle	Undergraduate Dean, Business School	1; 2; 3; 4
Linda	Lecturer, Math Department	3; 4
Carol	Endowed Chair and Marketing Professor, Business School	1; 3; 4
Amir	Assistant Professor, Architecture	1; 2; 3; 4
Chris	Instructional Associate Professor, Biology	3; 4;
Morgan	Assistant Professor, Information and Logistics Technology	1; 2; 3; 4
Rick	Professor and Department Chair, Art History	1; 2; 3; 4

In addition to the interview data, one section below includes a short transcription from a UWP session between a WAC fellow and a group of engineering students working on a collaborative writing project. This excerpt is included because it shows how team-based writing occurs in a WIP curriculum, which was rarely articulated in detail by faculty during interviews, despite it being a valued aspect of writing curriculums.[4]

Interview Procedure and Analysis

The interviews for this research were qualitative and open-ended in nature, working from the same five primary questions about each interviewee's partnership with the UWP and approach to teaching writing. Time of interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes, and interviewees were asked follow-up questions based on their responses.[5]

Rather than fully transcribing and analyzing each interview through the use of software, I used a logging method developed by folklorist-ethnographer Carl Lindahl, who describes logging as a detailed table of contents for the entire interview. The logging method enables the researcher to summarize and paraphrase the interview with attention to key words, while reserving transcription for the most significant moments. Although some researchers, such as Irving Seidman (2012), warn against selective transcription, the thorough logging and noting of the interview still requires careful listening, documentation of the entire interview, and a fair amount of selected transcriptions. All interviews, logs, and analyses were conducted by me. According to Lindahl (2004), interview logs should:

1. follow the order of the interview;

2. focus on the interviewee's words rather than on the questions of the interview;

3. begin a new entry when the topic changes (approximately every 1-4 minutes or when the interviewer poses a new question);

4. mark each new entry with the time so that the researcher can go back and find the section easily in case they wish to return to it; and

5. use short sentences to describe what is said, along with brief quotations when preserving the language choice of the interviewee is necessary.[6]

During the analysis and coding of these interview logs, particularly with attention to the interview question, "How do you approach the teaching of writing?" the four primary concepts of WIP developed. I used a grounded theory approach, that enabled themes to emerge via an open-coding process (Charmaz 2006). It was never my intention to draw conclusions about commonalities across pedagogical approaches; I was primarily focused on how each department collaborated with the UWP. However, I quickly learned that: a) the presence of a UWP partnership influenced writing pedagogies; a) when faculty across the disciplines wanted to make changes to their pedagogies or do something innovative in the teaching of writing, they often turned to the UWP for support. Thus, these faculty perspectives come from teachers of writing who were looking to move beyond traditional teaching practices.

Establishing a WIP Framework

Although not every concept was present across all faculty interviewees, these trends were significant because over half of the faculty mentioned each of them. Given the wide range of disciplinary backgrounds represented here, some pedagogical variation is expected. Still, these concepts were taught within a larger, discipline-specific context, and were often adapted to fit the particular disciplines, rather than discussed as general writing ideas, with the exception of WIP Concept 3, clarity. The examples below offer representative highlights from interviews with faculty members across the disciplines that showcase how they talk about teaching writing.

WIP Concept 1: Students must learn to compose visually and orally, in addition to alphabetically

One particular faculty member, Amir, an Assistant Professor of Architecture, speaks with great enthusiasm and appreciation for his UWP partnership, which began the year before when he was a part-time faculty member teaching a writing-intensive course. This year, his first in a tenure-track line, Amir continues his commitment to teaching writing, which he intentionally discusses as a project, not a paper. Amir emphasizes the need for visual communication (models and drawings) and written communication to work together simultaneously. Amir explains:

> Take a look at the structure of the assignment. You'll note that there is a writing component, which is the sort of bolded item at the top of the page, and then you'll notice at the bottom, there are presentations they offer as well. So, the structure of the assignment involved both writing as communication and visual communication as well. Really a part of the goal that I've set up in the assignment is that they're working hand-in-hand to achieve the objectives. So, in their submissions, they would be inclusive of visual communication... Whether it's photography as a capturing of visual reality, whether it's collage, whether it's a wide variety of techniques in terms of the visual, the goal here is that it becomes integrated with the writing. They're working together. So, you'll note in the specifications of the assignment that illustrations are key and the writing and the visualization are both included in the final product. They also do visual presentations in class and that also is a chance for them to verbally and visually reinforce the writing as well. As far as the structure of the assignment, it's not necessarily a paper. I never will term it that when I'm talking about it. I call it a project. And, that's maybe a semantic separation, but for architects, the term project means something more than simply just one piece of a larger equation. The project encompasses all of the different tactics, mediums, strategies that we employ to solve issues. So, I call it a project. I don't call it a paper, and I think that maybe philosophically summarizes it.

The idea of approaching writing assignments as projects is an important aspect of the mindset needed to approach writing in architecture, and other design disciplines, because it requires representing knowledge visually, verbally, and in writing, as well as integrating the three. Later, Amir specifically describes how WAC fellows help his students learn how to work with both image and word by "talk[ing] to… students about the position of the image, the relevance of the image, the captioning of that image and the way it's labeled." In other moments during this interview, Amir makes it clear that his students' ability to compose across modes is essential for their future work as architects.

As part of their recognition that university writing should help prepare students for workplace writing, other administrators and faculty also acknowledge that, in addition to more traditional written forms, students will likely have to compose orally and visually in their future careers. Thus, they create assignments that encourage students to practice these kinds of composing. For instance, Morgan, an assistant professor of information and logistics technology, has her upper-level, writing-intensive students work on a project that revolves around charts, graphs, and diagrams. The writing assignment takes the form of a modified IMRaD report genre (Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion), with a detailed Appendix that includes seven different tools and methods that are constructed primarily as tables and images. Each figure in the appendix not only has to be developed, along with effective titles and captions, but also has to be written about in the IMRaD report.

Although writing studies may not consider these to be complexly multimodal, they do fall on a kind of multimodal continuum (Grouling & Grutsch McKinney, 2016). The texts Morgan asks her students to create are not traditional, alphabetic texts, because they also have visual, numerical, and spatial components. As Joanna Wolfe notes in her 2010 *CCC* article, teaching quantitative literacy, or "rhetorical numbers" as

she calls it, should be part of our writing curriculums. And some disciplines do integrate more *multi*modal elements into the curriculum, such as electrical power engineering technology's (ELET) senior capstone projects, which require students to create a prototype, write an informational report about the development of the prototype, and market their projects via oral and visual presentations that include a large, wall-sized poster and a PowerPoint presentation with an oral delivery for an audience of professors, peers, and community members who then judge the projects and seriously consider investing in the projects. While the inclusion of multimodal elements in the ELET projects shows an awareness of the need for students to learn this kind of writing, the faculty members' and teaching assistants' articulations of these projects suggested that they considered the translation across modes to be a simple, direct process (i.e., create the prototype, write the report, pull quotes from the report to create the poster, slides, and oral presentation). In this particular UWP partnership, WAC fellows spent substantial time helping students move across modes and teaching them how these genres were indeed different.[7]

WAC/WID is well positioned to support multimodal writing across the disciplines, yet greater attention to how faculty outside of writing studies engage in these pedagogies is central to determining how we might approach this collaborative work (Fodrey & Mikovits, 2020; Zimmerman, 2020). Thus, students learning to compose visually, orally, and in writing, the first major concept of WIP, acknowledges this focus on integrating multiple literacies in writing.

WIP Concept 2: Students must learn to write in a team-based, collaborative environment that requires effective project management

In another partnership that requires students to compose across modes, Tim, a recent SRU graduate with a B.A. in history and an experienced WAC fellow, worked closely with four sophomore-level ELET majors on their collaborative writing assignment. After reading through a draft of their proposal, Tim encouraged the group to set up a Google Doc so that they could work together on one text. The transcribed exchange below emphasizes both team-based writing and the support for project management via the support from a WAC fellow. While this does not draw directly from a faculty interview, this exchange best highlights what a team-based writing WIP pedagogy looks like in practice, as well as the role of WAC fellows in supporting this work.

> Tim: Overall, those aren't huge issues, right, but they're just enough to where it will really, just for the sake of this class, it can really pull down your grade, and you don't want that for silly mistakes, right? And that's why it's best to get several different pairs of eyes looking over it, because I'll tell you from my experience, when I write something and I read it to myself, I'm going to completely skip over the errors I made because I know what I want it to say.

> Hao: Yeah

> Tim: Yeah. And that's why it's good that four people write it, and even if there's a lead writer, everyone reads each section and really knows, okay, what's this about, what's this going on.

> *[Students laugh]*

> Tim: What?

> Hao: I mean, it's like, we're non-native speakers, the way we're writing, it's like…for me, him, and him, so we can't understand.

Tim: Yeah, absolutely, and here's the thing, that's also why I'm here.

Hao: So then when we read it, some of our people read it, they may not understand, so that's why we need you. [laughs]

Tim: Yes, that's why I'm here. To give you that extra little jump. But, I will say, for the most part, you did what you needed to do, so don't let the fact the fact that English isn't your first language bog down your ideas, because I still knew what you wanted to say, and that's really critical.

Hao: That's why we tried to write it, with as much detail so you can guess from that.

Tim: Right

Hao: We're writing the shortcut…

Tim: You will come upon a time when, as seniors, or when you're working for the private sector or the government of something like that, you're going to have to write proposals intended for people who are outside of your field. So, if they can't follow what you're writing about, they won't fund it. That's just that. Imagine that, you're writing to get money from the Bauer family or something like that. Those guys are in business. They're not technicians, so, you want to write it in a way so that anyone ideally could understand.

Hao: Yeah, that's right.

Although this is a bit confusing to follow without the body language, what Hao the ELET student suggested was that since none of them are native English speakers, having them all read one another's work would result in the same kind of reading, and they would most likely not read errors as errors. Tim agreed that he was there to offer another reading, but then he reframed their claim in a larger context. He reminded the students that he was able to follow most of their ideas in the proposal and refuted their suggestion that their non-native status would prevent them from being able to provide one another with feedback. Tim also set the stakes for clarity in the students' writing higher than grammatical correctness by linking their ability to communicate clearly in writing— something they are all capable of assessing—to the likelihood that the project would be funded. Tim encouraged students to think about a broader audience for their work by getting them to focus on how to make their writing accessible to non-specialists in their field. This excerpt shows students engaged in the second concept of WIP, which requires students to write together in a collaborative environment. Figure 2 shows how this labor was accounted for in the planning of the writing and research project. In their final report, students more formally presented each team members' participation using a Gantt chart to visually depict the distribution of labor.

While most faculty had primarily workplace-focused reasons for requiring team writing, others incorporated it primarily for workload management. For instance, Morgan (computer science) explains her decision to create team-based writing assignments as a necessary "survival mechanism" that the SRUUWP helped her develop. Specifically, she says:

We used to have classes around twenty to twenty-three, but then budget cuts started happening and we were basically told as a faculty 'your classes will never get smaller, they will only get larger.' And, I had a big spike. I went from twenty students to thirty-five, and sometimes I had maybe forty and my goal, personal goal, is that if you have an assignment due in my class, I'm going to give you feedback within one week. So, I worked it out with [the SRUUWP]—what to

do? And, we decided to work in teams of two, sometimes three, [because] feedback is only as useful as it is timely.

This major shift in Morgan's approach to teaching writing was not focused on preparing students for future work-based writing, but was a way for her to continue providing timely feedback. The move was also a reaction to increased class sizes, something many universities are facing, and provided Morgan with a strategy for continuing to maintain her values as a writing teacher while also keeping her workload manageable. Morgan makes her struggle with this move explicit by admitting that, "I don't like that I have to give that option to team up, but it's a survival mechanism for instructors." she was "just doing it more as survival," and previously hadn't "realize[d] that these are the negative effects of budget issues on the classroom."

Justin:

- Find sources needed to help program the project concept.

- I'll do some programming and work on project design.

- Let me know what else we need help with!

Dave:

- Find sources needed to work on the Literature review

- Assist in programming and project design

Ross:

- Helping with literature review and final report. Assisting with project design when possible.

Jim:

- I'll start working on the literature review after the sources/notes are posted on here.

- I'll start creating the final presentation after we have more information about our project

- I'll put together the Final Report when everything is complete

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Figure 2: Planned roles for writing the report displayed in working team Google Doc

Then, Rick (art history) discusses his work with collaborative writing and feedback through the use of google docs, which enables teaching assistants, professors, WAC fellows, and peers to provide writing feedback to students in one space. Like Morgan, Rick is teaching writing in a class that he describes as "too big," even though it is the only writing-intensive class in the program. The class regularly enrolls nearly fifty students, and thus, Rick explains, "if it were not for the writing studio experiences and a good teaching assistant, it would be impossible." He also describes how the "writing studio," a type of SRUUWP-provided WAC-based support where students meet in small groups to discuss their individual writing projects with peers and a UWP consultant-facilitator, significantly lowers the number of students who fail because this approach encourages students to start drafts earlier for a real audience. Rick's strong preference for the group-based peer review, rather than one-on-one, encourages a "process of discovery" that starts from where students are, rather than always revolving around a draft.

Despite these reasons for collaborative writing projects, WIP recognizes the need for teamwork and interpersonal skills, in addition to familiarity with technology, that enables working together outside of

face-to-face, asynchronous settings. The UWP WAC fellows are well-positioned to support team writing—whether it be collaborative composing or group writing exchange and feedback—in part because they are technically outside the group and thus provide a more neutral perspective.

WIP Concept 3: Students must learn to develop clarity in their writing

Also working from a team-based writing pedagogy, Morgan, the same assistant professor of information and logistics technology who I mentioned earlier, has been collaborating with the UWP for several years in her teaching of an upper-level, writing-intensive course focused on quality improvement methods for managing production and service operations. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to terminology and mapping processes that they can use to assess a problem, identify causes, and develop solutions for potential customers. Her major writing assignment asks students to investigate a real or fictional workplace problem through the application of Lean Six Sigma, a methodology that relies on collaborative team effort to improve performance by systematically removing waste and reducing variation. Morgan notes a difference between the kind of feedback she offered students and what the WAC fellows could provide:

> You know, when it's about the content of the class, or like how to use this quality tool, that they [WAC fellows] can point them back to the instructor, whereas if it's like 'I'm trying to explain this and it's not clear. Can you help me make it more clear?' well, that's in their wheelhouse, that's what the facilitator can help with.

Although she seems to overlook the relationship between content and style by separating the two, she also suggests that clarity is a general, perhaps universal, writing skill that is not specific to information and logistics technology.

Similarly, Tara, an associate dean for student affairs in the law school in her tenth year, describes the kind of generalist analytical skills as such:

> They really need to focus on the critical reasoning and analysis portion, and I think the rest can come, but I think the more specialized skill is what is necessary. Because even in, you know, a law review article, just with you guys, you know, you're going to state your thesis, your problem, what you're trying to address, and then, as you gather your materials—your different cases, your other articles—I mean, you're going to analyze that material against what you're trying to do, so again, you're always going to come back to that analysis, which is the meat of your project, your exam, the bar (laughs). I mean, on the bar exam, that's what they're looking at—they're looking at how do you analyze the problem? And then they want you to come up with a definitive conclusion.

For Tara, analysis and "critical reasoning" are skills taught by English Departments and UWPs, as she says, "just with you guys [in English]." Her discussion of "analysis" circles around specific elements of writing again connected to clarity. For instance, the writer must state their thesis and end with a definitive conclusion, leaving little room for confusion or indecision.

Nevertheless, she places such emphasis on clear analysis and critical thinking because of the professionalizing aspect of her discipline. She believes that these skills will be useful beyond the university, as students write law reviews for publication and take the bar exam. She explains that the bar exam is designed to determine how students will act as lawyers in the workplace and thus determines whether or not they should receive their license to practice. In this case, Tara's descriptions of writing in law show how these professional writing genres—i.e., law reviews and the bar exam—exist as both academic and real-world, in that they span across university and workplace audiences. While Tara is very much aware of her

students' future lives as working lawyers, her emphasis on both "critical reasoning" and "critical thinking" aligns with academic genres. Thus, this example shows how WIP genres and academic genres exist alongside one another in ways that are complimentary.

Also emphasizing a more generalizable writing skill that has a place in both academic and workplace genres is attention to mechanics. For instance, Carol (marketing) explains that her partnership with the UWP means, "I don't have to get down to the sentence level…I hate to use the word mechanics, but I guess you're handling the mechanics of improving a draft." Although she refers to writing simply as "mechanics" here, Carol offers more nuanced writing and communication advice to students during her class, where she emphasizes the importance of clear communication over any other grammatical or writing-based issues, asks her students to imagine their audience as they wrote, and spends a large amount of class time having students talk through their research projects for both experts and non-experts. Much of Carol's feedback attempts to repeat back to students their projects, as she understands them, and to help them talk in concrete, rather than abstract, terms. While not explicit, Carol's description of writing support as mechanics is directly followed by descriptions that extend that work in ways that point to an emphasis on clarity. This indicates that "mechanics" may simply be the first thing that comes to mind when university administrators and disciplinary faculty think about teaching writing; they are not necessarily reducing all writing instruction to a single idea of writing "mechanics." For Carol, a focus on "writing mechanics" also seems to include attention to audience, organization, source integration, analysis, and argument, all in the name of clarity.

Overall, university administrators and disciplinary faculty value working with the UWP because they often have students work with generalist WAC fellows outside their discipline who can help students determine whether or not their writing is clear. The emphasis on students writing so that those outside their field can understand was an important element of "good writing" for these interviewees, pushing back against the writing across the curriculum premise that disciplinary experts are best positioned to guide discipline-specific writing, since writing is highly situated, and thus without a universal definition of what constitutes "good writing."

Recent scholarship on transfer, though, recognizes that some writing skills and habits, like clarity, can be taught and applied across contexts, especially when writing instructors teach intentionally for transfer and students are explicitly taught to develop a metacognitive awareness (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; Anson & Moore, 2016). This scholarship further corroborates the opinion of these interviewees. WAC fellows and writing centers in particular can help facilitate transfer by helping students make connections across assignments and contexts (Devet & Driscoll 2020; Hill 2016; Nowacek & Hughes 2015). Similarly, Chris Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki (2006) notice some generalizable concepts of academic writing valued by faculty across disciplines, which are "persistent, open-minded" study, the valuing of "reason over emotion," and an "imagined reader who is coolly rational" (p. 5-7). The practices of writing with a professional audience in mind at SRU adds to this list a focus on clarity, the third concept of WIP. This is one of those moments of tension between composition studies and faculty across the discipline. Compositionist Ian Banard's (2014) discussion of clarity in *Upsetting Composition Commonplaces* notes that "clarity" is not transparent, that concepts of clarity carry "ideological baggage," and that the distinction between unclear and clear is problematic, especially because there is no universal definition of clarity outside context and audience. Yet, these participants' concept of clarity is more in line with Joseph Williams' and Joseph Bizup's (2017) concept of clarity, which emphasizes conciseness and avoids unnecessary or unintentional complexity.

WIP Concept 4: Students must learn to write in ways that are accessible to non-expert audiences

The across-the-curriculum emphasis on clarity stems from the need students have to communicate with non-expert audiences, all the while drawing on their disciplinary expertise. Thus, the value of identifying other audiences or readers for student texts beyond the expert professor becomes more important. For instance, Kyle, an associate dean for undergraduate business programs with over twenty years of experience in the college, explains his awareness of the difference between the kinds of writing students would likely do in the workplace versus the kind of academic writing done by faculty**:**

> Writing in the disciplines, if you're a biology major and you're going to do research in graduate school and publish in a respected medical professional journal, that's academic writing within the discipline. But, if you're a business student, the writing you're going to need to do would be, maybe a project analysis of why we should build a refinery in Azerbaijan, or a memo to your boss, or maybe a marketing report. And it's very different from what gets published in business journals, which is the kind of writing business professors write.

Yet, Chris, an instructional associate professor in biology, seems to approach the teaching of writing from a mindset that aligns better with Kyle's than with "academic writing within the discipline." Chris explains:

> In the sciences, just like in any sort of academic peer review, what my goal is in my class is, well certainly, I'm trying to teach my material, but really what I'm really trying to expose them to is, what the world is really like as a scientist. In the grand scheme of things, I know that in two years, they don't do any of the stuff that I teach them. They're going to forget about the physiology I teach, but what I do want them to know is, you know, you're going to leave here with a biology degree and you should know how to communicate as a biologist—I don't care if you're planning on medicine, I don't care if you're planning on working in a lab, I don't care if you're working at McDonald's. I mean it doesn't [matter] what field you're going into. It doesn't matter what field you're going into, you're going to have to learn to write a report, you know a technical report.

Thus, "thinking like a biologist" is linked to communicating and writing like one. Whereas Chris emphasizes the importance of preparing students to think and communicate from the position of a professional in the field, he also shows an awareness of what Michael Carter (2007) has called meta-genre, or the overarching genres and broader patterns of language as social action that group together multiple fields. For Chris, the value of students understanding how to write a technical report, which they learn in biology, is also something that they will likely use in other contexts, with other audiences in mind.

Nearly all university administrators and disciplinary faculty acknowledge that students will likely have to write for non-experts in their fields, and want their writing curricula to reflect that. This leads to both the creation of assignments with entirely new, workplace audiences (like Fernando's), and to the development of writing that can be read and understood by both experts and non-experts alike (like Linda's attempts in her writing assignments for future math teachers). Thus, the fourth concept of WIP recognizes that faculty often ask students to write one text with both professional and non-academic readers in mind, something quite different from asking students to write for only academic audiences.

The Future of WIP: An Exemplary Curriculum

The ELET department exemplified a highly authentic WIP curriculum as they worked with the UWP through a four-course, vertical model of writing intensive courses required for all majors in their

sophomore, junior, first-semester senior, and second-semester senior years. As students practiced writing in workplace genres early on, they were eventually required to present in the Engineering Technology Undergraduate Research Symposium. One of these groups with whom I studied and worked had an investor from the beginning as they worked on their project, which was to design a shipping container with solar panels that would function as a mobile classroom for children in Africa. Their goal was to create a classroom that would be "as efficient as possible and safe," keeping in mind the harsh climate of the Mali region where they would pilot the first classroom of this kind. These student writers were deeply engaged, thinking about both their writing and their presentation of the project well beyond its life in the university. Over the semester, their primary audience was not their professors, but their investor, a medical doctor, who imagined their project as a pilot for a potentially large-scale project. They worked collaboratively, using google docs, face-to-face meetings, and after hours, emergency Zoom conferences to work through their project. From the beginning, their project had multiple audiences and communicating clearly and effectively to all of them was of utmost importance.

In an urban university with a strong population of underrepresented communities and at a school where immigrant and part-time students may not qualify for financial aid, the question lingers for the students: is continuing education worth the time and expense? More often than not, these are students working multiple, low-level jobs, some even full-time, to be able to afford their tuition, fees, and textbooks. This example shows the potential of a WIP curriculum to motivate these types of students as they use research and writing to further their own meaningful projects that not only prepare them to be competitive in the workforce, but also keep them in school. It shows the valuable role that UWPs and WAC/WID programs can play in helping to support and encourage writers whose projects have higher stakes beyond the classroom, as well as the importance of WAC fellows in making writing meaningful (Eodice, Geller, & Lerner 2017).

Although there has been a trend across some universities to make deals with local businesses that plan to hire students in exchange for curricular influence and financial support, this example of a student-focused, undergraduate research symposium, the culminating event in a WIP curriculum, provides one way of pushing back on neoliberal ideologies while still creating opportunities for student-driven projects—which are experimental in nature—but which ultimately, give students the opportunity to apply their writing and research abilities to their own project designs. In this way, students—not businesses—impact curricula, and eventually then the businesses and potential investors themselves.

The presence of WIP's four primary components—an emphasis on multimodality, team writing, clarity, and writing for non-expert audiences—provide several promising avenues for future research. For example, future studies might ask the following questions:

1. What can the fields of writing studies and WAC/WID in particular learn from the writing pedagogies of disciplinary faculty that might shape programmatic design?

2. How well do simulated and authentic WIP practices teach students to master professional writing genres? To what extent do these approaches prepare student writers for workplace writing in similar and/or different ways?

3. How might simulated WIP pedagogies move toward more authentic practices? How willing are faculty across the disciplines to do this work? What roles might WAC/WID administrators play in supporting this kind of shift?

4. What other kinds of WIP practices exist across disciplinary faculty? Are there similarities within more generalized disciplines (i.e., humanities, sciences, social sciences, etc.) worth noting?

Composition studies can support WIP by drawing on subfields like professional writing, service-learning, and genre studies, while WAC/WID programs and WAC fellows are well-positioned to work with writers and faculty teaching from a WIP pedagogy, because they are often already serving as a non-expert audience and focusing on clarity. The findings of this study suggest a significant shift away from traditional approaches to WAC/WID that emphasize writing for the professor as audience and exam-based or research paper essays (Melzer, 2014). WAC/WID programs and UWPs that support writing across the disciplines should think more creatively about how experiential learning and writing beyond the classroom might shape curricular initiatives. In particular, WAC/WID administrators and those who facilitate WAC fellows or course-embedded tutoring programs, should find ways to integrate elements of professional writing, team-based/collaborative writing, and multimodal pedagogies into their training and professional development so they can better support student writers as they prepare for writing lives beyond the university.

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Notes

[1] Although the site for this research was the university writing center, I use the term university writing program (UWP) because this particular writing center functioned explicitly as both a writing center and a writing across the curriculum/writing in the disciplines program, in addition to supporting other writing initiatives. Thus, UWP better describes the site because it accounts for the multifaceted, programmatic work conducted in the center.

[2] Southern Research University stands for the university at which this research took place and is a fictious name.

[3] The full ethnographic study can be found in *Disrupting the Center: A Partnership Approach to Writing Across the University*, forthcoming in 2022 from Utah State University Press.

[4] This data is pulled from a case study book chapter from *Disrupting the Center* that looks closely at the partnership between the UWP and the department of engineering.

[5] Interviewees were told that the interview would last approximately 45 minutes and the same set of questions were asked for each. However, some interviewees had less or more to say beyond those questions, and I always encouraged interviewees to expand and continue talking, even when they spoke beyond my questions. This accounts for the wide range of time differences across individual interviews.

6 For an example of this logging method, see Appendix.

7 ELET faculty and TAs were interviewed for the larger, ethnographic study from which this research comes, but they were not interviewed within this particular dataset. Part of the reason for this was that the department chair was the primary point of contact for developing the partnership, not the instructor of record, so he primarily spoke from a programmatic, rather than instructor, perspective. For more details about the ELET partnership, see Chapter 6 of Hallman Martini (forthcoming) *Disrupting the Center: A Partnership Approach to Writing Across the University*, Utah State University Press.

Appendix: SL Interview Log

Description: WAV on SONG PCM-D50

Interview Team: Rebecca Hallman

Event: Interview with Sam Lewis

Place: SRUWC

Date: August 31, 2015

Length of interview: 1:09:58

Setting: SL's Office, UofH WC

Summary: Sam Lewis (SL) is the Associate Director for Writing Programs at the SRUWC. During my interview with SL, he described his approaches to/experiences with writing center work and discussed his involvement with establishing WID partnerships.

Key words: partnership, program development, project management, student, consulting firm, individualized, assessment, rubric, critical thinking

Selection from Log

[00:35] SL says he's worked at the SRUWC for 12-13 years and that his title and says that his contribution is program development, which means that in the "life cycle" or "initiation process" of partnerships (p-ships), he's in on the early stages (development, needs assessment, finding out what the partner wants and what the WC can do to deliver what they want). SL says this is a combo of assessment (design) and pedagogy (assignments and supporting assignments). After SL aids in development, the project management is then taken over by someone else.

[2:32] SL says he will describe the first WC p-ship he was involved in

[2:49] SL says a difference between the SRUWC and others is that in addition to being a service provider (where students come to get help, a tutoring shop), they are also a program development resource.

[3:09] SL describes the early Bauer of Business case where they decided to be expansive in terms of setting up a p-ship and mentions the controversy of getting essay scoring outsourced. [This part is transcribed.]

[11:24] SL says that he thinks about being a WC professional in terms of engineering (looking at systems—allocating appropriate resources; and functions—student education and student development). [This part is transcribed.]

[14:53] SL says his decision to work in the writing center was a "career choice." He began working in the writing center during its "early evolutionary stages in its current…uh…iteration" at the time he was

completing his doctorate. SL then calls this a coincidence. The appeal for SL was being able to contribute to student success.

[16:48] SL describes a WC as a hybrid or heterodox of a service center, a program development center, project management, almost like a "consultant firm" for faculty and administrators.

[17:51] SL says he describes the WC to others at the university in the same way—a combo of a service center with additional resources for faculty and administrators.

[18:14] SL says he's not sure how the SRUWC is different from others because he hasn't spent a lot of time looking at what other WCs do, but he believes that they are move involved in program development, curriculum development, and even faculty development than other WCs.

[18:52] SL says the SRUWC is similar to other WCs in terms offering individualized service to students. SL says "I don't think you can call something a writing center if you don't have writing tutors meeting with students to work on their writing."

[19:28] SL describes how he approaches the teaching of writing as "initiation" and "developmental." [This part is transcribed.]

[21:50] SL discusses how he got into assessment and says that before he did a PhD in creative writing, he taught high school English and his "initiation" into that was based on "effective instruction" or "effective education," a bit of a brand name movement that he's not so much committed to, but more so committed to measuring what's important and measuring what you teach. [This part is transcribed.]

[26:11] SL says one thing that differentiates them from standard practice is in "transcending the three standard concepts of university education": faculty, course, and semester. SL explains partnership. [This part is transcribed.]

[28:47] SL explains how working with more graduate programs has led him to realize that a big difference between UG and G programs is the success model and the expectation of attrition.

[34:28] SL explains that the WC works as a consulting firm where people come to them, wanting to do something for their students. This was not empire building. SL mentions the Bauer partnership and assessment. [This part is transcribed.].

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