17 The (Transnational) Past, Present, and Future of the Writing Across the Curriculum Movement

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Abstract: This chapter summarizes and expands on the closing plenary session delivered at the 2018 English Across the Curriculum conference hosted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The first three authors, all second-generation U.S. writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) scholars, all with transnational WAC experience, discussed the WAC movement's history, current status, and potential futures. The fourth author, a pioneer in the English-across-the-curriculum (EAC) movement, closed the session by sharing her perspective on the past, present, and hoped-for future of EAC in Hong Kong and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

Keywords: writing and learning, writing across the curriculum, English across the curriculum, language across the curriculum, educational reform movements

In December 2015, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University hosted the first international English Across the Curriculum (EAC) conference, attracting more than 300 participants from 13 different countries, along with those from the Chinese mainland and Macau. The inter-institutional conference organizing team, comprising members from four institutions, planned the conference with two major goals in mind: one, to announce that writing across

the curriculum (WAC) is once again emerging in Hong Kong, this time in an adaptation that focuses on both writing and speaking in English across the curriculum in Hong Kong's complicated trilingual context; and, two, to provide a platform for transnational exchange of scholarship, research, and professional development in writing in English in linguistically complex academic environments.

That second goal, along with the successful implementation of many of the planned EAC initiatives, provided a strong motivation for the second international EAC conference, a celebration that included more than one hundred concurrent sessions and plenary talks by Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and WAC scholars from Hong Kong, Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. As presenters in the closing plenary session, the three U.S. authors—all second-generation leaders in the WAC movement and all with transnational WAC experience—offered a three-part roundtable discussion to introduce the history, current status, and potential future of WAC to our largely Asian Pacific audience whom we assumed would have only limited knowledge of the significant role WAC has played as an educational reform movement in the US. In turn, to honor Julia Chen's pioneering EAC role in Hong Kong, we invited her to close the session by sharing her perspective on the future of EAC, including her goal of developing an Asia-Pacific EAC network. This chapter captures the essence of our remarks while also offering an overview of some of the WAC literature and current changes, expansions, and innovations.[1]

Given the somewhat parallel paths that WAC and CLIL have followed and the ways in which these are being joined and adapted in the EAC initiative, we begin our chapter, as we did our plenary panel, by tracing the foundations of WAC from its international roots in the United Kingdom's language across the curriculum movement in the 1960s and 1970s to the principles and programmatic features that strongly structure U.S. WAC today. We continue with a discussion of the recent formation of the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum, a key step in the transformation of the WAC movement from one supported by an informal network of scholars/practitioners into a movement supported by a formal organization with bylaws, committees, and affiliated groups. We follow this discussion with a look into the future and the changes reflected in the growth of international writing-focused conferences and publications, expanded opportunities for sharing scholarly

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1   In the plenary session, Townsend spoke first, Zawacki second, Palmquist third, and Chen fourth. In this chapter, we write with a collective voice, rather than as individual panelists.

work, and new types of research initiatives and networks. We conclude with a discussion of the past, present, and hoped-for future of the EAC movement.

WAC: Foundations, Principles, Practices

Sometimes it is helpful to begin defining a concept by saying what it is *not*. WAC is not about correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, or the many other generic skills of written prose. Nor is it a stand-alone writing course. While WAC practitioners avow those aspects of written communication as necessary, they fall far short of creating "good writing."

WAC is a pedagogical reform movement dating from the late 1960s and early 1970s, with roots in both the US and the UK. Historian of writing across the curriculum David Russell (2002) describes WAC as "the most widespread and sustained reform movement in cross-curricular writing instruction" in U.S. higher education (p. 272). WAC's origins as a distinct movement in the US can be traced to a three-week seminar in 1966 held at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Forty-seven participants from the US, UK, and Canada, along with 21 consultants from selected non-English disciplines (psychology, theater, speech, education, and linguistics) assembled with the express goal of defining English and outlining the ways it might best be taught. Christiane Donahue (2016), reflecting on the 50th anniversary of the conference, observed:

> *Very quickly, the actual discussions focused in on language and writing; most of the concrete results of the Seminar were about teaching and learning writing, in relation to language, technology, and speech.* (original italics)

A similar movement in the UK, known as language across the curriculum (LAC), had developed earlier in the decade and would prove to be a key contributor to the U.S. WAC movement. A bottom-up movement led by classroom teachers, LAC focused largely on helping students in K-12 settings address the challenges associated with discrimination based on dialect. Among the many scholars whose work shaped and was shaped by the LAC movement, University of London education professor James Britton and his colleagues, working and researching primarily at the pre-collegiate level, produced groundbreaking texts that strongly influenced their U.S. counterparts. Britton's *Language and Learning* (1970) has become a classic exploration of how children use language to shape their individual visions of the world. Similarly, *The Development of Writing Abilities (11–18)* (Britton et al., 1975) strongly influenced—and continues to influence—work in WAC. Although

both U.K. and U.S. scholars were reading the same theorists—Bruner, Jakobson, Luria, Moffett, Piaget, Polanyi, Vygotsky—regrettably, LAC was not as sustained in the UK as was WAC in the US.

Despite the diminished presence of LAC in the UK, European and Hong Kong audiences will recognize the somewhat parallel movement of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a pedagogy primarily employed in Europe and Hong Kong at the primary and secondary levels with some rather limited application at the tertiary level. As the participants of the 2018 EAC conference surely noticed, all of these language and literacy-related movements—LAC, WAC, CLIL, EAC—share influences and similarities, if not direct overlays (or levels of educational application) in their principles and practices. Indeed, one of the many benefits of the EAC conferences is the bringing together of our respective language and literacy academic professionals, so that we may be reminded of our shared work and explore ways to further our transnational interests on behalf of our students. On a related note, the U.S. WAC movement's biennial conference declared itself in 2006 to be the International Writing Across the Curriculum conference, and members actively seek to share research and pedagogies with transnational colleagues (Townsend, 2019).

In its most general sense, WAC refers to the idea that writing should be an integral part of the learning process throughout a student's education, not merely in required writing courses, but across the entire curriculum (International Network, 2014). As John Bean, one of WAC's early and influential advocates, points out, the relationship between writing and *thinking* is central to the WAC movement (1996, 2011). Specifically, Bean (and many others, including the authors of this chapter) directs our attention to how writing can be used to enhance students' thinking about the content of the material they are studying in ways that deepen their learning.

Inasmuch as most scholars/practitioners understand WAC to be focused on student *learning* first and foremost (as opposed to the reductive nuts and bolts definition of writing one might draw from what WAC is *not*), the following four principles comprise the backbone of writing used in courses throughout the curriculum (International Network, 2014):

1. Writing as rhetorical. Analyzing *purpose* and *audience* is essential to composing or understanding any text.
2. Writing as a process. High-stakes writing (writing that will be graded, for example) involves a complex process of idea formation, drafting, reader feedback, revision, and understanding the rhetorical situation.

3. Writing as a mode of learning. Writing *about* a subject helps the student *learn* about that subject (for example, see Emig, 1977).
4. Learning to write. To be effective, writers must learn to adapt to a variety of rhetorical situations, audiences, and purposes.

WAC Program Variety and Operation

Because WAC is an educational reform movement, as opposed to a prescriptive agenda for teaching students "how to write," WAC takes different shapes at different institutions. As Christopher Thaiss (2001) has observed, "WAC theorists and program leaders have encouraged almost unlimited variety in terms of what counts as writing and how it is evaluated" (p. 308). Moreover, many WAC programs feature a concomitant emphasis on reading and speaking. Some U.S. institutions house WAC programming in their departments of English, in stand-alone programs, and still others within teaching and learning centers or in writing centers, with a variety of administrative structures. There is no unilaterally agreed upon place for situating WAC in higher education (Smith, 1988). In fact, to be effective, all WAC initiatives must be determined by each institution's exigencies: size, institutional type, institutional mission, administrative configuration, fiscal resources, linguistic characteristics of student population, current and former writing requirements, and so on (Townsend, 2012).

Some institutions have a curricular WAC requirement that all students must satisfy in order to graduate, in which case, specific writing-based courses may be flagged as meeting this requirement. For example, it is common to list courses as satisfying a "writing-intensive" or "writing-enriched curriculum" requirement. A wide variety of procedures exist whereby institutions certify and monitor their WAC courses. The more effective programs ensure that WAC program policy and oversight reside under the purview of faculty and that ample resources are available to support faculty in the disciplines who offer WAC courses (Townsend, 2001).

Some institutions differentiate between WAC and WID, or writing in the disciplines (Carter, 2012). In general, WID refers to how professionals in disciplines conduct and teach their writing practices. WID courses typically address questions about how members of particular disciplines, such as history and microbiology, write and think, and how best to help their students learn to write within that discipline. Writing assignments in WID courses often interrogate a discipline's principal genres and explore the typical audiences for the discipline's writing. While we question the distinction between WAC

and WID, which equates WAC with writing to learn and WID with writing to communicate within disciplines, it is not an uncommon distinction. It seems more useful to view writing to learn and writing in the disciplines as two ends of a spectrum of WAC emphases (see Palmquist, this collection).

Characteristics of WAC Programs and Courses

For those institutions where WAC programs flag individual courses, examples of writing-intensive course characteristics include low student-to-teacher ratios, restricting teaching to experienced faculty (as opposed to graduate teaching assistants), requiring a stated number of pages or papers with opportunities for revision, distributing writing across the semester, and factoring writing into the course grade (Farris & Smith, 1992).

Instead of flagging individual courses, some institutions flag entire academic units, as is done at the University of Minnesota, where the writing-enriched curriculum (WEC) model was developed (Flash, 2016). In this model, academic units (typically a department) work in partnership with a WEC team of writing specialists to design undergraduate "writing plans" (https://wec.umn.edu/about) that apply to that department's student population. Faculty members in the WEC unit, in consultation with WEC specialists, create, implement, and assess the writing plan they deem appropriate for their students.

Whatever approach they adopt, virtually all WAC programs espouse *critical thinking* as a primary goal for student writing. Each program defines that concept in its own disciplinary framework, often with an emphasis on active as opposed to passive learning. Nearly all WAC programs also share some combination of the following characteristics in the writing students are assigned:

- explicit directions, often designating a specific audience, purpose, and genre;
- a focus on process in addition to product (the steps that must be taken to complete the assignment);
- shorter, more frequent (low stakes) writing, instead of longer, less frequent (high stakes) term papers;
- peer review or other collaboration with students;
- revision based on teacher- and peer-feedback to achieve an improved outcome; and
- explicit grading criteria.

Often a distinction is made between "writing-to-learn" and "learning-to-write," with the former using writing as a means of achieving better un-

derstanding of course content, while the latter implies stronger attention to achieving control over a discipline's standards and may employ more stringent grading.

Sustaining WAC Programs

WAC programs are notoriously vulnerable. The WAC literature is replete with cautionary stories of programs disappearing. As Russell (1991) has noted, "The WAC movement, unlike most of its predecessors, attempts to reform pedagogy more than curriculum. . . . [O]n an *institutional* basis, WAC exists in a structure that fundamentally resists it" (p. 295). Some of the obstacles WAC programs face include inadequate support from top-level administrators, assigning leadership to an unprepared director, not providing programmatic support, lack of alignment among elements of a program, failing to ensure *faculty* oversight of the curriculum and program, not undergoing periodic review of courses and the program, and expecting that "improvement" in student writing can be "proven" through pre- and post-testing in flagged courses (Townsend, 2012).

By far the most problematic difficulty in maintaining robust WAC programs, however, is lack of reward for teaching. WAC courses, of whatever type, inevitably require faculty to rethink their teaching methods. Faculty need time to reflect, and plan, and learn new methods, especially if they are steeped in traditional pedagogies. Shifting from faculty-centered to student-centered instruction requires patience, willingness, and support from knowledgeable colleagues and peers, which can detract from research and publication. Russell (1991), again, observes,

> If WAC is to become more than a marginal activity, criteria for promotion, tenure or merit pay must measure and value the kinds of teaching and learning that WAC promotes, though this, like measuring and valuing writing itself, is far more difficult than looking only at more easily quantifiable "outcomes." (p. 296)

The question, of course, is why institutions—and faculty who understand the complications associated with creating and sustaining a WAC program—would invest in WAC. The answer lies in the contributions it makes to student learning while students are taking courses and to their ability to think critically and write effectively once they have graduated. Indeed, in the US, WAC (under the label "writing-intensive courses") has been identified as one of the original high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008). Additionally, Andy

Frazee and Rebecca Burnett (this volume) show how WAC supports student and faculty innovation and connection to the community and workplace.

WAC: Current Status

It is evident from even a quick browse of the WAC Clearinghouse website (https://wac.colostate.edu) that ample scholarship and resources are available on building and sustaining WAC programs at the local level in the US. At the national level, however, it seems that only scant attention has been paid to how many new programs are being developed and how many languish or die. The most recent information we have on the numbers of U.S. WAC programs comes from the "International WAC/WID Mapping Project," with numbers based on a survey undertaken from 2006-2008 (http://mappingproject.ucdavis.edu). While numbers on the growth and demise of programs are notoriously hard to track, as the Mapping Project and earlier efforts (Miraglia & McLeod, 1997) have indicated, we know, as Townsend (2012) explains in "WAC Program Vulnerability and What to Do About It," that WAC programs are most vulnerable when funding is cut, if they are not deeply informed by WAC principles, and/or if they are not led by writing-knowledgeable faculty committed to the hard work of program building and strategic in adapting to the local context.

This point leads us to a series of pressing questions that serve as the focus of this section: How can WAC, EAC, CLIL or other such educational reform movements be sustained as fields and as legitimate foci of our scholarship? How can we best introduce and mentor new academics into the field? In what ways might we prepare new and experienced writing studies academics to lead and sustain our increasingly demanding programs? To answer these questions, at least in part, we briefly trace the early difficulty in defining WAC in the US as a practice and a program given the enormous variability of programs across institutions, as we noted earlier. We then contrast this with recent efforts to establish a more formal structure and articulation of what the field comprises—efforts that led to the formation of the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum (AWAC) in 2018.

The Past Leading to the Present

In 1981, following the first decade of WAC initiatives in the US, Christopher Thaiss established what was then called the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs. In 2004, it would change its name to the International Network of WAC Programs (or INWAC). From the outset,

the Network's Board of Consultants (https://wac.colostate.edu/network/), of which Townsend and Zawacki were early members, acted in many ways as the voice of WAC, taking on the role of encouraging, advising, and supporting newcomers and sharing best practices. As Zawacki and Paul Rogers (2001) made clear, however, the Network's role was "not to make policy statements or to define 'WAC,' but rather to help others interested in starting programs . . . that would mirror local institutional cultures and exigencies rather than conform to larger national trends" (p. 6). The most visible manifestations of WAC at the national level were—and continue to be—the International Writing Across the Curriculum (IWAC) conference and the WAC Clearinghouse, a publishing collaborative that has provided a platform for representing the component parts of WAC as a field. The Clearinghouse has become a rich set of scholarly and pedagogical resources for scholars, program administrators, teachers, and writers across disciplines who share an interest in using writing to support teaching and learning.

As WAC programs proliferated and younger scholars joined the Network, they argued for a stronger, more coherent organization, beginning with the need to articulate shared principles and practices to guide the field as well as to establish WAC as a recognized field of study with an increasingly large body of scholarship, including scholarship on program building and administration, often not valued in tenure and promotion decisions.[2]

In 2014, a small ad hoc group of Network members drafted the Statement of WAC Principles and Practices (https://wac.colostate.edu/principles/) as a first step in describing and codifying what we value as a WAC community. The statement included sections addressing the leadership of successful and sustainable WAC programs, a suggested timeline for program development, principles and practices for WAC pedagogy and program assessment, and a rich list of resources and references. The formal articulation of these principles and practices can be seen as the starting point for the steps that were subsequently undertaken, beginning in 2016 at the IWAC conference, to form the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum (AWAC) (https://www.wacassociation.org), which was formally launched in fall 2018.

In the relatively short time since it was established, AWAC's executive board and committees have accomplished a number of goals, including formalizing connections among various WAC and writing-related organizations, promoting the publication of scholarly work on WAC, and providing mentorship opportunities. Among the key organizations with which AWAC has established relationships is the WAC Graduate Organization (WAC-

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2   For evidence of the need for the latter, see, for example, Townsend (2020).

GO) (https://wac.colostate.edu/go/), which has played an important role in bringing new scholars into the WAC field. WAC-GO was created by graduate students in 2016, well before AWAC was formed, and it continues to be led by graduate students who are advised by a board of experienced WAC professionals. Now under the umbrella of AWAC, WAC-GO sends out a newsletter, offers research support and scholarships to attend the IWAC conference and the WAC summer institute (described below), and, perhaps most importantly, offers a cross-institutional mentoring project that pairs graduate students who do not have access to WAC mentors or courses at their own institutions with established WAC scholars elsewhere for one-to-one mentorship (https://wac.colostate.edu/go/cross-institutional-mentoring-project).

Like WAC-GO, planning for a WAC summer institute (WAC SI) was motivated by a need to mentor and advise those new to WAC, especially new and prospective program leaders. A secondary motivation was the desire to support more experienced directors who faced new challenges or who wished to expand, update, or revitalize their programs. Online registration for the June 2019 institute at the University of Denver opened in early fall; the 30 available slots filled within minutes, with more than double that number on the waiting list, a clear sign of the need for the systematic and sustained support offered by the three-day format. Developed around the theme of building sustainable, high-impact programs, the institute included lectures, workshops, individual consultations, and small group meetings intended to provide opportunities for mentoring and networking. While initially planned as a biennial event, the competition for slots and the subsequent high level of satisfaction expressed by the participants in the first WAC SI laid the groundwork for an annual institute with one in summer 2020 and another in 2021.

Expanding WAC's Focus to Graduate Writing

While U.S. WAC has traditionally focused on undergraduate student writers and writing across the disciplines, alarm in recent years about attrition and extended time to degree in graduate programs has led to questions about the role writing might play in students' choosing to leave their programs or to delay completion, particularly at the doctoral level. This increased attention to writing has resulted, in turn, in calls for more support for graduate student writers and more research on their specific needs (see Rogers et al., 2016, for example). The Consortium on Graduate Communication (CGC) (https://www.gradconsortium.org) was founded in 2014 by WAC, writing center, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages TESOL scholars-prac-

titioners to provide for systematic conversations around best practices for working with English first- and second-language graduate students on written, oral, and multimodal communication.

The CGC holds an annual summer symposium and offers a website that provides curricular resources, scholarly work and research reports, and models for graduate communication courses, retreats, writing groups, and tutorial practices. In addition, and in line with the organization's research and resource goals, a growing body of scholarship on writers at the graduate level has been developed, with publications focused on the cross-curricular writing support needs of domestic and international second-language (L2) English graduate students across the disciplines (see, for example, Simpson et al., 2016 and Lawrence & Zawacki, 2019). As a final point on WAC in the present, we note WAC's increasing engagement with the field of English L2 writing (see, for example, Zawacki & Cox, 2014) as well as its turn to and support for international cross-disciplinary writing research and program building.

WAC: Futures

The 2019-20 academic year marked the 50th year of the first known WAC faculty seminar, a year-long project led by Barbara Walvoord at Central College in Iowa. While that offers an opportunity for celebration for what Russell (2002) has characterized as one of the most enduring movements in U.S. higher education, it also serves as a point for reflection and critique. The theme of the IWAC 2020 conference—*Celebrating Successes, Recognizing Challenges, Inviting Critique and Innovation*—embraces this opportunity, as does this chapter. Looking forward, we anticipate that work will take place on several fronts. The formation of AWAC will lead to increased professional recognition for the field as well as a growth in research, scholarship, and publication opportunities, accompanied by awards and other forms of distinction. We also expect to see growth in the size and diversity of the WAC community. And, certainly, we see continued internationalization of WAC as a movement and a field, affording increased opportunities for sharing scholarly work and collaborating on global research initiatives.

Growth in Scholarship, Professional Recognition, Diversity

We expect to see growth in the amount of research and other forms of scholarship published on WAC and related areas. This growth will be based in part on the growing internationalization of the field. It will also be based on a broadened understanding of the kind of scholarly work that is relevant to

WAC. We are seeing, for example, increased interest in connections between WAC and writing analytics (and the larger field of learning analytics). This connection reflects both the field's longstanding interests in assessment and pedagogical improvements. It also reflects increasing methodological capacity for exploring key questions, such as improvements in the ease of use of corpus analytic tools, tools associated with content analysis, and tools associated with the analysis of big data.

This growth will also be fueled by a growing interest in connections among WAC, second-language learning, and generation 1.5 (immigrant) populations. Similarly, we will also likely see growing scholarly attention to social and labor issues, such as the increasing reliance on contingent faculty labor in the US and the increasing oversight of higher education by government. These areas of interest promise to expand the amount of work taking place under the broader umbrella of WAC.

To accommodate this expanded work—and, to some extent, to encourage it—we expect to see increased opportunities for sharing scholarly work. In the past few years, we have seen the founding of new academic journals, including *Double Helix* (https://wac.colostate.edu/double-helix) and *The Journal of Writing Analytics* (https://wac.colostate.edu/jwa). In response to the large number of high-quality submissions for special issues published by the journal *Across the Disciplines* (https://wac.colostate.edu/atd), the journal editors founded the Across the Disciplines Books series, which recently published its third volume. We are also seeing new conferences that focus on WAC and the related areas of critical thinking and speaking, including Quinnipiac University's biennial Critical Thinking and Writing conference and the EAC conference series. Finally, we are seeing strong representation of scholarship on WAC and related areas in existing national and international conferences, such as the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the Council of Writing Program Administrators National Conference, the Writing Research Across Borders conference, the conference of the Special Interest Group of the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction, and the conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing.

In fall 2019, the WAC Clearinghouse editorial board and the AWAC executive committee approved the development of awards to honor professional contributions, both nationally and internationally, to the WAC community. These awards will include recognition for scholarly publication, advancement of WAC principles and practices, excellence in WAC program design and administration, and distinguished contributions to the field. The awards will also serve as a further means of establishing WAC as a distinctive area of

study and are likely to increase the number of scholars who see work in WAC and related fields as an area within which to make their disciplinary home.

Recently, editorial board members of the WAC Clearinghouse proposed a new research center, the Bazerman-McLeod Institute for Writing Studies, to serve as a platform for collaborative research across institutions, with a focus on research that involves multiple types of institutions, both nationally and internationally. We expect this kind of initiative to provide a useful foundation for the development of new research instruments and methods relevant to WAC and related fields. The goal of the institute is to support long-term studies in which scholars contribute differentially over time and in consideration of the local conditions within which they work. As a collaboration between the WAC Clearinghouse and AWAC, it is hoped that the institute will serve as a model for similar efforts in the larger field of writing studies in the US and potentially in other countries.

An Increasingly Internationalized Movement

It will not surprise those who attended the Second International Conference on English Across the Curriculum in Hong Kong that we see significant growth ahead in WAC, CAC, ECAC, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English Across the Curriculum (EAC), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and related areas. While WAC is a movement that was launched in the US, it is becoming increasingly internationalized. This is reflected in recent surveys of WAC and writing programs, such as that conducted by Thaiss et al. (2012), as well as the increasing internationalization of our professional organizations as noted above. Since its founding in 1997, the membership of the WAC Clearinghouse publishing collaborative has grown steadily more reflective of the internationalization of the field. More than 30 members of the Clearinghouse editorial board, publications review board, and series editors are from outside the US. This number is larger if international members of the editorial boards of the journals supported by the Clearinghouse are counted.

The internationalization of the field is also reflected in the book proposals and article submissions received by the book series and journals supported by the Clearinghouse. To give just one example, the book series *International Exchanges on the Study of Writing* (https://wac.colostate.edu/books/international/) has been expanded to include a Latin American section featuring books in Spanish, Portuguese, and English. The series will likely expand further in the coming years to include other international sections and publications in languages other than English.

And, finally, one need only look at the growing number of international attendees at the past several IWAC conferences, including a prominent cohort of scholars from Hong Kong who have been attending to learn from and about U.S. WAC at the same time that we are learning from them about the many ways that the principles and practices of writing across the curriculum are being adapted to fit the trilingual contexts of Hong Kong higher education.

English Across the Curriculum: Foundations, Current Status, Futures

Our introduction noted that one goal of the 2015 English Across the Curriculum conference was to announce that WAC was "once again" developing in Hong Kong, so this section begins with a brief description of two past efforts, one in the mid- 2000s and another in the early 2010s, to introduce WAC in two universities in Hong Kong. Neither of these efforts was sustained; the first was discontinued after the leader retired (see Braine & McNaught, 2007) and the second when the leader stepped down when project funding ended (Cheng et al., 2014).

Given subsequent educational developments, however, it was clear that a cross-curricular WAC-like program was needed in Hong Kong. As Chen (2019) points out, two top-down education policies—a shift in schools from English medium of instruction (EMI) to Chinese medium of instruction and a lengthening of the undergraduate curriculum from three to four years—that were introduced after the 1997 return of Hong Kong sovereignty to China meant that students needed English writing and speaking support more than ever for their academic pursuits in Hong Kong's EMI universities.

This need could not be met by stand-alone English courses alone because universities are able to allocate curricular space for only two, or perhaps three, credit-bearing undergraduate English courses. Often these courses are included in the freshman and sophomore years, and they tend to be generic academic English (EGAP) in nature. Research shows, however, that it is doubtful students are able to remember and transfer their generic academic English writing and speaking knowledge when preparing for their discipline course assignments—unless there has been reinforcement in their disciplinary courses (Yiu, 2014). The lack of reinforcement and the obvious gap in development of students' discipline-specific writing and speaking skills are reflected in an employer survey on the performance of first-degree graduates. The 2016 employer survey results at one university show that on a 1-5 scale (from disagree to agree), employers ranked the importance of "language proficiency" and "analytical and problem-solving abilities" at 4.17 and 4.19, whereas they

ranked graduates' performance in these two areas at 3.75 and 3.57 respectively (Chen et al., forthcoming).

In 2013, an opportunity arose for developing a writing and speaking across disciplines initiative when the Hong Kong University Grants Committee offered start-up funds for the establishment of communities of practice (CoPs). The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) established a CoP on enhancing students' English abilities outside of regular EGAP and English for specific purposes (ESP) courses, and called it "English Across the Curriculum" (EAC) to differentiate it from Chinese, the other official language in Hong Kong, and to avoid misunderstanding that the initiative focused on writing skills only. Without teaching assistants and having limited teaching release for staff, the EAC team worked with faculty to develop learning modules that aligned with three of the four WAC principles stated earlier in this chapter: understanding the purpose and audience of the writing/speaking, learning about the discipline through writing about it, and adapting writing to the rhetorical situation and purpose. In view of the relatively low proficiency level of students (a substantial number of students scored around 6 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or equivalent), the EAC learning packages provide grammar handouts, focusing on topics such as the correct use of tense and reporting verbs in the literature review section of an academic text.

In 2014, this one-university CoP grew to a four-university project team that received a government grant of one million Hong Kong dollars to promote EAC staff development. In 2017, the EAC "scheme," as it is referred to in Hong Kong, expanded to a five-university project team that received 7.8 million dollars of government funding to develop (for the digital native generation) a discipline-specific mobile app on capstone/final-year project writing and speaking for presentations.

Despite the progress of the last half-decade, EAC faces numerous challenges in Hong Kong as elsewhere. In an effort to institutionalize and sustain EAC, a 2016 discussion paper proposed establishing an EAC committee comprising academic staff and English language teachers at PolyU, the lead university on the collaborative EAC projects. The University Senate, however, rejected the proposal due to concern that EAC would become a compulsory element in the undergraduate curriculum. Another significant sustainability challenge involves financial resources, just as is the case for WAC in the US. Currently, the EAC team is funded by two government project grants, running out in 2020 and 2021 respectively, and PolyU has yet to commit any financial support to the initiative. To convince university management that EAC is worthy of support, EAC leaders have demonstrated: (1) EAC's economic scalability by extending its reach to different faculties (colleges), de-

partments, and staff; (2) EAC's impact on student assessment performance; and (3) substantial interest in the EAC/WAC/CLIL movements from around the world, as evidenced by international participation in the 2015 and 2018 EAC conferences. A third conference is planned for May 2021. EAC's demonstrated scalability, impact, and international interest indicate its potential for becoming a niche area for PolyU, and, in turn, for other Hong Kong tertiary institutions.

Looking Forward

Within the broader framework that WAC and EAC as pedagogical innovations provide, we have seen a great deal of diversity in pedagogical methods and program design. We expect this to continue. The writing enriched curriculum approach that is becoming widely used in the US (Flash, 2016), for example, has strong application to writing instruction in international settings. We have also seen WAC implemented in ways that take advantage of other high impact practices found in U.S. universities, such as learning communities, service learning, and undergraduate research (Kuh, 2008).

Indications of the willingness of international scholars and writing program leaders to adopt leading practices in their local contexts have already been seen in the institutions profiled in Thaiss and colleagues' (2012) landmark study, *Writing Programs Worldwide*. It seems highly likely that the use of these practices will lead to new approaches that will, in turn, enrich the larger WAC, EAC, and CLIL communities. Indeed, the English Across the Curriculum initiatives that gave rise to the second EAC conference are an excellent example of the innovation and scholarship we can expect to emerge as we apply approaches used in one context to the pedagogical needs of students and teachers in another.

With the power of innovation in mind—and the recognition that the members of the WAC, EAC, and CLIL communities will continue to seek new ways to improve and support the teaching of writing and speaking—we expect that institutional leaders will continue to see writing as increasingly central to the success of teaching and learning in higher education.

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