

CHAPTER 7.

FROM A FACULTY STANDPOINT: ASSESSING WITH IE A SUSTAINABLE COMMITMENT TO WAC AT A MINORITY- SERVING INSTITUTION

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Spring 2018 marked the start of a two-and-a-half-year “probationary” period I was given to set up a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program at the University of New Mexico (UNM)—probationary because we had just been through three different provosts, some interim, in the past three years, and the final say on the establishment of a WAC program would be given to the next (and, hopefully, longer-lasting) provost once hired. Prior to this period, UNM did not have a formal WAC program, nothing beyond the singular efforts of individual faculty, a handful of graduate students, or a lone disciplinary program. With my background and research interests squarely in writing program administration, and WAC specifically, I saw this as a great opportunity to serve both faculty and students in the creation of a sustainable WAC program to support the further development of students as writers across the disciplines at UNM.

My immediate goal as UNM’s first WAC director was to learn more about my campus as a ready site for WAC. This initial step, *understanding the institutional landscape*, as Michelle Cox et al. have named it, is the first stage of the whole systems approach to sustainable WAC¹ and consists of the following three strategies: 1) *determining the campus mood*, 2) *understanding the system in order to focus on points of interactivity and leverage*, and 3) *understanding the ideologies that inform the campus culture of writing* (64-66). Forefront on my mind was the question, then, of how my institutional context would shape, or *contour* as Michelle LaFrance so aptly puts it, the conceptions of writing (and perhaps of

1 Cox, et al.’s whole systems approach to sustainable WAC consists of four stages: 1) Understanding the Institutional Landscape, 2) Planning a Program, 3) Developing Projects and Making Reforms, and 4) Leading for Sustainability.

writers) found at UNM (“Institutional” 28). In an effort to address this question, I adopted a number of heuristics from institutional ethnography (IE) as a materialist framework, which both shaped my methodology and influenced my analysis of the data collected, as described below. But, first, I describe the unique institutional context that is UNM.

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CONTEXT

UNM is the state of New Mexico’s flagship university. The Albuquerque campus, where I am located and where this research took place, is a Hispanic-Serving Institution and the only Carnegie-classified “very high research” R1 institution in the state. In Fall 2019 (pre-COVID-19), of the 21,498 students on campus, over 87% (18,671) were from the state of New Mexico (“Fall 2019” 16), and over 70% of beginning freshman who had recently graduated from a New Mexico high school were students of color (19).² Additionally, nearly half of UNM’s undergraduate student population identifies as “first generation,” with neither parent having received education beyond high school or not having earned a four-year degree (“First Gen Proud”). At UNM, we often proudly say we teach the future demographic of higher education—today.

As for the larger context in which UNM is situated, year after year, and again in 2019, the state of New Mexico ranked the lowest in child well-being (50th state out of 50), including in terms of overall health (48th), economics (49th), family and community (50th), and education (50th). While the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported an improvement on average across the US in 11 of the 16 “Kids Count” index measures for child well-being,³ they also reported that, as a nation, we “have failed to eliminate the racial and ethnic inequalities” that continue to leave many children and their families behind (9). This is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the state of New Mexico, based on the above measures.

IE: A MATERIALIST FRAMEWORK

In *Institutional Ethnography: A Theory of Practice for Writing Studies Researchers*, La France explains that “[t]o undertake an IE project is to uncover the empirical

2 For Fall 2019, the percentage by race/ethnicity at UNM of beginning freshmen who recently graduated from New Mexico high schools was reported as follows: 60% Hispanic, 24% White, 5% Asian, 4% American Indian, 4% Two or More Races, 1.7% Black or African American, .5% Non-U.S. Resident, .7% Race/Ethnicity Unknown, and .1% Native Hawaiian (“Fall 2019”).

3 For the “16 Key Indicators of Child Well-Being by Domain,” see The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2019 Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being, pp. 12-15.

connections between writing as individual practice and the conditions that make a site of study unique” (18). That is, our distinctive institutional contexts shape our teaching and learning practices as well as our attitudes about writing and writers, whether explicitly or invisibly. IE can help uncover how and why this interplay happens by revealing how the work of an individual is influenced by the material conditions and the work of others within the university. UNM, the site of my IE research, represents one of only a handful of Hispanic-Serving R1 Institutions in the US and enrolls a significant percentage of undergraduate students from traditionally marginalized and excluded backgrounds who now represent one of the fastest growing demographics in higher education. With this student demographic, and the austerity challenges the state of New Mexico faces, UNM offers a rich landscape for examining through the lens of IE how the material actualities of a public institution influence the teaching and learning of students and campus readiness for WAC.

As I set out to do this research, I adopted the IE heuristic approach of a *standpoint*—specifically that of faculty across the disciplines at UNM (Rankin, “Conducting . . . Analytical Work”). This faculty standpoint is the empirical location from which I collected data on the workings of the university and its relationship to undergraduate writing instruction across disciplinary courses, curriculums, schools, and colleges on campus. As Janet Rankin explains, standpoint informants understand their work “ideologically,” or in theoretical terms of what is supposed to happen (e.g., faculty’s understanding of best pedagogical practices), and “materially,” or in empirical terms of what really happens (e.g., how those best practices manifest in the classroom in response to institutional forces) (“Conducting . . . Analytical Work” 2).⁴ It is from a faculty standpoint, then, that my research questions originated:

1. How much interest is there among faculty across the disciplines for WAC?
2. What faculty ideologies about writing (and undergraduate writers) might help or hinder the development of sustainable WAC at UNM?
3. What material aspects may support or challenge faculty’s work in supporting undergraduate writers across the disciplines?

Furthermore, this faculty standpoint informed the data collection tools I developed for the mixed-methods approach I took to address these questions, resulting in a faculty survey; semi-structured faculty interviews; and the collection of teaching artifacts, including course syllabi, assignment prompts, and writing assessment criteria.⁵

⁴ In this edited collection, Miley, et al. helpfully refer to this as the “ideal” versus the “real,” in their examination of a third space where the ideal and the real might find alignment.

⁵ University of New Mexico IRB study #14829.

DETERMINING THE CAMPUS MOOD

As Cox, et al. argue, determining campus mood is an important aspect of assessing the overall readiness of an institution's commitment to student writing across the curriculum. Measuring this readiness includes "a mix of collecting data, talking to stakeholders, reflecting on current writing practices across university contexts, and identifying points of conflict and support concerning possible WAC program models" (87). To assess the campus mood at UNM, beginning from a faculty standpoint, I distributed a 35-item survey to 1,300 individual faculty in the fall of 2020 on UNM's Albuquerque campus. Due to space, however, I limit my focus in this chapter to the following two survey items:

- What are your motivations for having students write in [a chosen] course?
- What are your challenges or the barriers for you having students write in [a chosen] course?

I paired these two questions specifically as I believed the first to likely reveal *theoretical* reasons for faculty integration of student writing in their courses across the disciplines and the second to uncover *material* aspects either encouraging and/or inhibiting that work.

Despite the difficult semester faced at the time of this research, brought on by a global pandemic, I was encouraged by the 344 participant responses (26%) to the survey, from which I isolated responses to the two questions above. Of the total participants, 226 faculty (86%) reported positively to integrating writing into at least one undergraduate course, with these courses representing every college or school on UNM's Albuquerque campus with an undergraduate degree program. While not definitive, this wide-ranging, positive response from faculty across the disciplines bodes well for identifying a coalition of faculty supportive of discussions about WAC on campus. This "baseline" understanding of faculty mood can be useful for examining how favorable conditions might be for introducing new WAC approaches within UNM's curricular ecology before, as Cox, et al. suggest, allocating more time and resources to WAC interventions (89).

IDENTIFYING POINTS OF INTERACTIVITY AND LEVERAGE

Beyond determining mood, Cox, et al. additionally recommend identifying points of interactivity and leverage for bringing about transformational change to one's institutional context. It is at these points that one may begin to see "pathways of least resistance" within the complex institutional system for sustainable approaches to WAC. From the IE faculty standpoint I have adopted,

these points include where within the institution faculty are focused on writing and writing outcomes across their curricular contexts. These faculty points of entry can help identify “what interventions should be made, at what levels, in what order, and on what scales” as well as help determine which initiatives should be prioritized “to have greatest impact/leverage and simultaneously achieve maximum buy-in” (90-91). The responses from faculty in this study suggest multiple pathways within all disciplines for building and strengthening writing support across the curriculum.

UNDERSTANDING IDEOLOGIES INFORMING THE CAMPUS CULTURE OF WRITING

For a more complete ethnography of writing across the curriculum within an institution, it is necessary to not only analyze the mood of campus stakeholders such as faculty and the places within the larger network where writing is taking place but to also understand the ideologies about writing that underlie the pedagogical ecology of the institution that may support (or obstruct) the development of a formal WAC program on campus. Figure 7.1 illustrates a taxonomy of motivations as reported by faculty in response to the following survey question: *What are your motivations for having students write in [a chosen] course?* As the question was open-ended, some faculty provided more than one response, making the total of responses greater than the number of participants.

As depicted in Figure 7.1, the 381 total responses received from 220 faculty have been categorized into 12 types of motivations, with the greatest number of faculty (a little more than half) identifying *promote transferable skills* as a reason for emphasizing writing in an undergraduate course. While only two faculty actually used the term *transfer*, respondents indicated in very clear terms the importance they see in helping students develop transferable skills, whether in preparation for graduate school, their future professions, and/or life outside the classroom more generally. As one faculty wrote about students wishing to attend graduate school in the future,

In Honors Courses, the goal is to promote student’s engagement and experience with evidence-based practice and research. The majority of students in the course desire to obtain a graduate degree (MSN, DNP, or Ph.D.) in nursing, which requires writing skills. My goal in assigning written assignments is to promote their growth and development throughout our undergraduate program to ensure advancement in their career trajectory.

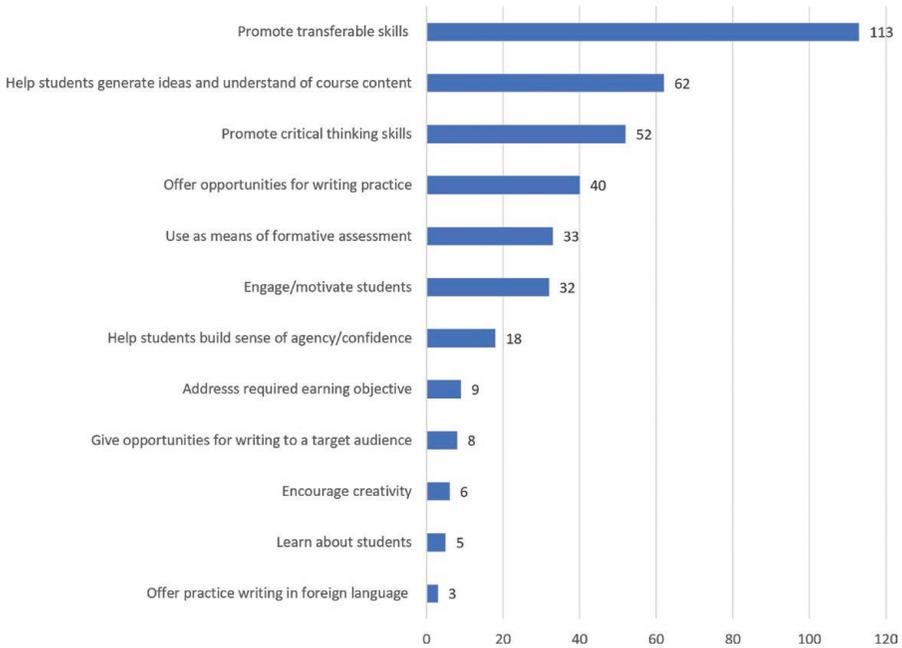


Figure 7.1. Faculty motivations for fostering undergraduate writing.

Another respondent, from the School of Architecture and Planning, wrote about students' development of their writing skills as a kind of duty of citizenry or community:

I know the value of language (in general, and as [a] written record/communication) . . . I am motivated by the awareness of just how much the mis-use of language is responsible for bureaucratic insensitivity to reality, for political tribalism and fractured communities, and for interpersonal confusion, resentments, and even outright hatreds. Learning to write is a big step towards being able to contribute to solutions.

Faculty also recognized the generative aspect of writing as a tool for learning: “I am motivated for students to write-to-learn: to connect with their own thinking process and idea generation. This can serve as a foundation for communicating with each other about and exchanging their ideas about the subject matter”—as well as a tool for fostering critical thinking: “To teach brainstorming, critical thinking and reflection of course concepts. I want students to realize that the business concepts we teach are not purely objective; journaling, application, and reflection are also very important.”

Additionally, a number of faculty identified students' need for practice as a motivation for assigning writing and as a means of formative or alternative assessment and a way to engage students in course work. Finally, additional reasons for assigning writing included fostering student confidence and agency in themselves as writers, teaching them to write for specific and varied audiences, encouraging creativity, faculty learning more about students, and practicing writing in a foreign language (i.e., other than their native language of English). To a much smaller degree, faculty identified writing as a required learning objective of the course, while other faculty commented that they included writing despite it not being listed as a required program or course outcome.

As reflected in the responses presented above, “[u]sing IE to study the ‘work’ that people carry out allows writing studies researchers to reveal the deep and often hidden investments and experiences of those people, making visible the values, practices, beliefs, and belongings that circulate below more visible or dominant discourses” while uncovering “opportunities for recognition, conversation, or intervention” (LaFrance 5). Clearly, the motivations that faculty have identified for supporting students' development as writers across the disciplines are well in line with the overall beliefs extolled by the field of writing studies as to how WAC work can serve students as developing writers. These include supporting students' transfer of knowledge and practice in writing across genres and contexts (Anson and Moore; Nowacek; Yancey et al.), understanding writing as generative (Preston; Thelin and Taczak), supporting students' development of critical thinking skills (Bean and Melzer; Brookfield; Carpenter and Krest; Carriethers et al.; Nosich), and using writing for formative or alternative assessments and to scaffold learning (Anderson, et al.; Childers; Gibbs and Simpson; Maki; Wiggins and McTighe).

With the identification of these faculty beliefs, as a WAC director I am able to reinforce the ways faculty value the use of undergraduate writing in their curriculum while also offering various kinds of support (e.g., effective means of using formative assessment, engaging students, and offering opportunities for writing to diverse audiences, etc.). The faculty responses above are indeed heartening, even ideal. However, as we know, faculty (would need to) enact such beliefs within an institutional context that often shapes faculty practices despite one's beliefs. As LaFrance reminds us, the work of an individual “is always rule-governed and textually mediated” by hierarchical forces within one's institutional context and often against one's own interests (5). As such, I was intrigued to learn from faculty what about their work with undergraduate writing, despite their motivations, made the work challenging and what might possibly negatively influence their commitment to WAC.

REVEALING TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS WITH IE

As Rankin reminds us, the goal of IE research “is to investigate how people working in a particular place are coordinated by work going on elsewhere [within the institution] . . . [and] to amass evidence that is used to describe and to empirically explicate how disparate interests are activated and subordinated” (“Conducting” 2). The IE framework names this conflict of interests a *problematic*. LaFrance distinguishes problematic from a problem as such: While the former may begin with the latter, a problematic “then recognizes and accounts for the situated, complex, and interconnected relations among people, their experiences, and their practices related to that problem” (39). Annica Cox, in this collection, describes the revealing of problematics as a way to “explore further the persistent conflicts, slippages, and disjunctions in the work that we do, *despite* our best efforts.” And, as LaFrance and Nicolas explain, “a problematic takes into account that not all individuals will be oriented to a situation or practice in the same way” (139). A problematic I have identified at UNM via this study is represented by the disjuncture between the seemingly widespread practice of integrating writing into courses across the disciplines and how that occurrence differs from what is “worked up (abstracted) within the official texts, policies, and understandings” (i.e., via the IE heuristic of boss texts)⁶ of the larger institutional context (Rankin “Conducting . . . Analytical” 3).

While the majority of faculty respondents included 300- and 400-level courses in their disciplines as locations where they focus on undergraduate writing, writing instruction as official institutional policy at UNM is limited to a few first and second year “communication” courses as part of UNM’s general education requirements (“Communication”). These courses are described by the institution as “complementing the major” and as “providing a base of knowledge and flexible tools for thinking” that “equip students for success throughout their education and after graduation” (“General Education Curriculum”). However, formal institution-wide policy in support of student writing stops there. The problematic or disjuncture, then, is between faculty’s clear interest in and active participation with writing across the curriculum at higher levels of instruction in the disciplines (the “ideal”) while not being offered formal support from the institution in doing this work, neither through stated policy nor, least of all, a well-established, well-funded WAC program (the “real”). Perhaps ironically, then, where others in this collection point to the tensions to be negotiated between “boss texts” and the embodied experiences of faculty work, this study points to the tension created by a *lack* of boss texts beyond first-year writing as evidence of the administration’s disinterest in or failure to support faculty and students in undergraduate writing across the curriculum.

6 See Nugent, et al. and other chapters in this collection for a detailed discussion of boss texts.

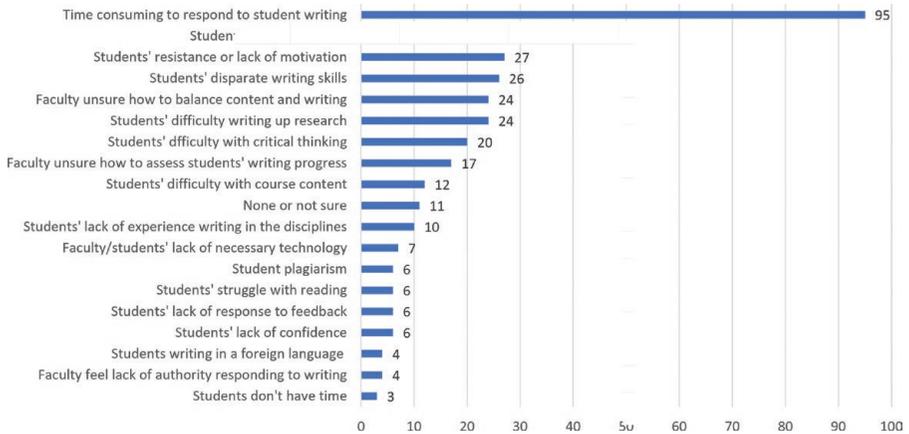


Figure 7.2. Faculty perceptions of barriers to assigning student writing in a course.

When comparing faculty motivations for supporting undergraduate student writing in their courses to the challenges faculty face with the practicalities of that work, additional problematics are revealed, specifically in response to the second of my survey questions: *What are challenges or barriers to having students write in [a chosen] course?* Figure 7.2 taxonomizes the 342 responses received from 216 faculty participants to that open-ended question, with some faculty providing more than one response.

While the *motivations* identified by faculty reveal the *theoretical* reasons why individuals might work to integrate writing into their undergraduate courses, the *challenges* identified by faculty point to the *material* conditions that can make the work of emphasizing writing in courses across the disciplines difficult. To some readers, it may appear at first glance that the responses in Figure 7.2 might be grouped into two categories: student and faculty “deficiencies.” However, returning to Rankin’s notion of standpoint as an IE heuristic, “The work of the IE analyst is to conduct inquiries into ruling practices from the standpoint of actual people who occupy specific locations within the extended ruling regimes that coordinate everyday work” (“Conducting” 2). This means we must consider the faculty standpoint expressed above within the material realities of the larger institutional context. We must consider the materiality of the university in which faculty are teaching and students are learning to understand more clearly the meaning of the responses above. As articulated by LaFrance, “IE as methodology poses the ongoing critical work of ethnography as a simultaneous process of theorizing our work within institutional contexts and as a means to understand the actualities of that work that live below the layers of our materialist discourse” (23). Faculty’s responses to the second survey question help to uncover the reality that lies below the surface.

The most obvious challenge identified by 95 faculty (44%) as inhibiting their work is the amount of time (or lack thereof) that faculty have to respond to student writing. This challenge was identified almost three times more than the next challenge. Specifically, faculty described the time it takes to grade papers or provide useful feedback to students as “daunting” or “prohibitive” due to the institutional constraints of high student enrollment in a class, a high teaching load, and/or a lack of support from a course TA. Faculty also reported teaching classes ranging in size from 20 to 200 students and teaching up to 300 students per semester. Of course, the higher the enrollment for a class and the higher the teaching load, the less time a faculty member has to offer feedback to any one student. And within several of the disciplines on campus, it is often non-tenure track faculty who teach the undergraduate courses while carrying a higher teaching load, making responding to student writing almost, or often, impossible. Obviously, it is not faculty who set course caps or define teaching loads but department chairs, deans, or provosts. Such policies, then, have a negative effect on faculty’s ability to support students in their development as writers.⁷ This condition reflects the IE concept of *ruling relations*, which, as explained in the introduction to this collection, “shape thinking and doing within institutional settings, routines, and conditions [that] are not accidental, but bear traces of ideology, history, and social influence.” The influence here at UNM are the austerity measures set by university administrators to make any one class more profitable, despite the conflict it creates for best practices in teaching and support of student learning.

The additional challenges listed in Figure 7.2 might be viewed at first glance as owing to faculty or student shortcomings, as faculty have identified them. However, the additional challenges, upon closer examination, are also the result of ruling relations. For example, 24 faculty (11%) identify having difficulty balancing time and attention to writing instruction in class with that of the course content required by factors beyond their control: requirements identified by their department or program, the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and other accrediting bodies, and/or the expectations of colleagues teaching more advanced content higher up the curriculum. Therefore, despite faculty valuing attention to undergraduate writing, the outcomes identified by the *ruling relations* coordinating and organizing the daily experiences and practices of faculty (and students) across space and time (LaFrance 32) make the focus on

7 At my own institution, thankfully, the fire marshal has forced the administration, in a sense, to limit course caps for first-year writing (FYW) to 25 students, as the rooms available to the FYW program can accommodate only up to 25 students safely and legally. However, note that even this level of enrollment conflicts with the CCCC recommendation that writing classes be limited to no more than 20 students, with the ideal limit set at 15 (CCCC).

writing difficult, particularly without formal institutional support (in the way of a WAC program or other) on how to address these challenges.

The lack of access to faculty development opportunities in relation to WAC is also evident in other difficulties identified by faculty, including not being able to clearly communicate to students faculty expectations for an assignment (and “without being too prescriptive”), designing fair assessments, and successfully tracking students’ progress with writing. A small number of faculty also identified (incorrectly, in my view) their lack of authority to offer students feedback on their writing, either because faculty themselves are non-native speakers of English (e.g., “I learned English starting at an adult age, and thus my English skills are limited, so I do not feel that I have full authority to teach how to write”) or because they simply weren’t sure how to respond to student writing effectively:

We have students practice paraphrasing passages so they get more comfortable with that skill for larger stakes Wikipedia page edits. My challenge is that true paraphrasing is subjective and sometimes I don’t feel confident in how I assess their paraphrases. Beyond advising that they don’t reuse phrases from the original sentence, sometimes I lack the precision needed to communicate what they need to do to make their paraphrases better.

With IE’s focus on the ruling relations that coordinate faculty’s daily work, we can re-see the deficiencies that faculty view as their own as actually a failure of the institution to provide adequate support for faculty who value opportunities for undergraduate writing across the disciplines.

The failure of institutions, both at the university and state levels, is also reflected in what may first appear to some as student deficiencies. In Figure 7.2, faculty identified thirteen of nineteen challenges of writing instruction as those brought to the classroom by students. However, again, as IE instructs us, a closer examination, or a “looking up” as described by the editors and authors of this collection, reveals that the deficiencies ascribed to students are more accurately viewed as those of our local and state institutions that govern the experiences of faculty and students. For example, the particular challenges faculty identified as originating with students’ orbit around differences in student’s preparation before attending university and their subsequent disparate writing skills, including grammar knowledge, critical thinking skills, the ability to write up research, comprehension of course content, degree of experience writing in the disciplines, reading ability, and, to a lesser degree, understanding and avoiding plagiarism. At its most extreme, but, fortunately, to the least degree in response to the survey, blame placed on students appears in the form of classism and

racism, as illustrated in the following faculty survey response that overgeneralizes the (lack of) ability among students from New Mexico in contrast with students from other states and other countries:

Students come in from high school with woefully inadequate basic writing skills, and almost no research, synthesis, and factual interpretation skills whatsoever. This of course varies widely—a second challenge for a teacher. There are differences in preparedness between NM [New Mexico] and out of state students. In addition, [our] classes [in my discipline] attract a high proportion of foreign students, whose English ranges from superb (better than “native” speakers, actually) to abysmal.

As reflected here, we see that some faculty are conditioned to identify students and their writing as lacking^{8,9} rather than recognizing the socially organized ruling practices at the institutional and state levels constructed by contemporary Western societies that result in differences in preparation among UNM students (Rankin “Conducting . . . Guidance” 2). Here, I return to the data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation referenced above that perhaps accounts for this faculty’s perception of the variation of student preparedness. We know that in 2019 New Mexico was ranked at or near the bottom among the 50 states according to six indicators, including education (50th) and economics (49th) (9). We also know that an overwhelming majority of undergraduate students from New Mexico are both first generation college students and represent historically marginalized races/ethnicities. However, rather than label the institutional factors at the state and national levels that “have failed to eliminate the racial and ethnic inequalities” that contribute greatly to the variation in student preparedness within our state and local institutions, including K-12 public schools and colleges and universities, the deficiency at the institutional level is occluded and, too often, as here, placed on the student.¹⁰

At the same time, some faculty blame their own self-identified “deficiencies” for not knowing how to respond or not having the time to respond in an effective way to the perceived needs of students. In this way, attention to the university and the state’s deficient response—through the withholding of human,

8 See, for example, reference to UNM’s past “remedial” English program via the UNM Newsroom before it was replaced by Stretch and Studio courses (Suilmann).

9 See Bethany Davila and Cristyn Elder’s curriculum response to this issue.

10 Not to mention the problematic ideologies around language and standardization that are perpetuated by the institution and, therefore, at times, faculty. Again, see Davila and Elder’s curriculum response to this issue.

monetary, or technical resources, to name a few, and the (lack of) implementation of (un)helpful policies—is displaced onto students and faculty, who are, in fact, subject to the ruling relations of the university and the state. With IE’s emphasis on identifying the interconnections between the material conditions of the sites in which we work and how or why people do what they do, we begin to recognize how our practices are coordinated by institutional factors that often work against faculty and what we know as best practices for increased student success. With this tension brought out in the open with IE, we can in fact see the challenges identified by faculty in Figure 7.2 as material conditions of the university. We understand the needs of faculty and students. And we can see the ways our local and state institutions fail to address them.

CONCLUSION

We know from the collection of WAC scholarship over the years that three conditions are necessary for a WAC program to survive: 1) “grassroots and faculty support”; 2) “strong philosophical and fiscal support from institutional administrators”; and 3) a combination of one and two (Townsend 50-51). The overarching goal of this research has been to identify factors that may point to the first—a faculty commitment (or lack thereof) to WAC at UNM and where commitment may lie on campus so that it may be leveraged for broader, sustainable support for UNM’s nascent WAC program. At the start of this research, I expected the data collected to help me “make visible [the] assumptions that underlie practices, anticipate points of resistance, determine which existing ideologies might be candidates for change, identify ideologies that clash, and plan strategies for handling those differences” as a step in measuring the possible commitment of faculty to sustainable WAC (Cox et al. 66). I have sought to identify some of the ideologies held by faculty, as well as the material conditions of their work, that can influence their teaching of undergraduate writing. Upon analyzing faculty responses to the two survey questions above—regarding faculty motivations and challenges to teaching writing—through the lens of IE “we can begin to see how notions of writing and its institutional contexts are co-created in the ‘inter-individual’ interplay among discursive structures, material actualities, and the work individuals carry out (Smith 2005)” (qtd. in LaFrance 28). This interplay of individual and institutional factors, or “discursive pivot points” as Devault refers to them (LaFrance 28), may either help or hinder (or both) a commitment to WAC as one’s institutional context shapes conceptions of writing, including our own and of those around us, for good and for bad. The interest shown by faculty above in undergraduate writing, as evidenced by the response rate, across a wide range of undergraduate programs, surely points to a kind of interactivity

that can be strengthened and built upon in a purposeful way toward sustainable WAC. Even more importantly, of course, in support of sustainable WAC are the ideologies underlying faculty's motivations for assigning undergraduate writing, which reflect the underlying beliefs of the field of writing studies about the ways WAC can serve students effectively. The support from faculty for WAC and across the disciplines is clearly represented in the data.

However, the material conditions faculty identify, co-constructed by the ruling relations of the institution, point to a lack of commitment from those who set the conditions for faculty teaching and student learning. Again, I evoke LaFrance: "As writing studies researchers begin to account for the complex interconnections between the material conditions of our sites and how people do what they do, we begin to recognize how writing, writing pedagogy, and our multifaceted work in sites of writing are coordinated by particular institutional factors" (5-6). IE, as my method of design and analysis for this study, has served to uncover the tensions and conflicts influencing faculty (and students') everyday practices against their own best interests, with high course enrollments, an emphasis on quantity rather than quality of course content, and an adherence to ineffective approaches to teaching and learning as reinforced by institutional austerity measures, not to mention the intersectional racist/classist systems reinforced by local and state institutions. While this initial research points to the clear presence of grassroots faculty support for WAC across schools, colleges, and disciplines on our Albuquerque campus, a question still remains: Will there be adequate support at the level of local and state institutions for sustainable WAC at UNM?

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