CHAPTER 11.

FINDING WRITING WHERE IT LIVES: DEPARTMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH DEPARTMENTS

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This chapter offers tactics for moving toward a sustainable, faculty-driven WEC process when the very conditions of working with a department seem to preclude faculty involvement. In the WEC initiative at the University of Oklahoma, our approach has been like that of a social activist doing grassroots work behind the scenes before they have achieved the critical mass to effect institutional change. The chapter first aims to update the general WAC conversation about social movement tactics with recent literature about relational dynamics (Tarabochia, 2017), including the rhetoric of respect (Rousculp, 2014) practiced in community-oriented writing centers. These relational dimensions are especially important for new or small WEC programs that must flexibly build coalitions and one-with-one ties to foster a campus culture of writing. We present evidence from WEC's work with the OU Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Drawing on faculty focus group responses and curriculum development materials, we demonstrate how one curriculum specialist, guided by WEC, gradually initiated a departmental conversation through one-with-one conversations, coalitions with other teaching initiatives, and strategically chosen curricular interventions.

BRINGING WEC TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

"Organizing 101!" proclaimed historian Anne Hyde, punctuating a WEC focus group conversation in which the Department of Chemistry's instructional lab designer Tami Martyn had described her "grassroots" efforts, similar to those

of Blank in Chapter 5 of this volume, to engage individual faculty members in discussions about student writing. Here's the context: In 2016, Dr. Martyn approached our WEC coordinator for assistance integrating writing instruction across the four-year undergraduate curriculum in chemistry. With the approval of the chair, we slightly revised and distributed a WEC-style survey that collects instructors' perceptions about student writing. But while the department appreciated the data and blessed Tami's work on a WEC-inspired curriculum map, they believed it impossible for the faculty of over 32 to be involved in a concerted two-year project of curricular and pedagogical change related to writing. Thus, while WEC fell short of one of its fundamental principles—open and extensive faculty involvement in developing a plan for curricular development—we continued to consult with Dr. Martyn as she worked, both overtly and "behind the scenes," to create a departmental buzz about student writing.

Our story, then, reveals a kind of outsourcing of expertise that could be one of the challenges of implementing WEC at many universities. Yet while our focus group revealed the trying conditions under which faculty labor, Dr. Hyde's "Organizing 101" remark also suggested that WAC's history of borrowing tactics and strategies from social movements might offer solutions. As Anson and Dannels (2018) put it in their case study in *Sustainable WAC*, "the departmental model [e.g., WEC] requires a kind of community activism that at once respects the autonomy and values of departmental cultures while also providing them with new perspectives, knowledge, and strategies" (p. 6). To be sure, WEC can be seen as part of an effort to overcome the limitations of the "social movement" model's reliance on micro-level, decentralized pedagogical work (Cox et al., 2018, p. 17). But as Anson and Dannels' allusion to "community activism" suggests, this concern with strategic issues such as program administration in no way implies abandoning the "movement" tactics of earlier WAC approaches. Consistent with the strategies recommended in Cox, et al., WEC builds on the relational wisdom gleaned from grassroots WAC to create a *flexible* system—one that thoughtfully respects disciplinary prerogatives, faculty autonomy, and a bottom-up ethic of inductive work. When this "work with other movements" takes the form of collaborations and partnerships, we argue, relational work that employs tactics is required. Drawing on recent theory about the link between social relations and larger WAC conversations (Geller, 2009; Rousculp, 2014; Tarabochia, 2017), we show how WEC facilitates collaborative labor and mutual respect in ways that move toward a systemic writing plan, even when labor and administrative constraints incline departments to "doubt" (Geller, 2009) this goal from the start.

This chapter illustrates our experience adapting the WEC model to our situation in three stages. First, we will provide an overview of WEC at our uni-

versity, the origins and connections to the writing center's existing WAC efforts and collaborative ethos. Then we will describe three interrelated approaches that have the explanatory power to help us better understand our WEC efforts: a *rhetoric of respect*, or attention to the dynamics of reciprocity and to the relational dynamics that go into forging sustained collaborations; *co-inquiry*, which emerges from valuing both techne and episteme during collaborative work; and the *coalition-building* strategies that enable WAC movements to be legible to all stakeholders. After showing how collaborative work and attention to relationships work together, we'll present a case study—chemistry—that illustrates the potential of collaborative micro-work in environments that turn to outsourcing expertise. Overall, this chapter offers tactics for moving toward WEC's staged, faculty-driven process when the very conditions of working with a department seem to preclude faculty involvement. Our approach is like that of a social activist doing grassroots work behind the scenes before they have achieved the critical mass to effect institutional change. At OU we have often been pleasantly surprised by how the material practices of the WEC model—the faculty survey, the insider/outsider assessment, the curriculum map—scaffold faculty to conferring about disciplinary writing, the value of collaborative work, and curricular goals in ways that administrative mandates fail to inspire. We believe that this universally desired outcome would be welcome in almost any higher education context.

INCUBATING WEC IN A WRITING CENTER CULTURE

What we did for many years at OU would hardly be classified as systemic or sustainable (Cox et al., 2018). Our approach was basically a neighborly one, with a peripatetic writing center director interested in talking with faculty about teaching writing in their discipline as well as about the writing they were doing in their discipline. For example, over the past ten years we have made a space for informal faculty discussions of writing across disciplines through brown bags, guest lectures, year-long symposia, writing groups, and Write Track Workshops. At times we had embedded graduate student writing fellows with departments to help facilitate a makeover—one that might have been required to meet program review standards to improve capstone writing, for example.

Because we intentionally developed a relational ethos for our writing center, we wished to extend that intentionality into thinking about WEC (Tarabochia, 2017). We wanted to find models that aligned with our values and offered some explanatory power. Our most useful affordance was the relationships we had already built, the trust that the writing center (through the director) had engendered. We were also pretty set on not adopting an overdetermined model. So at

the start we were thinking about how to retain the good will and informality we had cultivated with faculty while transitioning to an actual programmatic model.[1]

In our context, a public R1 flagship with about 25,000 undergraduate students, adopting the WEC approach as described in the introduction to this collection was less like creating a WAC program from scratch and more like building on the OU Writing Center's existing grass-roots effort to reach faculty across campus and engage them in conversations about writing—student writing and their own writing. Yet the WEC approach included elements we had not employed, most particularly making our efforts more transparent and deliberate with plans and goals.[2]

THE RHETORIC OF RESPECT

As the OU Writing Center and WEC staff collaborated to achieve this more systematic engagement with departments, we took advantage of the affinities between the "rhetoric of respect" which Rousculp (2014) has articulated in the context of community writing centers and the practices of listening and cultivating faculty expertise which are so essential in WEC's work with departments. The OU Writing Center, as a site for developing WEC, already demonstrated the organizational wisdom of social movements because of its existing social justice partnerships across campus. We saw WEC's "community activism" idea as helping us transplant WEC to an environment where, in the absence of funding incentives and an administrative mandate, building relationships and alliances would be at a premium.

There are strong homologies between WEC's approach to working with departments and the main tenets of the "rhetoric of respect" that Rousculp (2014) has outlined for an activist community writing center. For Rousculp, the rhetoric of respect is meant as an alternative to rhetorics of "tolerance" and "acceptance," which may imply a patronizing and unequal stance toward writing center visitors and partners. The cultivation of mutual esteem demands agility in balancing listening and expertise in adaptation to local partnerships. Rousculp learned, on the one hand, those doing this work need to "believe the organiza-

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1   When Michele arrived at OU (2006), she invoked a book that she had been thinking about for several years when she was asked about developing big programs. OU did not want/ still does not want, a campus-wide writing intensive initiative or a systemic WAC initiative, which fit well with her intentions and set the tone for WEC at OU. See *Small is beautiful: a study of economics as if people mattered* (Schumacher, E. F., 1973).

2   Late in 2012, we invited Pamela Flash to visit OU and provide some overview of the University of Minnesota writing enriched curriculum program to selected faculty and the provost. Soon after, because we sensed a positive reaction to the model by the provost, we submitted a proposal to fund a WEC initiative.

tion (in our case, departments) are capable of knowing what they want and what is best for them and their clients (in our case, students)" and attend planning meetings in a "blank" listening state. On the other hand, genuine reciprocity requires the "perception of worth, in esteem for another—*as well as* for the self," a kind of situational self-awareness that will sometimes withhold advice, but at other times offer expertise (2014, p. 25, italics ours). Crucially, for all its intentional "fuzziness," Rousculp's approach is guided less by general feeling or theory than it is by discursive practice: "how we collaborate [and] problem-solve" in the field. In other words, we build strong relationships by foregrounding practical work, trusting that collaborative, problem-solving activity will reveal the proper balance of listening and expertise better than standardized guidelines.

Co-inquiry and Labor

WEC work reveals the extent to which the virtues of "co-inquiry" depend on understanding the process of inquiry as empirical *work*—the almost magical ability of work to lead people to insights that no amount of abstract discussion or lecturing could induce. Geller (2009) has argued that WAC workers who participate in egalitarian dialogue with faculty will be able to play with disciplinary differences and reveal the underlying principles of teaching writing. Beyond egalitarianism, however, what's essential to Geller's concept of co-inquiry is the work process of empirical inquiry. Here she provides a method: "we can think our differences, rather than just thinking about our differences . . . and thinking our differences together is slow work," she explains, "the stuff of retreats, intensive weeklong workshops, and the very best collaborative assessment research" (2009, p. 33). Tarabochia (2017), too, has theorized the value of such "slow work" to generate meaningful relationships with (and among) faculty in her discussion of "establishing expert techne" in WAC work. Tarabochia's conversations with WAC developers reveal that many can establish expertise in a dialogic way when they "[make] visible the methodological dimension of their expertise—the craft-ful practice of teaching writing" (2017, p. 36). We think she's saying that techne leads to episteme better than the other way around.

These concepts of expert techne and co-inquiry reveal the hidden value of early WEC tools such as the faculty survey and initial assessments and curriculum maps—tools that may provide occasions of co-inquiry even before departments have assented to the idea of a writing plan. We might see these empirical tools as gestures of "productive humility" that Luskey and Emery have described in Chapter 4 of this volume—as places where the WAC worker can perform their disciplinary naiveté, and where the faculty members can work in the liminal space between "good writing" and thinking and expression in their specific

discipline. The faculty survey might seem like just setting a quantitative benchmark for future assessment—but its true value lies in the preparatory process of calibrating disciplinary writing outcomes by comparing them with several samples of student writing: practical work that does more to help faculty to understand the concept of teaching "writing in the disciplines" than venting about student writing quality. The same can be said of initial assessments of student writing: initial assessment is not so much a pretense to scientific comparison; there's an ulterior motive—namely, involving faculty in the process of developing disciplinary-specific criteria themselves (Flash et al., 2018). Small scale, initial assessment can be used to generate dialogue with early adopters about disciplinary writing and to create a sense of agency and investment by mixing their labor with the process. In short, for WEC initiatives, we think "co-inquiry" means the first priority may not be getting a slot at the department's next faculty meeting to pitch a two-year writing plan to the assembled professors; instead, it should be creating occasions of co-work on student writing with faculty, and consciously leveraging any activity that makes visible the epistemological thresholds of disciplinary writing and curricular design.

But the concept of co-inquiry also suggests some ways we had to modify our initial understanding of the WEC approach. We thought WEC meant, much as Rousculp (2014) counsels, an ethos of minimal response—going into meetings "blank," withholding expertise, even when faculty say things that would rankle our comp/rhet comrades. In practice, however, the relational dynamics of working with faculty have led us to revisit the "co" in "co-inquiry." Tarabochia (2017) counsels flexibly offering and withholding expertise, depending on labor needs of a particular person/department. Geller advances the value of equity between WAC worker and patron—not a "division of labor" or a patron-client relationship, or between a generic pedagogy coach and a disciplinary expert, but a reciprocal exchange between two disciplinary experts "working their differences together." Patton (in Geller, 2009) describes the scene:

> The dialogue I've had with him and others isn't just one-way—we share lots of reading, lots of philosophical inquiry about our assumptions, as well as questions about my teaching and assignments. But my point here is that to embrace egalitarianism is not to deny expertise, much of which is *practiced* even if not *preached*. (p. 30)

Here Patton nicely connects both sides of the co-inquiry equation: "practiced" techne can become more explicit episteme when it's approached with the playful, cross-disciplinary dialogue between WAC worker and faculty member.

COALITION-BUILDING

Respectful dialogue and collaborative work acquire greater legitimacy when they are perceived as part of a grassroots movement rather than primarily as part of a top-down initiative. Even back in the 1990s, as early WAC leaders began to construct a vision for the future, Walvoord (1996) characterized WAC as a *movement*, one based on strategic collaboration that maintains an anti-state, pro-faculty stance. For Walvoord, WAC programs could emulate the social movements' "dissemination of tactics and personnel" in intentional alliances with other campus stakeholders such as teaching centers, offices of assessment, and gen-ed initiatives, while carefully avoiding losing WAC's "pro-faculty" stance (1996, p. 70). To Walvoord, seeing WAC within the paradigm of social movements is a more positive way to frame the challenges, each of which then suggests a possible solution: work with other movement organizations" (p. 68-74). Susanmarie Harrington et al. (this volume) describe a contemporary example of this type of coalition building: "By bringing together WID, departmental faculty, and the library," WEC at the University of Vermont was able to demonstrate "that writing and information literacy are intertwined and disciplinarily situated." We believe our version of WAC/WID, developed from the WEC model, depends vitally on such coalition-building relationships. And coalitions remain focused on members, people who, however named, have joined a group and are moving along together.

As the ensuing case study will show, this dynamic of collaborative work has played out in Robert's work in chemistry, too. On the one hand, Robert and Tami both identify as "in-sourced" labor, similar to Gary Blank's early role in forestry (this volume). Just as Dr. Martyn's role as the "Instructional Lab Designer" for the chemistry department delegates the work of curriculum development and TA management to an internal specialist, Robert's first WAC project was as the "Writing Coordinator" for the U.S. History Survey. At that time, he was charged with injecting writing into a curriculum that was not going to give up the "Sage on the Stage" style of teaching. Thus, he was given the work of TA training and writing curriculum development, labor that would not be taken up by senior faculty at the time. In addition to bonding over the similarities of their institutional status, Robert and Tami's working relationship thrived on the sort of cross-disciplinary co-inquiry that Geller (2009) and Tarabochia (2017) have discussed.

Now we want to show how these three elements—rhetoric of respect, of relational work/co-inquiry, and coalition-building—influenced our work with one department—chemistry.

CASE STUDY: DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY

Prior to WEC we were quite familiar with trying to make change happen within small groups—a coalition of the willing, so to speak.[3] We were also aware that some departments were fractured—and fractious. We intuited deep historical political divides within departments that could have prevented any interaction from being positive. We also saw, in some cases, how bringing in outside expertise was perceived as the best solution; some departments wanted us to do all this work or to work on an individual basis with instructional designers to deal with matters of curriculum and pedagogy. To better theorize the relations between these campus-wide, departmental, and individual aspects of WAC/WID work, we developed an IRB-approved study to facilitate focus group discussions with faculty members we have worked with over in a WEC capacity over the last five years. We will use our work with chemistry to illustrate how we've flexibly applied WEC instruments to departmental cultures resistant to WEC's collective approach. The case study also illustrates how relational dynamics condition adaptations of WEC's long-term staged process.

The WEC team's work with chemistry began three years ago when the department's full-time instructional lab designer, Tami, contacted us about incorporating writing instruction into their general education offerings. This unusual institutional situation—working with an embedded instructional designer—quickly presented advantages and obstacles. One the one hand, we had a built-in liaison, a chemist with knowledge of disciplinary writing, and one who was "thoroughly convinced—I convinced myself before working with WEC—that you don't know if a student understands until they can put it into words." But Tami's insider expertise also posed a problem for WEC's participatory, inductive approach to curriculum development. Although a WEC-style faculty survey pinpointed critical writing abilities and suggested the need to map them over the curriculum, the department said "No" to our proposal to discuss these results with the faculty. Instead, the department delegated responsibility for developing a curriculum map and instructional materials to Tami, alone, in consultation with WEC. How were we to move toward a sustainable curriculum when the engine of WEC work—

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3   Our earliest efforts under the WEC banner were with construction science, computer science, and music. George Cusack [now at Carleton College] is credited with bridging our informal approach to a more structured process and, especially with music, was appreciated for "giving us just what we needed to work on this" in terms of direction and guidance. George acknowledged the tensions in the department, made the participatory, inductive, and labor-intensive process transparent, and focused the attention and energy on the task at hand—"fixing the Capstone."

faculty dialogue about actual student writing—was off the table from the get-go? In this case study we want to show how such circumstances may require tactically flipping your original WEC script now and again, focusing early on curriculum development activities that allow WEC personnel to build working relationships both with and within departments. While we found it necessary to depart from an optimal WEC sequence at certain moments, we were ultimately convinced of the importance of maintaining the overarching narrative at every step of the way in a "grassroots" process of gradually inducing faculty participation.

Robert responded to chemistry's unwillingness to collectively discuss their writing goals by offering to help develop a few "low-stakes" writing assignments for students integrating data tables and figures in their general chemistry lab reports. He initially thought he was throwing away the WEC playbook by getting into the weeds of assignment creation without the involvement of teaching faculty; it was Tami who had the tactical sense to foresee how focusing on tables and figures would move us toward the long-term goal of faculty participation. Her approach was to use the success of an assignment focused on a skill that faculty would not initially see as "writing"—constructing data tables and graphs—to induce individual faculty members to adopt language and approaches others had had success with. As she explained to the focus group:

> Yeah, [you have] to have an example to say, "This is what it will look like if you do this." And then they can say, "Yeah, that makes sense." Instead of just abstractly "We want you to write" or "we want your students to do better" or "What do you think writing is?" at which point they just shut down and say, "We don't write in my class."

Tami explained that the demonstrable impact of the tables and figures curriculum in first-year chemistry encouraged *Chem 2* instructors to integrate a similar language—"Titles, Tables, and Text"—on their own syllabi or learning management systems. Most importantly, Tami foresaw how flipping the WEC script—far from throwing away the playbook—could initiate a "grassroots" approach to gradually creating a departmental conversation one professor at a time:

> We're hoping to incorporate more faculty as we go. As I said, we really haven't incorporated all across our curriculum yet. And to do that, we have a conversation with that next instructor: how are we going to frame this, and how is it going to show up in your class? Can we make a statement on your syllabus? Can we put together this one page that you can just put onto your Canvas site? So that it makes it obvious that it's

> part of a system. But it's one faculty member at a time, and saying "Okay, we have an overall plan, we want to incorporate your course into it. How can we work together on this?"

In lieu of the best-case scenario—inductively generating learning outcomes in faculty meetings and committees—Tami is creating a de facto "system" by using the tables and figures curriculum to have conversations about chemistry writing with individual professors, and to persuade them to adopt consistent language across the curriculum. Tami and Robert agree gradually luring faculty into participating in a shared curriculum (similar to the activities preceding WEC implementation in some departments described in Chris Anson's chapter in this volume) is not as good as having open faculty discussions from the start—but we believe we can move toward that goal one professor at a time.

Developing working relationships to carry forward such "grassroots" strategies may require WEC workers to temporarily shelve their preferred method of coaching and to claim some writing expertise. Tarabochia (2017) shows that WAC workers often establish "expert *techne*" by sharing their own practices of teaching and writing and comparing them with the methods of faculty they're working with. For example, a WAC worker might leverage the practical suggestion about grade norming to arrive at the epistemological principle of the "rhetorical nature of writing and the complex reality of multiple audiences" (Roozen, 2015, pp. 38-39) through conversations about their common experiences with the scholarly peer review process. In a similar vein, Geller has argued that creating practical occasions of "co-inquiry" with departmental faculty requires not only "believing" in the faculty member's writing expertise, but also "owning up to" our own writing—"admit[ting] what we know—and don't know" about writing in our discipline and as WAC experts (2009, p. 31). Like Tarabochia, Geller (2009) believes that such practices of "thinking our differences together" (p. 33) requires exposing deeper epistemic assumptions, "learning how to make explicit the thinking that leads you to say what you say" (p. 29). The practical work of comparing differences as teachers and practitioners of writing can lead tacitly to the deeper realizations—that writing is disciplinary, that it's rhetorical—that enable faculty participation in WAC/WID work.

Robert's work with Tami to create the "Tables and Figures" curriculum for Chemistry suggests how such practical work done in the spirit of mutual humility can lead departments toward these epistemological thresholds. Tami and Robert developed their thinking about this in a co-presentation at the OU Writing Center's Year of the Scientific Writer Symposium—a fact worth underscoring because it shows how WEC's work with individuals and departments builds on Michele's "coalition-building" approach to developing a campus culture of writing. In their presentation Tami and Robert used the subtitle "Just a Chemist

. . . Just a Writing Teacher" to convey the productive messiness of co-discovering the writing in student data tables and figures. Tami, persuaded that writing about data makes it *meaningful*, sought out Robert's expertise as "writer"; she didn't want so much to be prompted neutrally to develop her own consciousness of chemistry writing as to engage in playful dialogue with someone who approaches "writing" from a different disciplinary angle—as a historian, as a "writer" (Robert's Ph.D. is in history, and he teaches composition in the Expository Writing Program). As she explained in the YSW presentation:

> At this point I wanted an "expert's opinion"! Though I had put together what I thought was the most important parts of writing a good paper and had gotten feedback within the department to support the curriculum, I really wanted to know how a writer would view it. I also know that we are educating a wide variety of students and I wanted to know what assumptions I was making of students' understanding that non-chemists would not understand. I NEEDED an outside perspective.

What is interesting about Tami's characterization of Robert's role here is how it alludes simultaneously to his "expertise" as a practitioner and teacher of writing and his (useful) ignorance of what counts as meaningful in a chemistry context. The same experience that made Robert an "expert" in creating curriculum materials like this also rendered him useful as an uninformed "outsider."

As Tarabochia (2017) and Geller (2009) have emphasized, developing such working relationships of mutual respect both requires and reveals deeper reflection on pedagogical process—in our case, on *how* we found a common language about meaningful writing across our disciplinary divides. At first, Robert struggled to grasp what Tami was presenting as "meaningful" in tables and graphs—choices about where to start the x-axis, the ordering of columns of data, and so on—and to relate to his own stock of ideas about interpreting evidence (the Toulmin model from composition, primary source criticism from history). The breakthrough happened when Robert and Tami read together the following passage from Heard's *The Scientist's Guide to Scientific Writing*: "Do not expect readers to interpret a graphic unassisted. The text should indicate what pattern they should look for, how that pattern relates to the point being made, and how to see the pattern in a complex graphic" (2016, p. 117). Tami and Robert dubbed this passage their "magic quote," because, after Tami exclaimed "that's what I want!' upon hearing it, this invocation to audience awareness greatly helped both of them focus on a few of the most important "meaning-making" aspects of putting together tables, labeling them, and explaining them in the text. Reflecting on the totemic status of this single quotation throughout their collaboration,

Robert and Tami explained that they had stumbled upon the value of the deep learning goal—audience awareness—as the guiding principle that would help them focus the curriculum on just a the most "meaning-generating" aspects of table or a graph. Tami summarized the payoff of this collaboration in a way that pinpoints the value of thinking across disciplines: "Again, we really wanted to focus on what is *meaningful*, not necessarily the rhetoric. In my mind I was considering 1) What our science-minded TAs would be able to grade comfortably and consistently, and 2) What first-year student scientists could grasp and master at this point." Having created this relationship of meaningful disciplinary practice and "rhetorical" writing in a working dialog about a single feature of chemistry writing, Tami and Robert made their approach more "shareable" by identifying the deeper pedagogical principle that made their work possible.

By learning how to talk to one another about chemistry writing, Tami and Robert also learned how to revisit the idea of a WEC-style faculty conversation about writing with the department administration. Tami created a buzz about the tables and figures curriculum by conducting a formal assessment of its impact on General Chemistry lab reports and co-presenting these results at OU's Assessment Forum. Tami and Robert also hatched a plan to propose a WEC-style "insider/outsider" assessment of capstone writing to initiate a conversation about the learning outcomes in a course that represents the culmination of students' four-year curriculum. The department chair responded to Tami's proposal with enthusiasm. Noting that he already had somebody in mind for the outside assessor, he also embraced the underlying logic of this approach by approving of Tami's suggestion to re-orient the capstone writing assignment to a more "real-world" scenario modeled on examples from John Bean's *Engaging Ideas*. In her proposed curriculum, students choose to be a research scientist for a public agency like the EPA or NASA and write a research-based proposal to maintain funding for one of these agencies' chemistry-related projects. The initial success of this capstone initiative illustrates the relational, performativity aspect of WEC work.

Recalling the chair's remark that he "already had someone in mind" as the outside assessor affirms how concrete, personal relations can authenticate abstractions such as the assertion that writing is what chemists do in their professional work. The fact that the same department head who initially said "No" to a faculty meeting on writing outcomes then approved of similar conversation as part of the assessment process illustrates the relational wisdom baked into WEC instruments. The faculty who may say "we don't teach writing" are more likely to perceive that they have something to discuss when presented with the practical work of assessing student writing with working chemists outside of academia. But we also need to emphasize how Robert and Tami's co-inquiry with tables and figures cleared the way for this breakthrough on capstone assessment. Particularly with some aspects of data, the

use of "real-world" examples of bad tables from chemistry journals created the narrative about writing as meaningful to students when a real audience is introduced.[4]

At the one-with-one level, focusing on a particular (and particularly) disciplinary form of writing—tables and graphs—allowed Tami and Robert to build a working relationship and develop "shareable" epistemic knowledge about curriculum development. At the departmental level, they were able to leverage that small success to win broader acceptance for faculty discussion of chemistry writing by using WEC's "insider/outsider" assessment method to appeal to the department's strong relations with professional chemists outside of academia. But all of it was further enabled by WEC's tactical cooperation with multiple campus pedagogy initiatives—the office of assessment, science librarians, and temporary coalitions such as the science faculty who supported the "Year of the Scientific Writer" symposium. As Tami explained to the focus group, the opportunity to present and revisit her curriculum development work in multiple forums legitimized her efforts in the eyes of her faculty in ways that only working with WEC would not have.

In the process of developing a WEC-inspired curriculum map (Figure 9.1), Tami was able to engage individual faculty in discussions about what writing abilities are taught in their courses, and then to re-present her findings in a graphic that was both descriptive and prescriptive.
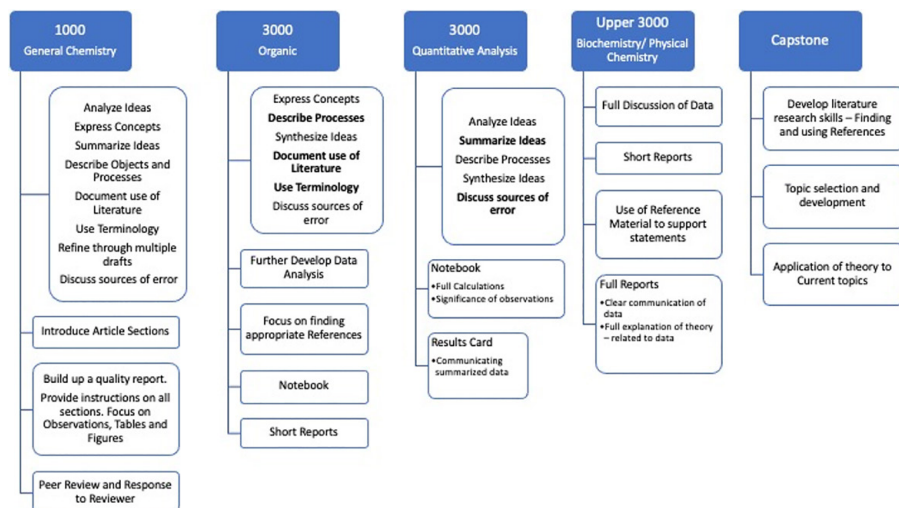

Figure 9.1. Martyn & Scafe, "Strategies for Assessing a Writing Enriched Curriculum in Natural Sciences," OU Assessment Forum, 2018.

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4   Although student responses in this case were not part of The Meaningful Writing Project data, the way the term is used here points to two interconnected reasons students named a writing task meaningful—authenticity and relevance. See Eodice et al. (2017) and meaningfulwritingproject.net/.

In our focus group, which was held shortly after the 2018 OU Assessment Forum, Tami explained how documents such as this helped her coordinate faculty conversations about writing even outside of the departmental meeting forum:

> I think it's been really good that the university has had the [Year of the Scientific Writer] forum in spring and the Assessment Forum this fall. And having [all this work] come almost like a grassroots type of thing: maybe the idea came from WEC to our department, but then our department starts spreading, "Hey this is what we're doing and this is working well for us." So even if it didn't come as a top down "everybody is going to do this" getting to us and starting that conversation, then it was also valued when we go present that somewhere. Other people agreed with it, and they said, "Oh and I like the way you're doing that. We should do something like that." And that's the type of feedback I got from last week [at the assessment forum]. So, yeah, I think that makes a big difference to our faculty when they hear other departments like what you're doing.

Tami's remarks corroborate Russell's argument that a discourse on writing in the disciplines can be more effectively dispersed throughout a community instead of only "through the determination of individual faculty or at the insistence of maverick administrator" (Russell, 1990). When new WEC programs find themselves occupying just one niche in a larger ecosystem of campus pedagogy initiatives, they may find, as Tami and Robert did, that work presented in multiple forums outside of the WEC-department relationship lends an interdisciplinary vitality that can further legitimize those departmental efforts.

The WEC approach contains a great deal of relational wisdom, which is why we wanted to adopt the model. Our work with chemistry shows that a WEC worker can operate within a "coalition of the willing" reaping the benefits of a campus culture of writing, of distinctive departmental cultures, and of one-with-one relationships by adopting a kind of informed opportunism. At first, we wondered if we had made the right decision to bring WEC. Would it be a nimble enough platform to allow us to preserve some of the artisan ways we had been working with faculty and departments? Would it signal a regulatory programmatic shift? Would it be perceived as the "fix" (as some hoped) for faculty and departments? Overall, we believe integrating the WEC model was possible because of, not despite, the highly relational "small" WAC effort we had developed.

CODA

We have come to realize the social justice potential of WEC has been latent in our work with departments, and we are right now (early 2021)—in part spurred by events on our campus and nationally—making inclusive writing pedagogy intentional and embedded in the WEC process of developing curricular writing plans. As we integrate inclusive writing instruction into the process, we have come to see WEC's *relational* ethos as a healthy alternative to the potentially missionary and colonizing elements of some WAC programs, elements that have been critiqued as assimilationist or accommodationist (see Guerra, 2015; Kareem, 2020; Kells, 2013; LeCourt, 1996; Mahala, 1991; Russell, 1990; Villanueva, 2001). What if WEC's collaborative, grassroots methods offer a better way to work toward social justice? And what if our through-line of the relational extended from our work with groups of faculty to inclusive and collaborative pedagogies within disciplinary writing contexts? For example, a capstone revision in chemistry echoed WEC's relational ethos by offering opportunities for meaningful writing, where personal connection to self and future happens within an authentic writing assignment (Eodice, et. al, 2017). We can learn from research projects that look at the student writing experience through Writing Across Communities models and studies of students' writing experiences outside and beyond school, such as the Wayfinding Project, as well as learn from the findings of the research group *(Re)Examining Conditions for Meaningful Learning Experiences* at Elon University.

We believe WEC can better live up to the social justice potential of its relational ethos if it serves not only the curriculum but also the student learning imperative. With Kells (2019) we see all writing as an "ecology of relationships" (p. 20) that must include relationships with the student writing experience, yet the students are often absent from the process and imagined as a monolithic problem in the abstract when we cook up our assignments.

In Chapter 4 of this volume, Luskey and Emery reach a similar conclusion: "our own liminality with disciplinary concepts and discourses enables us to approximate students who are themselves apprenticing in their disciplinary fields . . . [yet] throughout the WEC process, students, themselves, are rarely present in the conversation." Certainly, as we write this in early 2021 there is some exigence to trade the deficit model for a developmental approach and the disciplinary for the democratic. As Kells (2019) advises us, "WAC programs must become more culturally responsive and structurally de-centered. Otherwise, we risk reproducing the dominant narratives of oppressive educational systems which replicate themselves hierarchically to benefit those already in power and to serve the most elite (rather than the most vulnerable) constituencies in our communities" (p.

27). This would mean not only including students in the WEC conversations as partners (Cook-Sather et al., 2014), but also shifting our focus from building programs to building communities. We are slow learners, but twenty years ago Villanueva (2001) pointed the way: "We should enter into a dialogue across the disciplines so as to better to understand the social processes that could relegate such a large number to the troubleheap" (p. 170). This critique of the social underpinnings of the deficit model requires, as Poe (2020) notes, that the "discussions about adequate standards for writing that fueled WAC long ago now become discussions about negotiation, perspective, and change" (p. xiii). Ultimately, for us, after all the work with faculty across a table, the goal is really to keep building the core capacity for collaborative change, the type of change made possible in our context through crafting relationships within institutional, disciplinary, and personal contexts.

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