CHAPTER 10.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS AND COMPROMISES IN INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT: CHANGING THE STORY OF STUDENT WRITING AT A HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTION (HSI)

Analeigh E. Horton
Fairleigh Dickinson University

Aimee C. Mapes
University of Arizona

Emily Jo Schwaller
University of Arizona

Abstract. *This chapter reflects upon a state university's required writing assessment. The authors argue that the mandates were not based in writing studies best practices. They demonstrate moves, which they refer to as "strategic interventions and compromises," they made throughout the assessment process to make it more aligned with writing assessment scholarship. The authors provide nine heuristic questions aimed at WAC stakeholders to empower them to make similar moves within their own contexts.*

Community members of the University of Arizona (UArizona) have been invested in students' writing development for decades, with stakeholders including administrators, faculty, and the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR). In 2020, student writing development re-emerged at both the institutional and state levels. During the implementation of a new writing across the curriculum (WAC)

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program at UArizona, ABOR mandated that the three Arizona state universities (Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and UArizona) collaborate on an assessment of student written communication. Over the previous 15 years of UArizona's writing assessments, data results contributed to a misperception that "students can't write." When tasked by the state to design a written communication assessment, the UArizona assessment team—a group of writing experts upholding scholarship debunking these kinds of claims (Wardle, 2019)—discovered that the past assessments were methodologically misaligned to capture students' development and had not been designed with campus writing specialists. In the same way, the upcoming ABOR assessment of student writing favored summative results of students' performance without being contextualized to the needs of our local university (Ewell, 2009) and, worse, seemed likely to reaffirm the institution's perceived student writing crisis. Including the authors and three other writing and assessment specialists, the UArizona assessment team set out to make strategic interventions in the assignment design that was informed by linguistic social justice (Syracuse University College of Arts & Sciences, n.d.). We had three priorities within our local and state contexts: to minimize the harm of accountability assessment (Gallagher, 2011), to counter deficit-minded talk about student writing, and to leverage assessment as an opportunity for WAC faculty development marked by reciprocity.

Although research supports that writing development is non-linear (Driscoll et al., 2020), writing studies scholars have shown that assessments of writing such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment or Voluntary System of Accountability (which had been used by UArizona in 2018) reduce student learning into a decontextualized snapshot (Gallagher, 2011; Wardle, 2019). Results from these kinds of studies can offer institutions metrics for leveraging competition (Gallagher, 2011) but fail to produce a holistic understanding of students' writing development. For the Arizona statewide assessment mandate, ABOR wanted to use an assessment like the Collegiate Learning Assessment or Voluntary System of Accountability, arguing that a standardized assessment could be used to compare students at the three state universities. Writing experts representing each of the three universities argued against this kind of comparison: since the contexts and student populations of each are distinctive, any kind of comparative assessment, especially one developed by a third party with no localized knowledge, would create misleading or false inferences on student performance at one institution versus another.

Ultimately, ABOR and the statewide tri-university writing representatives compromised on the assessment design. First, all three universities agreed to use a nationally-developed rubric, the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Written Communication Rubric. This rubric is intended to be modified by individual institutions, so ABOR and the tri-university writing

representatives compromised on a tailored rubric to be used by all three institutions. Second, while all three universities were allowed to select their own artifacts for the assessment, a subset of each were rated by scorers at the other two universities. Throughout this negotiation and subsequent assessment, our UArizona team had to act strategically. Michelle Cox et al. (2018) describe "strategic interventions" (p. 158) as key to integrating sustainable WAC programs in complex systems. We interpreted strategic interventions as opportunities to disrupt the mandated assessment requirements. However, as disruption was not always possible, we made strategic compromises when we could by suggesting alterations to the mandates. Our interventions and compromises sought to move the overall mindset toward linguistic justice for our diverse student body (Perryman-Clark, 2023).

Our UArizona team made many strategic interventions and compromises throughout this assessment project; we have narrowed them to the most salient for WAC administrators across institutional contexts based on the common elements of assessment that many programs experience: assessment design, rater training, and report writing. First, we describe our contributions to the collaboratively tailored AAC&U VALUE Written Communication Rubric. Second, we detail the multimodal, hybrid rater training we created to enhance UArizona raters' learning development, validity, and reliability. Third, we discuss the UArizona assessment report we collaboratively authored for institutional and state stakeholders. We offer several insights into the assessment's methods and findings. However, as our strategic intervention asserted, effective assessments are localized, so we, therefore, encourage readers to focus less on our specific results and more on the heuristic questions offered at the end of each section that might be taken up to promote linguistic justice in unique settings.

CONTEXT

UArizona is one of three four-year public universities in Arizona. It is a large, Research 1 university located in the southwestern United States in Tucson, one hour north of Mexico. UArizona is the state's flagship land-grant institution, which sits on the Indigenous lands of the O'odham and Yaqui. It is an American Indian and Alaska Native-Serving Institution (AIANSI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). It is governed by ABOR.

In Arizona, like many in United States contexts, assessment of the public institutions involves state-, institutional-, and faculty- level actors. State regents or legislatures mandate policies. Institutions respond in kind with administrative guidelines, sometimes with or without faculty insights. Related to the written communication assessment described here, ABOR mandated the public four-year state universities to work together to design a plan for and carry out

assessment of undergraduate student written communication. The three state universities met frequently along with an ABOR representative. The cross-institutional meetings focused on planning the assessment for consistency across the three universities, which included the measurement instrument, procedures for selecting student written data, methods of assessment, analysis of student written data, and reporting of findings. After these decisions, each institution carried out the collection of student writing, the assessment, and the data analysis at their own campus and then shared an assessment report with ABOR. Taking two and a half years from start to finish, the entire assessment process began in May 2020 and UArizona's participation concluded with a final institutional report submitted to ABOR in November 2022.

Throughout the process, we advocated for a contextual paradigm of assessment so that procedures and measurement tools aligned with local curricula, instructors, and students, as these are optimum for validity, reliability, and fairness, and to help target specific goals and needs of students (Gallagher, 2014; Inoue, 2015; Mislevy, 2021; Poe & Elliot, 2019; Yancey & Huot, 1997). Table 10.1 presents a snapshot of UArizona students in 2021, and the samples collected for the assessment.

Table 10.1. Assessment Population

Academic Career Fall 2021	Number of Students	Student Writing Assessment Samples	Number of Artifacts
Undergraduate	38,528	Early Career (students with fewer than 25 credits)	364
New Undergraduate Transfers	2,639[a]		
Graduate	10,943		0
Total	49,471		728

[a] *Included in the undergraduate total.*

THREE PHASES OF ASSESSMENT

Pre-Assessment: Strategic Interventions and Compromises in Rubric Design

In this article, we focus on specific interventions to the process that led to small but impactful activities, with the first intervention being the design of the measurement instrument, or rubric. With the ABOR mandate that state universities develop and implement a cycle of assessment across three public universities, a tri-university assessment working group (henceforth referred to as assessment

working group) was formed with representatives across the three state universities, including WAC specialists. To guide the assessment, ABOR outlined nine parameters, of which four received the most discussion:

- Assessment will permit inferences about the abilities of the general student population.
- Where feasible, assessment will permit judgements about the learning growth experienced by students between their first and final years of undergraduate education.
- Some common instruments of assessment will be used by all Arizona public universities, as agreed upon through inter-institutional deliberation.
- The universities are required to collaborate with one another in the design and administration of some common assessments; however, each university will report assessment activities and findings separately as described below. (Notes from assessment working group, June 2020)

All three universities had to collect written artifacts from early-career students and late-career students while adopting the same methods for scoring and analyzing in response to two research questions: How does the writing of incoming freshmen compare with the writing of students nearing completion of the General Education requirements? What patterns are evident in student writers' accomplishments and challenges that can point to areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement in the General Education curriculum?

Regarding these parameters, members of the assessment working group were first concerned that the new mandate required additional labor without additional resources. Second, the parameters set a precedent for comparative analysis between early-career and late-career students with expectations of making claims that differences between early-career and late-career students would be evidence of exponential growth in writing development (or lack thereof) (Broad, 2003; Gallagher, 2014; Inoue, 2015; Neely, 2018; Poe & Elliot, 2019; Walvoord, 1997). Third, the mandate promoted accountability assessment based on decontextualized, summative results about student performance (Ewell 2009; Gallagher, 2014; Walvoord, 1997). According to Chris W. Gallagher (2011), accountability assessments reduce student achievement into "a lever for institutional accountability and competition, rather than a teaching and learning practice" (p. 451). For WAC specialists, Monica Stitt-Bergh and Thomas Hilgers (2009) explain that external assessments "do not encourage a campus community to ask serious questions about what it is doing, what it should be doing, and how to become a culture focused on ongoing self-improvement through data-driven decision making" (p. 3). At UArizona, WAC specialists harnessed

the assessment mandate as an opportunity to educate our faculty about the complexity of writing and to emphasize student writing strengths.

During the process, assessment working group members (including an ABOR representative, assessment coordinators at each institution, and content knowledge experts, such as the Director of WAC at UArizona) met regularly. Early on, the process of designing a rubric emerged as a site for compromise and potential agency. Cross-institutional dialogue was essential. We deliberated over criteria and benchmark standards. When a prototype rubric was presented by the ABOR representative with little alignment with writing studies research, we proposed the potential for adapting the VALUE Written Communication Rubric because it gives explicit permission to localize Rubrics "into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses" (AAC&U Values Rubric, 2008). UArizona WAC specialists then led the charge for revising the VALUE Written Communication Rubric.

Specifically, we promoted keywords in the rubric to reflect writing studies scholarship on writing development (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; Yancey et al., 2014). For instance, there was much discussion over the word *genre*. Different stakeholders feared that genre-based assessment would be difficult for training and calibration. Yet, WAC leaders and Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) serving on the assessment working group explained that attention to writing situations and genres aligned well with a process of collecting different types of writing across the disciplines. UArizona successfully argued that genre is an essential threshold concept for writing studies (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015).

An equally important issue related to deemphasizing prescriptive language standards (Baker-Bell, 2020; Inoue & Poe, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2012). One category of the rubric was "Control of Syntax and Mechanics," which focused on language expression. We argued that the rubric category should omit *error* as a focus. Eliminating phrases like "virtually error-free" or "with few errors," we offered the following: "The writer sustains *precise attention to* grammar, mechanics, and syntax in a manner consistent with the purpose, audience, and context and that enhances the clarity of the text's meaning" (emphasis original). The result was a standard that did not focus on errors in syntax, grammar, or mechanics. Throughout the process, we worked to omit a default language of "Standard English" that linguistic social justice scholars show disproportionately harms minoritized language users (Baker-Bell, 2020; Inoue, 2015; Kynard, 2016; Lippi-Green, 2012; Shapiro & Watson, 2022).

Taking several months, the process for designing the tri-university rubric required intentional dialogue from each institution's representatives and ABOR. Overall, the 2021–2022 Assessment of Written Communication established

rigorous, reflexive, richly contextualized assessment achievable with adequate time, financial support, open communication, and disciplinary expertise.

Questions for WAC Specialists

The strategic interventions and compromises during pre-assessment showcase adaptability for WAC specialists to consider in their own assessment contexts, such as:

1. What strategies can empower WAC stakeholders to maintain dialogue and deliberation toward shared goals?
2. How can programs resist accountability assessment by creating a cross-institutional coalition?
3. What strategies help reduce a reliance on error frequency in measurement language?

Assessment: Strategic Interventions in Training and Compromises in Execution

As previously stated, we utilized the assessment to provide a common language, resist false comparisons between student groups, and create reciprocal, transferable professional development for faculty. A vertical writing curriculum-structured courses across students' undergraduate careers-is particularly impactful for participants across institutions when there is a shared language and understanding (Anson et al., 2019; Melzer, 2014; Perryman-Clark, 2023). As noted in the rubric decisions above, we centered on the term *genre*, but within our training, we specified further by framing assigned writing as contingent on disciplinarity and metagenres. Metagenres illustrate patterns that highlight ways of knowing and doing-both within and across disciplinary spaces-that are typified within writing (Carter, 2007). Metagenres span disciplines and help instructors see connections between the writing they assign and the writing students experience throughout their academic careers. We used the following table to illustrate metagenres and train reviewers on writing principles present throughout (see Table 10.2).

By focusing on typical rhetorical moves made, reviewers were better able to anticipate and identify writing choices and the purpose underlying those choices. This was particularly useful in assessment conversations where the artifacts were decontextualized as we did not have the assignment prompts. It also helped us explain to instructors the importance of naming genres for their students to 1) highlight the purpose of the writing, 2) outline expectations and conventions of the genre, and 3) support students moving from one writing task to another to recognize genres and conventions.

Table 10.2. Metagenre Training Table

Metagenre	Common Moves
Writing research from sources	**Structure:** introduction, supporting reasons, and conclusion **Content:** debatable thesis, development of reasons and evidence from sources, conclusion **Vocabulary:** formal and academic **Examples:** argument, literature review, historiography
Writing to report empirical research	**Structure:** IMRaD with title, headings, subheadings, figures, and references **Content:** research question, description of methods and observed data, results, and discussion **Vocabulary:** technical jargon, objective tone **Examples:** lab reports, quantitative and qualitative research studies, logbooks
Writing to problem solve	**Structure:** problem statement, recommendation or proposal, concluding summary **Content:** establishes problem with evidence and proposes a solution, may present findings **Vocabulary:** objective tone, clear, concise **Examples:** executive summaries, letters to representatives, project proposals, business plans
Writing to critique a text or performance	**Structure:** title, introduction, paragraphs in support of thesis **Content:** presents analytical thesis that interprets a text; evidence includes quotes from text **Vocabulary:** active voice, descriptive language **Examples:** literary analysis, film criticism, analytical essay
Writing to reflect	**Structure:** highly varied, one paragraph or multi-paragraph essay, no headings **Content:** personal experience emphasizing description, narrative, and evidence from experience or specific course activities **Vocabulary:** more informal, heavy use of personal pronoun "I" **Examples:** self-assessment, personal statements, reflective letters

Beyond metagenres, we used the remainder of the assessment training as a strategic opportunity to provide a richer understanding of student writing and assessment practices for interdisciplinary faculty and administrators. The three universities communicated the following principles around assessment:

- Writing should be assessed through direct measures of authentic student work, such as course assignments;

- Assessment is *iterative* and not a linear progression; and
- Claims about development in student writing should be supported with evidence from the *same student writer over time*. In other words, we believe that institutional assessment is a snapshot of a group of students at different stages in their college career as writers.

These principles overlap with threshold concepts, specifically that "writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms" and "all writers have more to learn" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). These bullet points illustrate our philosophy around assessing writing, especially the importance of taking into consideration development over time and not creating false artifacts around student comparisons (Wardle & Roozen, 2016). We continually drew from these concepts in the report of our findings and the presentation of our work.

Our goal of highlighting WAC principles and equitable assessment practices required a longer process and more labor for both us and our reviewers. We created and proposed a budget to ABOR in response to the mandated assessment that provided approximately $30,000 of funding. We intentionally wanted a diversity of participants and recruited reviewers from multiple disciplines covering the major disciplinary categories (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, applied science, and art) and career tracks (e.g., tenured track, career track, graduate students, etc.). This diversity allowed for richer conversation and paid professional development opportunities for participants who are frequently tasked with individual labor. Additionally, we were determined to design the assessment as paid professional development that would have outcomes beyond the mandated review but that highlighted strategies and evidence-based practices instructors could incorporate into their classrooms. Our training then took place over two weeks in the summer with the first week containing asynchronous elements through our learning management system (D2L). The first week focused on the principles of WAC and assessment and the second week contained both synchronous and asynchronous elements where we gathered to calibrate materials and discuss discrepancies or clarifications for the rubric. Participants received a stipend of $500 for their labor (up to $1000 if they scored additional artifacts) and breakfast and snacks during the second week. We view the length of time, compensation, and attention to instructors' professional development as a form of reciprocity for doing the labor of assessment.

One challenge to integrating WAC principles in the assessment training was the amount of time focused on the technology. We were required to use Watermark, the university-supported tool recently adopted for a range of assessments across campus. The tool was unable to provide multimodal elements, which reinforced misconceptions that writing is only produced as a single text and

in relatively few genres. This limited the types of assignments we were able to curate from instructors. Additionally, the tool took a lot of training in terms of usability and incorporating the rubric meaningfully. This created more labor for participants to navigate between Watermark and our learning management system that had an annotated rubric and glossary. Although Watermark was challenging to navigate, it did provide an avenue for recording and tracking our assessment as we shared it with the two other institutions and aligned with our institutional goals.

Questions for WAC Specialists

Overall, our assessment training became an actionable space for supporting our goals of navigating accountability assessment and meaningful WAC faculty development. The strategic interventions and compromises during assessment showcase pedagogy and leadership for WAC specialists to consider:

1. What are the common values, terminologies, and metagenres important for your context? How do you communicate those across the institution?
2. How can WAC incorporate authentic writing scenarios across campus and programming-from individual classrooms to large-scale endeavors such as assessment?
3. How can we leverage resources (e.g., time, money, etc.) from other initiatives to provide meaningful professional development to instructors?
4. How does WAC professional development, mandatory or voluntary, create spaces for reciprocity?

Post-Assessment: Strategic Compromises in Reporting and Interventions in Collaborating

The UArizona assessment confirmed largely what we already know about writing development: students score higher than administrators predict (Brereton, 1995; Wardle, 2019), early-career students continue to learn genre conventions (Roozen, 2010), late-career students maneuver between genres in meaningful ways (Lindenman, 2015; Tardy, 2009), and students draw on their writing experiences from across time (Driscoll et al., 2020). The strategic compromises conducted in our findings included resisting comparisons between the early-career and late-career students and reinforcing the concepts of writing development and genre. Through writing the UArizona report, we operationalized genre knowledge as the tool for strategic compromise. We created a text designed to meet the audience's expectations while furthering our team's linguistic justice

goal. We blended elements of white papers, IMRaD articles, and position papers to communicate with our institutional and state stakeholder audience. We drew from the white paper form to present a one-page executive summary with five bulleted key findings and recommendations. Concurrently, as authors, we recognized this document's kairos for influencing the audience's mindset regarding writing assessments. The IMRaD style facilitated thorough discussions of literature, context and methods, findings, implications, and recommendations, plus a detailed appendix. We drew from linguistic features in position papers to imbue the writing with persuasive tonal and stylistic elements to nod towards reconceptualizing writing assessment. The report resisted ABOR's demands to draw comparative inferences about writing development between first-year and upper-level students. Our genre-based rhetorical resources enabled us to advocate for the importance of assessment processes that are "site-based, locally controlled, context-sensitive, rhetorically based, and theoretically consistent" (O'Neill et al., 2009, p. 57). In doing so, we sought to defend our strategic interventions and compromises while paving the way for future assessments to depart even further from UArizona's previous ones.

With the above goals in mind as we wrote the report, we created a document that imbued what we did with writing studies assessment theory. The Introduction quickly but thoroughly synthesized interdisciplinary research in educational measurement that called for connecting assessments to local curricular needs that best captured the complexity of writing development. We pulled from early studies like Richard Reed Braddock et al.'s (1963) meta-analysis of studies on process-based writing to contemporary takes such as Asao B. Inoue's (2015) socially-just assessment recommendations. In the Methods, we offered a deep dive into the UArizona's context and student demographics. As an AIANSI, HSI, and land-grant institution, it was necessary to highlight the diverse student body as an indicator of the population's diverse linguistic repertoire and needs, especially so it could differentiate UArizona from the other two state universities. We also clearly detailed the assessment procedures, documenting artifacts' creation, collection, and evaluation. Our meticulous description of methods showcased clear discrepancies between what scholarship recommended and what ABOR was asking us to do. We explained that a significant methodological limitation was that the assessment as designed would not generate results answerable to the research questions. We additionally added, departing from the white paper and IMRaD forms, a reflection on the process, drawing from persuasive rhetorical strategies found in position papers to showcase the strengths of the assessment (our strategic interventions and compromises) and its constraints (the assessment's design and lack of resources). We carefully crafted these elements ahead of the Results section so that readers skimming for data

would first encounter the assessment's theory/implementation contradictions. The Discussion presented implications and recommendations for supporting writing at UArizona. We reinforced evidence-based research on student exposure and dexterity with different genres throughout their writing careers. This gave way to showcase a strategy for accomplishing this goal-a parallel strategic intervention (nurturing the WAC program)-by highlighting the many potential benefits of investing in writing at UArizona. In sum, the assessment report creatively and clearly documented our strategic interventions and compromises and desire to change the story of student writing that "students can't write." The report insistently resisted comparisons between the student groups and decontextualized student writing.

The resulting report, a 26-page single-spaced document inclusive of graphs, tables, references, and appendices, represented approximately 30 months of work from seven UArizona co-authors and countless others. In this chapter, like Terry Myers Zawacki et al. (2009), we do not discuss specific results as the goal of our writing here is not to explicate UArizona students' writing, but rather, to provide through storytelling a framework (and words of caution, or at least, aspects to be aware of) for readers developing their own assessments. In our case, although we made several successful strategic interventions, we were unable to sway ABOR's mandate to compare early- and late-career students. In turn, our strategic compromise in writing the report was to highlight students' demonstrated strengths instead of entrenching false comparisons and deficit mindsets. However, despite our strategic compromises to author a genre-blended, business-like document, the full report was truncated by an upper-level UArizona administrator to, supposedly, be more digestible for ABOR. This, in our eyes, affirmed that "investments in student writing" really was masking accountability assessment because the stakeholders valued skipping directly to students' performance rather than reading and learning from our report.

Unsurprised by this turn of events, our last major strategic intervention was to return to our local context with insights from the Written Communication Assessment and to host a town hall. We invited all sites and stakeholders of writing from across campus to create a grassroots movement for cross-curricular writing support. We reported our findings and experiences to them and collaboratively brainstormed responses through a gallery walk-style interactive feedback session. During the gallery walk, participants identified their priorities for moving forward and were directed to share out. One of the most frequently starred priorities was to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, especially given our AANSI HSI statues and land-grant mission. This town hall served as an inaugural meeting for WAC Faculty Fellows and an opportunity to liaise with other sites of writing like general education, the Writing

Program, and the Writing Center. Our in-person meeting emphasized uniting WAC stakeholders that otherwise lacked clear pathways to working together.

Questions for WAC Specialists

The interventions during post-assessment showcase ingenuity in mandated writing assessment for WAC specialists to consider:

1. What do you want stakeholders, especially those with whom you might infrequently have an audience, to know and understand?
2. How can you utilize your assessment communications (e.g., reports, presentations, etc.) to advance WAC best practices that can counteract other past or proposed measures?

CONCLUSION

Institutional change often requires extensive time and labor for incremental results. As Staci Perryman-Clark (2023) explains, "it is critical that faculty development initiatives align with a university's vision or mission" (p. 19). Our need for strategic interventions and compromises reflects that our push for change was misaligned with ABOR's goals. Conflict between state versus institution versus writing faculty is common with the United States and hearkens to a broader challenge of neoliberal management in higher education that is rarely concerned with contextual factors of learning. While both ABOR and our team wanted students to become stronger writers, our definitions of "good writing" and conceptions of what writing development looks like were at odds. Our goal as WAC leaders, then, was to explore how we could leverage institutional requirements, such as this assessment as well as general education reform, to enact change in our local context. The required assessment became a kairotic moment for documenting fundamental issues in the writing ecology that impacted students at all three state universities.

This retelling, full of minutiae about the process, likely elicits feelings of entanglement within the weeds, which is how we felt working through it. This experience illustrated for us how institutional assessment is both a big and little detail in our university's history. Our work has a lasting impact on how we will respond, both at the state level and HSI university context, to student writing. It also set a precedent for future assessments of, including but not limited to, writing. At the same time, we recognize that this assessment was just one of many snapshots of writing. It took the pulse not only of student writing but about the culture, values, and goals that diverge and intersect across our laminated context, but only at a moment in time rather than across a longitudinal timeframe.

Overall, as WAC leaders, we were affirmed by this project that writing assessment, like writing itself, is a process. The compromises and interventions described here offer windows into the complex and complicated rhetorical situation.

Throughout the work, we tried to subvert accountability assessment for our purposes, which included educating stakeholders of writing complexity, resisting deficit narratives about student writing in terms of linguistic social justice, and using the assessment for WAC faculty development. The process allowed us to interact with audiences who were oftentimes unattuned to our requests for resources. Specifically, we gained a platform to argue for a more connected curriculum and faculty WAC training. Through the assessment process, we spoke to evidence-based scholarship in writing assessment and contributed our own data to persuade stakeholders towards a new story of student writing. Our work with ABOR, although hard fought and of potentially small-seeming significance, set important precedents for localizing assessments and arguing against accountability studies. However, the throughline of this endeavor has been nurturing our own university community, so we are proud of the grassroots change made at UArizona. Most notably, this process served as a launchpad for the WAC Faculty Fellows program focused on antiracist linguistic justice and also drew out sites of writing from siloes by bringing into conversation various writing experts across campus, like the Foundational Writing Program, General Education writing intensive course directors and instructors, and the Writing Center.

We hope that this chapter can be used by fellow WAC administrators in their own contexts to evidence the importance of listening to WAC experts' expertise in designing assessment. We recognize, however, the strength of institutional governing bodies who are oftentimes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to persuade. Therefore, we extend the questions posed throughout the chapter to inspire strategic interventions and compromises elsewhere. These questions invite and encourage WAC specialists to:

- Respond to institutional requirements through adaptability approaches that minimize linguistic injustices and maximize coalition building;
- Rely upon their expertise to infuse institutional requirements with best practices;
- Utilize institutional requirements as opportunities for professional development and gathering resources; and
- Reflect upon their goals and purposes ahead of communicating with stakeholders to make the most of opportunities for dialogue.

This heuristic is born of years of hard work in the name of linguistic justice for students. Our reflections highlight key points of tension and responses. We celebrate the progress and note the roadblocks on our to-do list of things to

accomplish to strengthen the perception of and support for student writing on our campus. By relying upon a broad range of instructors, administrators, and staff, a knowledgeable assessment team, and diverse disciplinary participation for scoring and scorers, we ultimately positioned WAC and linguistic justice as a grassroots effort that reached across campus lines. To Perryman-Clark's (2023) point, our work did not overhaul ABOR's beliefs about writing. However, our strategic interventions and compromises moved the needle, which we consider a promising first chapter in the revision of UArizona's story of student writing.

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