At the Commencement of an Archive: The National Census of Writing and the State of Writing Across the Curriculum

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> As we have noted all along, there is an incessant tension here between the archive and archaeology. They will always be close the one to the other, resembling each other, hardly discernible in their co-implication, and yet radically incompatible, heterogeneous.
>
> —Jacques Derrida

In his seminal theorization of the archive, Jacques Derrida offers a deconstructive reading of Sigmund Freud in three parts: Freud the person, Freud the archive, and Freud the text.[1] Derrida maintains that these disparate yet interrelated entities complicate whatever archive a researcher may hope to analyze, reminding us that there is always something that cannot be represented in archival work: the "remainder" that is left out. Archives—and the databases that constitute them—have since remained a focal point within rhetoric and composition as an emerging and evolving field, often calling attention to what is included and excluded as we reposition our discourses about writing program administration and writing pedagogies.[2] For example, *College English*'s (1999) special volume on archival work in rhetoric and composition reinforces the extent to which the archive has been central to questions of positioning writing within higher education, specifically with regard to which texts ought to be used to define the field. As John Brereton (1999) notes in his introduction to that very collection, "we still aren't sure what should be in our archive, or how access can be broadened, or which tools we should bring to our task of exploring the past. In fact, we aren't sure exactly what we already have in our archive, or how in fact we even define the term" (p. 574). He reminds us that "our term 'archive' is hardly static" (p. 576): the resources that help document and capture rhetoric and composition practices are indeed myriad and complex.

On a more local level, institutional or programmatic histories collected through archives—such as those collected by Gretchen Flesher Moon and Patricia Donahue—can subvert what has been established at the national level in terms of scholarly trends and concerns. Traditional archives composed of historical documents at institutions long affiliated with WAC (Arizona State University and George Mason University are

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but two examples) have emerged as an excellent source of information about programmatic development over time. These archives are immensely useful, as Susan Wells (2002) argues in her discussion of Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*. Drawing upon Derrida as well, she claims that the "final gift of the archives is the possibility of reconfiguring our disciplines" (p. 60). Wells notes that archives are defined by what we choose to include and exclude. Inclusion consequently changes the nature of what we think and observe about a field of study, expanding or limiting our evidence or dataset. In the case of WAC, I would amend her statement from "reconfiguring our disciplines" to "reconfiguring how we situate and represent our larger scholarly conversation and practices."

Archives, however, are not necessarily limited to collections of documents preserved in special collections. Rather, with the great advances made in information technology in recent decades, searchable and generative databases certainly should be considered archives in and of themselves. The power of collecting such documents and data lies in the potential to test our assumptions about the implementation of principles and practices inside and outside of composition proper. In fact, Wells maintains that archival work "help[s] us to rethink our political and institutional situation" (p. 60), as she claims that archives help scholars to hedge the desire to affirm their own positions, noting that the archive "resist[s] my own drive to demonstration, told me that I needed to do more" (p. 59).[3] In other words, when our research is limited to our own institution, or one or two comparable institutions, or even larger data from a fixed point in time, we risk confirming what we already know and assuming it is the status quo. Within WAC, then, one of the primary reasons for capturing large sets of information would thereby be to test and reconsider our own assumptions about the norms and practices at institutions other than our own—to find the outliers and remainders that may not come to light under the weight of our own "drive to demonstration."

It is appropriate that at the moment of "commencement"—as Derrida would call it—for a new archive, we remain attuned to the difficulties of actualizing a new source of data within writing across the curriculum scholarship. The National Census of Writing (formerly known as the WPA Census Project, hereafter abbreviated as "NCW") is a response to needs for perspective on both the particularities of individual programs and on larger national trends of writing program development and sustainability. Not an archive in the traditional sense, the NCW database is composed both of stable institution profiles as well as searchable data represented in tables, charts, and graphs. As the census evolves in the future, it is intended that data from the past will still be tracked against new information, making it possible to compare trends over time. This opportunity to compare against archived information is especially crucial, given that since the publication of Chris Thaiss and Tara Porter's (2010)

study of WAC/WID programs, there still remains a need for what they defined as "accurate, up-to-date information on the presence and characteristics of WAC and writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) programs" (p. 534).

However, much as Thaiss and Porter discovered in their 2008 survey, even reliably determining how many WAC/WID programs exist in the US and uncovering the trends in infrastructures that they exhibit—as I will illustrate in this essay—remains difficult. Data collected about programs becomes outdated almost immediately upon publication, as institutions continue to grow and evolve beyond the information they provide. These concerns are not addressed as explicitly as one would hope in past studies. To date, all efforts to survey and report on the reach and shape of WAC/WID programs—exemplified by Art Young and Susan Huber's (1984) ADE survey, Susan MacLeod and Susan Shirley's (1987) survey, and Thaiss and Porter's (2010) aforementioned work, which are the primary examples that are focused on WAC/WID initiatives within the larger milieu of writing program surveys—have been limited by the fixity of data represented in publication, the labor-intensive nature of collecting this information from individual schools, and the continuing ambiguity around how these types of writing programs are constituted and positioned within local contexts.[4] These efforts are still immensely invaluable for gaining perspective on the persistence, spread, and trends related to WAC/WID programs in the US and Canada.

In contrast to previous efforts to collect and compare data, such as those mentioned above, the NCW offers dynamic data results through inquiry and filters that will be beneficial to future research and writing program advocacy. The NCW project began in 2013, spearheaded by Jill Gladstein (Swarthmore College) and Dara Rossman Regaignon (New York University), then by Brandon Fralix (Bloomfield College), Jennifer Wells (Florida State University), and ultimately the George Mason University WAC Program faculty, which joined the project in 2014. The first of its kind for writing program researchers, the NCW database is supported by a Mellon Foundation "Scholarly Communications" grant, which was awarded to Gladstein, Regaignon, and Fralix in 2014. The initial survey collected data from a total of 680 responding schools on sites of writing instruction and support at public and not-for-profit universities with the goal of making the data collected available to researchers and program administrators via an interactive, online database. The NCW database is a powerful tool for querying information about writing programs and initiatives of all types—sites of writing, first-year composition, writing centers, WAC/WID programs, and administrative structures, and demographics for those programs—at two- and four-year institutions with a variety of filters to move from broader questions (such as "How many WAC programs are there?") to more narrow ones (such as "How many minority-serving institutions require WI?").

The NCW thereby offers a wealth of information about writing programs across the country. As a natural part of the coding and database construction process, it both flattens and reveals some of the complexities that attend WAC/WID programmatic work, and a few of these complexities and new contributions are what this essay seeks to share. Much in the vein of Derrida's criticism of the archive, any coding schema tends to exclude outliers and variability—the tension between archaeology and the archive is inevitably present. Derrida's consideration of the archive holds true here: what programs are in actuality, how programs are represented in the raw data submitted, and how programs appear in public-facing interfaces are all separate and heterogeneous things. Given the localized, embedded, and organic nature of WAC work (as Marcia Dickson (1993) has characterized it), applying a rigid coding schema to the particularities of WAC programs was an especially fraught process. As this article will demonstrate, the data collection and cleaning process revealed a variety of tensions between national discourses about writing program administration and WAC work *vis-a-vis* localized discourses that I hope will help scholars to qualify and contextualize the data that are presented in the final NCW database.

With this in mind, I will attend to areas of inquiry of particular interest to the WAC/WID scholarly community, and—as a necessary part of discussing these areas—I will include some information that will not appear in the final database. Where previous surveys have presented their data in one stable article and therefore could include a variety of responses, the NCW database will not be able to do so to nearly the same extent.[5] This outside information has been excluded from the database in part due to the limitations of coding structures and data presentation, such as algorithmic restraints, numerical tables that cannot accommodate text answers, or respondents' selection of "other" categories in datasets that had limited space for qualitative responses. Some of these "other" answers also were flattened into new categories during the cleaning process. Also, other data were omitted from the final database in part due to the related processes of collection and cleaning that allow the database computations to operate. The primary areas of investigation that center this essay concern continuing questions in defining WAC programs, questions of institutional expertise, and questions related to administrative oversight of WAC initiatives and programs in general. These three questions represent areas in which the data were either especially difficult to code—as in the case of definitional questions about what constitutes a WAC program—or where representations of institutional structures defied easy stabilization into categories.[6] While the main thrust of this essay is to highlight the relationship between included and excluded data in order to cast into better relief some of the significant challenges of data collection and archival work, I also will close by highlighting Wells's claim about helping rethink key terminology in WAC. The preliminary data presented in this piece are limited in scope, focusing on

a few key factors and opportunities for researchers as they begin to utilize the new NCW database. Any qualitative information shared in this essay will remove or redact identifying institutional information so as to protect the privacy of the respondents. Please see Appendix 1 for the full questions that constitute the WAC portion of the NCW survey.

Questions Defining WAC Programs

As Thaiss and Porter articulated in their 2010 findings, defining *WAC* and *program* remains problematic in spite of a variety of sub-questions designed to tease out consistent characteristics of local WAC initiatives. After Thaiss and Porter's survey results were published, William Condon and Carol Rutz (2012) similarly noted that "As WAC's thirty-plus-year history argues, the pedagogy and associated philosophy have become widespread, yet WAC as a phenomenon does not possess a single, identifiable structure; instead, it varies in its development and its manifestation from campus to campus" (p. 358). As WAC has become more "familiar" (Thaiss and Porter, 2010, p. 536), our representations of those manifestations have become correspondingly more diverse. This particular and embedded nature of WAC programs and initiatives then causes a variety of methodological problems in relation to data collection and determining how many programs there are within the United States, much as Gladstein and Regaignon argued in their 2012 discussion of WAC/WID initiatives at small liberal arts colleges (pp. 35–41, pp. 108–119). With the diversity of metaphors used to describe WAC programs over an almost thirty-year conversation—from Marilyn Cooper's (1986) "ecology of writing" to Bill Condon and Carol Rutz's (2012) quantum mechanics to Laura Brady's (2013) comparison of WAC and evolutionary theory—it is unsurprising that defining WAC initiatives remain a slippery thing.

The NCW's first question related to WAC programs asks, "Does your institution have a WAC program and/or writing requirement beyond the first year?" The structure of this question was designed to capture as much information as possible about writing in the major or disciplinary writing instruction but did not include the language of *initiative* or *collaboration* that other surveys have included (see Thaiss and Porter, 2010).[7] Moreover, this initial question was intended to act as a gatekeeping question for those responding to the entirety of the survey. A negative answer would prevent respondents from accessing questions on WAC/WID entirely. An affirmative answer allowed respondents to access the WAC section, which required a secondary confirmation of whether or not the institution had a WAC/WID program (see Appendix 1). However, follow-up responses allowed institutions to provide further data without the gatekeeping question preventing access. The difference between these two sections is represented in Table 1.

Subsequent questions in the WAC/WID section enumerated possible writing requirements usually affiliated with WAC/WID work, which included other lower-division, upper-division, and mid-level writing courses; theses or senior writing capstones; writing-intensive courses; assessment of program or course goals; and faculty professional development. Developed by Gladstein and Regaignon in their original 2010 survey instrument, these particular question structures were originally tied to characteristics usually associated with WAC programs or initiatives, as well as the WPA Statement of Outcomes issued by the Council of Writing Program Administrators in 2000 and most recently revised in July 2014.[8] The NCW's preliminary data regarding WAC programs and/or writing requirements beyond the first year are presented in Table 2. From this preliminary data, there is an overall increase in the number of WAC programs (proportionately speaking) from previous surveys, from approximately 43% (Thaiss and Porter, 2008) to 51% (NCW, 2013).

Table 1: Comparison between sites of writing WAC/WID and secondary affirmation in WAC/WID section of survey

	Sites of Writing	WAC/WID Section	% Difference
All Respondents (n=670)	315	341	+6%

Table 2: How many 4-year institutions have WAC/WID programs and/or writing requirement beyond the first year?

	Yes	No/NR	% with WAC
All Respondents (n=670)	341	301	51%

The data presented here are complicated by two subsets of respondents: first, respondents who either opted out after reviewing the question set independently in a follow-up email; second, those who answered in the affirmative on this initial question and then filled in subsequent "Other" options with statements that indicated there was no WAC program at all. NCW data required a clear division between "Yes" (coded as a 1) and "No" (coded as a 2). There was no ambivalence for those who might have only glimmers of such requirements embedded in various sites across the institution, those who might not identify with the initial language of *program* or *writing requirement*, or those who might have structures that do not map onto the questionnaire. For example, one respondent wrote that his writing program was in the process of developing specific writing-focused support for "WID, which includes faculty development, research, consultations, and teaching"—all of which usually correspond to national discourses about WAC/WID initiatives—but the respondent did not think that their particular initiatives fit with the questions asked in the survey: "we do not technically have a program, so none of your questions really apply." In fact, several leaders of WAC initiatives said that the survey questions simply did not apply to them,

questioning either the language of *programs* or the criteria often used to define such programs. One respondent from a discipline-based writing program noted that the WAC portion of the survey did not apply to her program. A different survey respondent indicated that while her institution had many characteristics of WAC, she lacked a budget for her initiatives and therefore did not believe she had a WAC program. Indeed, in spite of their institutions having the characteristics that usually define what is seen as a WAC program or "writing requirements beyond the first year," independent conversations with respondents via email or in person indicated that they were at times hesitant to identify as "WAC," noting that the absence of financial support, a particular sort of administrative oversight, or a lack of an institutional home prevented them from continuing with the survey. Ultimately, these respondents were coded as "2," indicating that the school did not have a program or disciplinary writing requirement beyond the first year, but future researchers will have the opportunity to use the NCW's filters to correlate the relationship between those respondents who did choose to identify as having a WAC program and their self-identified characteristics of WAC. Furthermore, the opposite also represents a possible wealth of research opportunities: scholars will have access to institutions who selected "No WAC" and can begin to investigate why they made that choice.

The second body of respondents who complicated the data presented in Table 2 answered affirmatively, but then populated later text-based options stating that there was not, in fact, a WAC program at their institution. In one representative example, a respondent noted that their school had a "WAC program or writing requirement beyond the first year," required some students to complete a thesis and WI courses, assessed goals related to those courses, and offered professional development to faculty teaching WI courses. However, upon reaching the end of the WAC portion of the survey, the respondent wrote, "This is not a WAC program." Another respondent also answered affirmatively to almost every question in the WAC portion of the survey, but then wrote, "no WAC program." This particular contradiction arose 14 times in the preliminary data. Even more problematic, as will be discussed in the next section, this same institution also had a second respondent who answered that there was no WAC program/writing requirement beyond the first year at all. Clearly, the structural language of *program* not only is a difficult one for scholars to discuss—as the above scholars of WAC program organization have noted—but that discontinuities in language also remain a methodological concern as scholars continue to gather data and seek to represent WAC work in our scholarship and at our own institutions.

Questions of Institutional Expertise

With the complications that arose from issues surrounding what is and is not a WAC program or writing requirement beyond the first year, it was discovered that the

number of respondents identifying WAC programs at their institution had another layer of complexity that will ultimately be unseen in the final version of the NCW database. Specifically, given the distribution of WAC programs across institutions, at times it was unclear who in fact spoke most clearly for WAC. As Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) have previously articulated, the leadership of such programs can have a variety of configurations in order to foster and support different institutional goals. Similarly, leadership of WAC programs is, as was discovered in compiling and coding the NCW data, difficult to trace when it is so often embedded in the disciplines or distributed across multiple colleges, positions, and departments. This difficulty in stabilizing raw data related to a WAC/WID initiative manifested in interesting ways: respondents from the same institution shared different information and, consequently, gave conflicting answers; respondents who did not feel capable of giving information about their programs or requirements; and those who were sure there was a WAC program but did not know who at their institution might be able to provide information. While some of these concerns were resolved in follow-up emails, their very presence in the initial data raises some important questions about who speaks for WAC/WID work when leadership of those initiatives has such variable structure and—indeed—may be housed outside of usual contact areas for writing initiatives. While these conflicts may be unsurprising to scholars of WAC program institutional structure or organizational leadership, the NCW's structure accentuates a few areas and opportunities for future research.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 highlight these peculiarities related to questions of institutional or programmatic authority. Specifically, 127 schools had multiple respondents, on which only 46 respondents deferred to a different person's expertise. At 10 institutions, both respondents from the same school believed there was someone better able to respond for their institution. Furthermore, every institution whose multiple respondents went on to provide information had conflicting answers—sometimes substantial ones—in this section of the NCW. In other words, none of the multiple respondents agreed on what the components of their WAC/WID program or writing requirements were, or they defined their terms differently—even on the same campus. Of particular note were the differences of opinion about whether the institution actually had a WAC/WID program, as 22 schools with multiple respondents disagreed in this initial category. It was not an uncommon occurrence to see one respondent claim that the site had a program and to input responses to represent the features of that program and then have another respondent from the same institution reply that no WAC/WID program existed at all. While this response percentage may initially seem insignificant, further data regarding oversight of WAC programs reveal a consistent pattern of administration by committee or dispersal of oversight for these initiatives. The language of the question "Do you feel able to answer questions about writing across the curriculum or the writing requirement beyond the first

year?" offered respondents the opportunity to defer to the authority of someone else on their campus. That two (or sometimes three) respondents could bring such differing views to the same questions represents an excellent opportunity to investigate the relationship between an individual's institutional position and the perceived work that occurs in WAC/WID programs. The NCW's protocol ultimately removes these differences of opinion from the final representation of an institution's sites of writing. With that in mind, these conflicting initial responses provided here are meant to offer an opportunity for further investigation of positionality and distributed leadership models within WAC administration.

Table 3: Number of schools with multiple respondents*

	Schools With Multiple Respondents	%	# of Respondents Who Deferred	% (n=127)
Total Number of Schools (n=670)	127	19%	46	36%

Table 4: Number of institutions disagreeing on presence of WAC program*

	# Disagreeing on WAC/WID Program	% Disagreeing on WAC/WID Program
Schools with Multiple Respondents (n=127)	22	17%

Table 5: Preliminary conflicting information*

	# of Multiple Respondents Completing All WAC Sections	% (n=127)	# of Multiple Respondents with Disagreements	% (n=100)
Schools with Multiple Respondents (n=127)	100	79%	99	99%

*NB: These data are composed of the multiple respondents who entered data for the WAC section of the census. There were even more multiple respondents for the entirety of the dataset across all sites of writing. All institutions with multiple respondents who had a respondent that did not provide data were excluded.

Complicating those institutions with multiple entries, the NCW also gave respondents the opportunity to opt out of providing information about their WAC initiatives depending on their level of ability to answer. The specific language of the question gave respondents a sense of the contents of the survey in order to help them self-assess their knowledge of their programs prior to proceeding:

> Do you feel able to answer questions about writing across the curriculum or the writing requirement beyond the first year? You will be asked questions about different requirements including details about writing-intensive

courses. You will also be asked about goals and assessment, faculty development, and the administration of these requirements including details on the job responsibilities of the different people who administer the program.

This question was meant for the project team to follow up with respondents or new contacts, and it is not included in the final, searchable database. Table 6 represents those respondents who indicated that there is a WAC program or writing requirement beyond the first year at their institution but did not feel they had the necessary expertise to share information about the program. At this early point in the survey, respondents who selected that they were not comfortable giving information were given the option to provide contact information for another person at the institution who might be better able to relate such information. With 32% of initial respondents indicating that they did not feel comfortable sharing information about their WAC/WID programs, it was surprising to see the comparatively low level of referrals to other colleagues at institutions. Indeed, in 13% of cases, the respondent confirmed that no other contact existed at all—the respondent was the only person who could talk about writing programs, but that ability did not extend to WAC.

Table 7 further underscores this concern, as 56% of respondents simply left the information blank. Follow-up inquiries yielded few responses, but those who responded to emails shared anecdotes about concerns at their institutions. One person characterized his institution's WAC course as "dysfunctional," stating that, "We have the requirement that every student take a discipline-based WAC course, but there is no WAC director. In fact, there has not been a WAC director since the late 1980's, and there are no plans for hiring one. . . . What's worse is that in many cases I don't even have someone I can ask for information from," as the program was "rudderless." The implicit disciplinary work that occurs in WAC initiatives seems, then, to obscure who in fact can and ought to speak for the program, as well as some of the methodologies that we might use to gather information about programs both locally and nationwide. Ultimately, respondents who provided no information in the initial survey or in response to follow-up emails will have their programs listed as "data unavailable." As it becomes possible for more schools to participate in the NCW in several years, there will be a fuller picture of the many representatives of writing programs and what perspectives they might bring as a part of their particular positions in their institutions.

Table 6: Respondent capability and referral ability*

	Total with WAC Programs (n=341)	%
Not Capable of Responding	111	33%

*NB: The number not capable of responding was taken out of the original, preliminary data.

Table 7: Respondent referral ability

	Total Not Capable of Responding (n=111)	%
Provided WAC Contact	19	17%
Unsure of WAC Contact	12	11%
No Other Contact Exists	14	13%
No Information Provided	62	56%

Questions of Program Administrative Structures

As previously discussed, there are a variety of understandings about the nature of WAC work being conducted at home institutions, which supports representations of WAC administration as being "diffused" or "democratized," even beyond the liberal arts college configurations that Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) have described (p. 61). Perhaps this trend can be attributed to the tendency of WAC programs to be absorbed into other institutional structures, such as composition programs or assessment initiatives.[9] Table 8 provides some suggestive information along these lines, as 40% of preliminary respondents with WAC programs answered "Who has primary oversight for the WAC Program?" with "Other" (out of the possible answers of WAC director, director of first-year writing, chair of the English department, writing center director, chief academic officer, registrar, associate dean or provost, faculty committee, no one, and other), thereby indicating that the single categories provided were insufficient to describe the complexities of their administrative structures. While new data columns were created to account for repeating answers, an overwhelming number of respondents took time to explain the differences between the explicit structures that had oversight by an administrator and the implicit structures that had more or less supervision by particular committees, departments, faculty, or administrators throughout the institution.

A promising trend that emerged from these qualitative responses is the collaboration that takes place as a part of these negotiated spaces, as well as the staying power that is produced by WAC initiatives even when programs may be losing momentum or are now defunct. With regard to the former, many respondents wrote that there were shared responsibilities with faculty across the institution or with organizational allies, such as those identified in the WAC Statement of Principles and Practices (2014). Where one selection of program administration was insufficient to describe the particularities of their institution, the "Other" section was utilized to identify multiple sites of administration for WAC initiatives. One respondent noted that—in addition to the WI approvals process being controlled by a cross-disciplinary university committee—program administration was "[a]nother shared responsibility, this time between the Writing Center Director and the Associate Vice Provost

for Undergraduate Education (who currently serves as Director of [writing in the major])." These multiple sites of writing expertise consequently confound the extent to which any individual survey respondent could accurately represent the full scope of disciplinary writing at his or her institution. Interestingly, the description related above was not in fact submitted by the writing center director, who might have a different perspective on who bears the weight of administrative duties or—indeed—have questions about what constitutes "administration" or "oversight" in practice.

With regard to WAC's persistence, respondents who indicated that they no longer have formal programs elaborated upon the remaining cultures of writing that operate at their institutions. One respondent who selected "Other" in response to questions about program oversight wrote, "The WAC program is defunct, but still has faculty who participated in it who use its guidance." At that institution, the culture of writing created by WAC long outlasted the program's formal existence or single administrative structure. Another respondent noted that in spite of their WAC program not being an "explicit one," particular disciplinary programs had administrators who directed writing-related programs in the majors but were not generally considered experts on writing. Instead, the writing program director consulted with these disciplinary administrators to support the "implicit" writing in the disciplines practices occurring within the major. These areas of implicit "oversight" represent an interesting opportunity for further research regarding the sustainability and longevity of WAC principles at institutions where funding for such initiatives is withdrawn.

Table 8: Primary oversight of WAC program, preliminary responses*

	"Other"	%	Collaborative Description	% (n=140)
Total With WAC/WID (n=341)	140	41%	26	19%

*NB: The number of "Other" responses was taken out of the original, preliminary data. These data have since been reallocated into other, newly created categories.

Conclusion

WAC/WID programs, it has long been noted, are particularly responsive to local contexts; a tool that casts the broadest net possible may not capture all elements of interest to all researchers. The data made available by the NCW database will provide many more opportunities to its users, as correlations amongst particular sets of information—such as institution size, location, population, curriculum, and practices—confirm and confound beliefs that scholars of WAC may hold. Basic information about trends in programs nationally that are usually solicited via listservs or emerge from studies comparing select institutions will now be readily available to scholars, but, as I have tried to illustrate in this essay, it is not without need for qualification. Our

struggles to gather this information in previous surveys and research are consequently not solely stemming from methodological issues rooted in the questions we are asking, but also in the unique institutional structures that make up writing across the curriculum and writing in the disciplines.

Even as some nuance is lost by the inevitable process of inclusion by study designers and other understandings obscured by respondents' interactions with the survey, much is gained in efforts to archive and present broad national data about writing programs. As Jeff Rice (2011) argued in his Latourian reading of assessment practices, this is why we benefit from following the traces and actors that compose WAC networks: in part to confirm our hunches with data-driven practices but also to resist the assumption that our national discourses circulating in publication and at our conferences apply to all of the practices that are manifesting across the country (pp. 31–32). The strength of the NCW is its power to reveal the great similarity and great variety of structures and practices—the accounts that "resist [our] own drive to demonstration" (Wells 2002, p. 59) about what we think is the norm and those that call into question the "topos that are already there" (Rice 2011, p. 32). It seems likely that the NCW survey mechanism will continue to inform its participants as much as it provides data for the field—one respondent noted in the assessment section that while his institution did not assess WI, the survey had made him think about the different types of assessment available to his program in the future. This circularity—"the survey helped me think about X, so when I fill it out next time it will be X"—represents another fascinating area of inquiry. We benefit, then, by being open to the new and unique configuration that an archive can produce knowledge.

The NCW has the potential to challenge assumptions, as well. For example, to what extent does the process of completing national surveys shape how respondents think about the formulation of their own local programs? Digital humanists such as Lev Manovitch (2012) have long noted that participants in public-facing data sources often self- "curate" to project particular images of themselves or the organizations that they represent (p. 466)—will this tendency arise as respondents consider how to represent their institutions in the best light or the most honest one? As we aim to "see the whole," as Michel Foucault (1972) put it so aptly (p. 126), what voices and discourses are being excluded by the nature of our question structures and survey logic? Such accounts and topoi are the richness that the NCW offers to the field, and the complexities represented in the datasets it will represent are much more than this essay can hope to identify or even gesture toward.

The initial examples presented here are meant to qualify some of the aggregated information presented in the census from the perspective of a researcher who had the opportunity to work with the raw data. With this in mind, the possible research areas that the NCW database will be able to further pursue are myriad. For example,

what is the relationship between institution size and the preponderance of WAC programs or initiatives? What sorts of institutions conduct assessment of their WI courses? What forms of assessment get support from institutional assessment in comparison to WPA-run assessment? Is professional development something practiced widely amongst small liberal arts colleges or larger research institutions? Are faculty compensated for their time doing professional development and in what ways? How do these various categories of curricular and institutional description correlate with various filters in place? These along with many other questions can serve as foundations for scholars and administrators both to advocate for their programs at their own institutional levels and begin developing more data-driven research projects.

Perhaps the most troubling concern that the NCW raises for scholars of WAC/WID is its confirmation of continuing issues related to even defining our terms. In 2010, Thaiss and Porter sought "to define just what, to our respondents, is this 'WAC' about which we are so concerned" (p. 562). It appears that we are still in the process of defining some of these key terms. That *program* remains a controversial word even after thirty years of scholarship further underscores the importance of the NCW's work. If we are still not that far removed from what most practitioners intuitively understand, then there is an occasion for further inquiry as to why these discourses have stagnated. We seem to circle around the same terminology, describing program features with everything from figures (metaphors and similes) to comparison by negation ("we are not that" or "we do not have X"). Why is the language about WAC work so polarizing on a local and institutional level? What can we learn about our institutional structures and practices through the instability of these terms? What is at stake in developing a more stable set of definitions, and is such an endeavor in the best interest of WAC initiatives? As the NCW database begins to illustrate the unfolding of WAC initiatives across the country over time, I hope that it will provide a richer picture of how disciplinary writing "terms" itself at particular locations, while also giving scholars a stronger sense of national trends for those who identify or dis-identify with such vocabulary.

Like Thaiss and Porter, I end my discussion of some of the tensions that this data collection process has revealed with a call for further research using the NCW database. It is my hope that this essay has offered some thoughts and information that might provide opportunities and encouragement for WAC scholars, as the NCW project presents ample opportunity for others to begin asking and answering questions that they may not have had the resources or support structures to investigate independently. I look forward to seeing how the NCW database will be of use to those who will take up the challenges its data represent to offer further understandings of the changing WAC/WID landscape.

Notes

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2. See Marlene Manoff's 2004 work, *Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines,* for a fully elaborated discussion of defining *archive* in cross-disciplinary and digital contexts.

3. Wells cites other notable discussions of the archive, including Susan Miller's *Assuming the Positions,* Robert Connors' *Composition-Rhetoric,* and Jacqueline Royster's *Traces of a Stream,* as a part of the importance of archival work within rhetoric and composition studies.

4. There have been other notable examples of such surveys, including C.W. Griffin's (1985) survey of WAC programs, Barbara Stout and Joyce Magnotto's (1987) survey of community college WAC programs, Leslie Roberts's (2008) study of community and two-year college WAC and writing center programs.

5. See, for example, Thaiss & Porter's (2010) inclusion of comments and explanations throughout their work.

6. See Krista Kennedy and Seth Long (2015) for a detailed breakdown of the complexities of data work in "The Trees in the Forest: Extracting, Coding, and visualizing Subjective Data in Authorship Studies."

7. The National Census of Writing website has a full glossary to assist researchers and future respondents when it is available for update in 2017.

8. The CWPA Statement was subsequently reworked into the WAC Statement on Principles and Practices and approved in February, 2014.

9. Carol Rutz describes her fears of this precise situation in an interview with Laura Brady (2013). Rutz says, "my teaching could be absorbed by a department, my portfolio work could be absorbed by the assessment office, and my faculty development work could be absorbed by the Center for Teaching and Learning. While the College could get it all covered that way, there would be no leadership model, and—as Ed White has said—having no leadership is risky. There would be no one to pay attention, to do the tending" (p. 15).

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Appendix 1: National Census of Writing Survey Questions (Survey Protocol Authors: Jill Gladstein and Dara Rossman Regaignon

Questions about Components of the Writing Program

1. Does your institution have a writing program?
2. What does the program consist of: Check all that apply.
    - first-year writing
    - writing across the curriculum
    - writing in the disciplines
    - undergraduate writing major
    - undergraduate writing minor
    - graduate program in writing/rhetoric
    - writing center
    - writing fellows
    - basic writing
    - other _____
    - hybrid WAC/WID program

Specific Questions for WAC and Writing Beyond the First Year

General Description

1. Does your institution require all students take lower-division writing courses taught by English or Writing for students in other departments? Does not include the first-year writing requirement.
2. Does your institution require all students take upper-division writing courses taught by English or Writing for students in other departments?
3. Does your institution require all students take a mid-level writing course(s)?
4. How would you describe the mid-level course? Check all that apply.
    - The course is focused on research writing.
    - The course is classified as writing in the major.
    - The course is similar to a writing-intensive course.
    - Each department determines which course fits this requirement.
    - Writing goals are embedded into a mid-level foundations course.
    - Other_____
5. Does your institution require all students complete a senior thesis or other writing-intensive capstone experience?
    - Yes
    - No
6. Is the senior thesis an explicit part of the college writing requirement?
    - Yes
    - No
7. Does the institution require some students to complete a senior thesis or other writing-intensive capstone experience? Check all that apply.
    - It varies by department.
    - Honors students are required to complete a thesis or other writing-intensive capstone experience.
    - No student is required to complete a senior thesis or writing-intensive capstone experience
    - Individual students can choose to complete a senior thesis or other writing-intensive capstone experience.
    - Other _____

Do you use this form of assessment in your WAC program?	Who is responsible for administering this assessment?				Who participates in this assessment?				Explain.
Yes (1)	WPA (1)	writing program faculty (2)	faculty across the institution (3)	other (4)	WPA (1)	writing program faculty (2)	faculty across the institution (3)	other (4)	Comments (1)
paper portfolio (1)									
electronic portfolio (2)									
random sample of student writing (3)									
writing exam (4)									
professor evaluation (5)									
no assessment (6)									
other (7)									

1. Does your institution require all students take writing-intensive (WI or W) courses taught by departments other than English or Writing? These courses may be called writing attentive, writing embedded, etc.
2. How long has the WI requirement been in existence?
   - ☐ less than a year
   - ☐ 1–3 years
   - ☐ 3–5 years
   - ☐ 5–10 years
   - ☐ 10–15 years
   - ☐ 15+ years
3. How many WI courses are required beyond the first-year requirement?
   - ☐ 0
   - ☐ 1
   - ☐ 2
   - ☐ 3
   - ☐ 4
   - ☐ 5
   - ☐ 6
   - ☐ 7+
4. When do WI courses need to be completed?
   - ☐ by graduation
   - ☐ by the end of freshman year

- ☐ by the end of sophomore year
- ☐ by the end of junior year
- ☐ it depends _____

5. Are there explicit goals for the WI courses?
6. Are they publicly available? Please post link here.
7. Have the goals been influenced by the WPA Outcomes Statement?
8. How are these goals assessed? Check all that apply. If the box below is bigger than your screen, scroll right to find a comments box to discuss the nuances of your program in regards to the different assessment methods. The category other allows you to share a method that was not listed.
9. What are the criteria for a WI course? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ Certain number of pages of writing. (Feel free to include the specific number.) _____
   - ☐ Revision
   - ☐ Time discussing writing in class
   - ☐ Other_____
10. If the criteria are publicly available, please post url here.
11. Who certifies that a course meets the WI designation? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ curriculum committee
   - ☐ writing committee
   - ☐ other faculty committee
   - ☐ registrar
   - ☐ chief academic officer (provost, dean, etc.)
   - ☐ WPA
   - ☐ no one
   - ☐ other _____
12. Is there an incentive offered for faculty to teach a WI course?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
13. Which incentives are offered? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ use of writing fellows
   - ☐ stipend
   - ☐ course release
   - ☐ smaller class size
   - ☐ credit toward tenure and promotion
   - ☐ other_____

Faculty Development for WAC

1. Is there professional or faculty development available for those teaching in the WAC program?
2. What form does that faculty development take? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ faculty seminar
   - ☐ required faculty workshops
   - ☐ optional faculty workshops
   - ☐ individual meetings with faculty members
   - ☐ collaborative research projects
   - ☐ conferences off-campus
   - ☐ on-campus speakers
   - ☐ other_____
3. If faculty are required to attend a seminar or workshop how are they compensated? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ They do not receive compensation.
   - ☐ They receive food at the event.
   - ☐ They receive a stipend.
   - ☐ They receive a grant to be used on course materials.
   - ☐ other_____

Administration of WAC

1. Who has primary responsibility for administering the WAC Program?
   - ☐ WAC director
   - ☐ director of first-year writing
   - ☐ chair of the English department
   - ☐ writing center director
   - ☐ chief academic officer
   - ☐ registrar
   - ☐ associate dean or provost
   - ☐ faculty committee
   - ☐ no one
   - ☐ other_____
2. How is the WAC director position classified?
   - ☐ tenure-line faculty
   - ☐ non-tenure line faculty (full-time)
   - ☐ non-tenure line faculty (part-time)
   - ☐ both faculty and staff (full-time)
   - ☐ both faculty and staff (part-time)

- ☐ staff only (full-time)
- ☐ staff only (part time)

3. Where does the tenure line reside?
   - ☐ English
   - ☐ Rhetoric/Composition or Writing Studies
   - ☐ Department other than English or Writing Studies_____
4. Who does the WAC director report to? (check all that apply.)
   - ☐ chair of the department
   - ☐ director of first-year writing
   - ☐ writing center director
   - ☐ chief academic officer (dean, provost, etc.)
   - ☐ associate dean or provost. (Please include title.) _____
   - ☐ dean of students
   - ☐ faculty committee
   - ☐ registrar
   - ☐ other_____
5. Was the director hired for this position?
6. How did he/she assume these responsibilities?
   - ☐ position rotates amongst faculty in the department
   - ☐ position rotates amongst all faculty
   - ☐ previous director retired or left the position
   - ☐ the director started the program after being hired
   - ☐ responsibilities are embedded in the responsibilities of the chair of the department
   - ☐ other_____
7. What is the full-time teaching load at your institution for all full-time faculty?
   - ☐ 2–2
   - ☐ 2–1-2
   - ☐ 2–2-2
   - ☐ 2–3 or 3–2
   - ☐ 3–3
   - ☐ 3–1-2
   - ☐ 3–1-3
   - ☐ 3–4 or 4–3
   - ☐ 4–4
   - ☐ 4–5 or 5–4
   - ☐ 5–5
   - ☐ 6–6
   - ☐ other_____

8. How many courses does the WAC director teach a year?
   - ☐ 0–0
   - ☐ 0–1
   - ☐ 1–1
   - ☐ 1–2 or 2–1
   - ☐ 2–2
   - ☐ 2–1-2
   - ☐ 2–2-2
   - ☐ 2–3 or 3–2
   - ☐ 3–3
   - ☐ 3–1-2
   - ☐ 3–1-3
   - ☐ 3–4 or 4–3
   - ☐ 4–4
   - ☐ 4–5 or 5–4
   - ☐ 5–5
   - ☐ 6–6
   - ☐ other _____
9. Which of the following are the job responsibilities of the WAC director?
   - ☐ teach courses in the first-year writing program
   - ☐ teach courses in the writing program/department (not FYW)
   - ☐ teaching courses outside the writing program/department
   - ☐ assess all aspects of the writing program
   - ☐ assess the development of student writing on campus
   - ☐ conduct faculty development with faculty across the disciplines
   - ☐ conduct TA training
   - ☐ consult with individual faculty across the disciplines
   - ☐ consult with departments across the disciplines
   - ☐ supervise professional staff (writing center director, asst. director, admin asst.)
   - ☐ supervise tutors (professional and/or peer)
   - ☐ hire professional staff
   - ☐ hire tutors
   - ☐ schedule writing courses
   - ☐ schedule writing center
   - ☐ place students into writing courses
   - ☐ facilitate placement exam
   - ☐ oversee curriculum development
   - ☐ train professional staff

- ☐ train peer/professional tutors
- ☐ advertise program
- ☐ oversee program budget
- ☐ tutor students
- ☐ plan events
- ☐ serve on university committees
- ☐ maintain program website
- ☐ serve as an academic advisor
- ☐ offer student workshops
- ☐ oversee exemption and/or transfer credit
- ☐ other _____

10. Does the WAC program have administrative assistants? How many? Mark zero is no support available.
    - ☐ _____ full-time administrative assistant who only works with the writing program/department
    - ☐ _____ full-time administrative assistant who splits time with another department
    - ☐ _____ part-time administrative assistant
    - ☐ _____ intern
    - ☐ _____ graduate students
    - ☐ _____ work-study students
    - ☐ _____ other
11. How many graduate students, staff members or faculty members in addition to the WAC director, have administrative responsibilities for the WAC Program or writing requirements beyond the first year?
    - ☐ 0
    - ☐ 1
    - ☐ 2
    - ☐ 3
    - ☐ 4
    - ☐ 5

For the number the survey will loop through questions 2–9.