Counselors, Tsunamis, and Well-Oiled Machines: Analyzing Figurative Language Among Disciplinary Faculty

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This article identifies four metaphor clusters—therapeutic, survival, mechanistic, and corporate—used by faculty across the disciplines in their talk about writing, the teaching of writing, and writing program collaborations. These metaphors use language that tends to be associated with remediation and business-model approaches to education. Yet, these clusters (1) imply a recognition of the writing program's agency, expertise, and necessity in the university; (2) suggest that partners do not always act in ways that reflect the assumptions embedded in their language use; and (3) indicate that, despite some initial misperceptions about writing (programs), partners are willing to change their understanding of and approach to writing through partnership.

Scene @ 16:30 minutes

Chris (biology): So, I'm presuming my students don't know how to write to save their lives, so if you've never written a paper, that's how you can start (prints and hands over copies of his writing assignment). And then this—

Interviewer: And most of them haven't done a lot of writing in biology when they get to your class, right?

Chris (biology): No. And, I mean, not to be offensive, but the English department ruins them all so...

Interviewer: So, what—in what ways do you see…

Chris (biology): So, in the sciences, you know, what we're trying desperately to do is we're trying to teach them how to express ideas, and I mean you guys in English, they're doing the same thing, but the idea is to express their ideas in a succinct way. In other words, get to the point, give us your evidence, give us your hypothesis, give us your evidence, and let's move on. Whereas in the English department, they're like

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'express yourself,' and so, the idea here is that we want to strip that express yourself out. You're not supposed to be part of the report. It's the material that you're reporting on that's the report. So, you know, part of that is breaking that bad habit. And it's not a bad habit, it's just not appropriate for the field.

During my forty-minute interview with Chris, a biology professor, I had to bite my tongue. While I was impressed with his candid descriptions and his lack of concern about how I, an English teacher, would respond to his criticisms, Chris' account of his students' writing was troubling. He built his entire pedagogy on the premise that "students don't know how to write to save their lives," and blamed their "ruin" on the English department. Here, successful writing is linked to survival. If students were in a life-or-death situation, they would not, Chris suggests, be able to write their way out of it. Survival requires the ability to keep living, "in spite of an accident, ordeal, or difficult circumstances" (OED), which in this case, writing presents. As we continued our interview, Chris discussed his writing in the disciplines (WID) partnership with the University Writing Program (UWP) as one way to help students survive their writing, using additional therapeutic, mechanistic, and corporate metaphors to describe how he understood writing and this partnership. Although the site for this research was the university writing center, I use the term university writing program (UWP) because this particular writing center functioned explicitly as both a writing center and a writing across the curriculum/writing in the disciplines program, in addition to supporting other writing initiatives. Thus, UWP better describes the site because it accounts for the multifaceted, programmatic work conducted in the center.

Analyzing metaphor in talk about writing, alongside more explicit statements, provides another layer of meaning that both reveals and masks writing experience. In *Metaphor and Writing: Figurative Thought in Written Communication*, Phillip Eubanks argues that we can learn much about writing and writers from examining our use of figurative language and metaphor in storytelling and our everyday conversations. Eubanks says that metaphors "are enmeshed in a constellation of relationships that complicate what people mean by them and how they are likely to influence people's writing" (2). Thus, when four figurative language clusters emerged from interviews with UWP partners from across the disciplines, I paid close attention, as they indicated prevalent underlying attitudes toward writing. The four major clusters—therapeutic, survival, mechanistic, and corporate—use language that writing studies practitioners tend to associate with remediation, marginalization, and business-model approaches to education. Yet, in the talk that surrounds these metaphors, faculty across the disciplines suggest otherwise. In particular, these clusters (1) imply a recognition of the UWP's agency, expertise, and necessity in the university,

as well as a strong sense of respect for the teaching and tutoring of writing; (2) suggest that partners do not always act in ways that reflect the assumptions embedded in their language use; and (3) indicate that, despite some initial misperceptions about UWPs, partners are willing to change their understanding of and approach to writing through partnership.

Investigating figurative language suggests that our potential UWP partners may not be who we assume them to be. For instance, Chris's assumptions about English teachers represents much of what the field of writing studies has worked against for the past couple decades, making him seem like the kind of person who would not make for a good UWP partner. Although Chris's assumptions do not necessarily represent reality, they are significant because he seems to draw directly on his students' writing experiences and abilities—perhaps both perceived and real—to formulate his beliefs. Besides, he is a dedicated writing teacher who also noted the WID partnership's impact on writing in his course, "students who went [to the writing center], their grades went up." While I was in no position to engage in adversarial deliberation as a graduate student studying how these partnerships worked, the exchange that begins this article does create space for both adversarial and collaborative deliberation, even if not directly related to the partnership work itself.

When they are willing to work with even non-like-minded faculty on discipline-specific writing support, the UWP and writing studies as a field can establish a steady reputation as an approachable program. This does not mean that the UWP becomes primarily service oriented, but rather engages in what Chris Mays and Maureen McBride refer to as collaborative and adversarial deliberation, where differences are engaged rather than flattened. Mays and McBride urge us to ask: "what is the best strategy to respond to…fundamental differences within an argumentative framework?" and anticipate potential mismatches across stakeholders (12). Another valuable mindset for this work comes from Tiffany Rousculp's "rhetoric of respect," which requires active engagement from partners whose contributions help shape programmatic structures. Similar to Mays and McBride's collaborative deliberation while intentionally making space for conflict, Rousculp's approach requires awareness of values, strengths, and limits while simultaneously recognizing another's contributions, rather than insisting on their own expertise and "essentialness" to the development of a writing partnership. More specifically, Rousculp argues that "respect does not require agreement or conciliation—as 'tolerance' rather, it entails recognition of multiple views approaches, abilities, and importantly, limitations (especially our own)" (25). Within a rhetoric of respect, "attention to how we use language in relation with others; how we name and classify, how we collaborate, how we problem-solve" is of utmost importance (25). What I find valuable about Rousculp's concept is her direct recognition of the need for respect, rather than simply "tolerance or

acceptance" of another person (24), or an assumption that respect is a natural part of any collaboration. Further, respect does not always lead to consensus; if UWPs work from a "rhetoric of respect," then they have to be interested in understanding language use that differs from their own, and even be willing to change their language in pursuit of creating common ground and understanding while also challenging other stakeholders' views when necessary.

The major contribution of my study is that I intentionally aim to consider metaphor use among disciplinary faculty in their talk about writing and UWP partnerships on and in *their* own terms. In doing so, WAC/WID administrators can look to the use of figurative language that may suggest implicit biases and potential mismatches that we should take into consideration as we make plans for deliberative and strategic cross-disciplinary partnership (Hallman Martini 2022). During the interviews conducted for this research, disciplinary faculty and administrators used metaphor extensively in their descriptions of writing and UWP partnerships. Through identifying both larger patterns across talk and attempting to understand the implications of specific word choices, UWPs can learn how their partnership work is perceived by their collaborators. In this article, I present four metaphor clusters that emerged from my data: therapeutic, survival, mechanistic, and corporate. These clusters are unique in that they do not neatly fit within previous metaphor categories identified within writing studies. Whereas the use of therapeutic metaphors forwards the idea that the UWP is a place for students in need of counseling and diagnostics, survival metaphors indicate that the UWP provides a necessary support for managing both student and teacher labor. Mechanistic metaphors perpetuate the ideas of UWP as "fix-it shop" and writing as primarily skill-based, yet also imply a recognition of writing studies as a discipline. The most prevalent metaphor cluster, which appeared in every single interview, was corporate or business-like language in reference to both the value of writing and UWP partnerships as a commodity.

These clusters have perceptual implications for writing studies, methodological implications for WAC/UWPs, and pedagogical implications for the writing classroom and for teaching writing across the curriculum more generally. Perceptually, these metaphors suggest that teaching writing and working with the UWP is both remedial and meaningful, as well as necessary for managing the heavy workload of teaching writing. Disciplinary faculty also put forth the idea of writing as a tool for the workplace while using corporate language to describe writing program "partnerships," both of which can be used to inform writing program collaborations across disciplines.

Through listening to metaphor-use by those outside our discipline, WAC/WID administrators can learn how faculty across the university understand our work, act in relation to those understandings, and change their perceptions of writing (programs).

This in turn offers us a method through which to plan for respectful deliberation via the collaborative and adversarial approach. In particular, using figurative language to explore the adversarial offers another way into conversations about teaching writing with attention to how and why we describe writing and teaching writing in the ways that we do. Taking the time to unpack the multiple—and sometimes conflicting—meanings of our chosen words gives us a possible scapegoat for understanding the adversarial. While sometimes this unpacking may indicate disagreement stemming from different worldviews, other times it may point to the challenges of working within a nuanced and flawed system of making meaning of the world: language.

Finally, pedagogical implications suggest a need to adapt genre-based approaches to teaching writing so that they include space for research into everyday talk about writing and analysis of figurative language as a way of determining perceptions of writing that may not be visible in explicit talk or written discourse.

Research Design and Methods

This research took place at a large, research university in the south that was ranked as the second most ethnically diverse university in the country with over 45,000 students. The university writing center, referred to more broadly as a the UWP throughout this article, provided a rich site for understanding writing program partnership because it houses one-on-one tutoring, writing across the curriculum, hybrid/online writing support, and training for new English graduate teaching assistants who are placed into hybrid writing courses as online writing studio facilitators. The first-year writing (FYW) program, which primarily consists of a lower-divisions administrator and committee of English faculty, is housed in English and primarily oversees face-to-face courses.

In its 2015 annual report, the UWP documented 22,928 student interactions, collaborated with faculty across campus in 57 discipline-specific partnerships, and led over 30 workshops. The UWP staff included an executive director, an associate director, four assistant directors, a technology director, four program managers/coordinators, two part-time web developers, three graduate student writing center fellows, and approximately twenty-two peer/professional consultants. Of these staff members, eleven were full-time and many of the others worked at least twenty hours per week. According to its mission statement, the UXWP does work in the following areas: assessment, writing instruction, curricular innovation, community outreach, professional development, and research in the teaching of writing. Financial support comes from the office of undergraduate student success, external grants, and several key partners in large colleges such as business, hospitality and restaurant management, and the law school, all of whom work with the UXWP on large-scale projects.

This study is part of a larger, critical ethnographic study focused on understanding the UWP's collaborative partnerships across the university. This methodological approach is rooted in a tradition of ethnographic research that emphasizes empirical methods such as interview, observation, field notes, reflection, and textual analysis; moves beyond description toward critique, action, and self-reflexivity; and maintains an awareness of social, economic, political, material, and academic pressures (Brodkey, Brown and Dobrin; Kirklighter, Moxley, and Vincent).

The eleven WID partners interviewed for this article represent a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, including deans from the business school, hospitality and restaurant management program (HRM), and law school, and faculty (tenured/tenure-track, instructors, and department chairs) from math, art history, English, marketing, biology, architecture, computer science, and political science. At the time of the interviews, these faculty partners had worked with the UWP for between one and twelve years, thus offering a diverse sample set. Participants were selected based on suggestions from the UWP administrative staff. Their positions and metaphor use are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Disciplinary faculty and administrators

Name	**Position/Discipline**	**Metaphors Used**
Charley	Former Associate Dean in Hospitality and Restaurant Mgmt. and Endowed Chair	Therapeutic; Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
Tara	Associate Dean for Student Affairs in Law Center	Therapeutic; Mechanistic; Corporate
Kyle	Undergraduate Dean in Business School	Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
Linda	Lecturer in Math Department	Therapeutic; Survival; Corporate
Carol	Endowed Chair and Marketing Professor in Business School	Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
Amir	Assistant Professor of Architecture	Therapeutic; Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
Chris	Instructional Associate Professor of Biology	Therapeutic; Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
Morgan	Assistant Professor of Information and Logistics Technology	Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
Rick	Professor of Art History and Department Chair	Therapeutic; Survival; Mechanistic; Corporate
John	Associate Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing Program	Corporate
Walt	Professor of English and Department Chair	Therapeutic; Corporate

Interviews were semi-structured, worked from a list of common questions that sought primarily to understand how partners taught writing and understood their partnership with the UWP, lasted between thirty and ninety minutes, and were audio-recorded, logged, and coded. For example, interviewees were asked background questions about what they taught, how they approached the teaching of writing in general, and how they defined good writing, as well as questions about their partnership with the UWP, including to describe how it began, how it occurs now, how it impacts students, and to what extent it works well and/or could be improved. Rather than fully transcribing each interview, I used a logging method developed by ethnographer and folklorist Carl Lindahl, who describes logging as a detailed table of contents for the entire interview. The logging method allows the researcher to summarize and paraphrase the interview with attention to key words, while reserving transcription for the most significant moments.

After logs were created, interviews were read for thematic content. The codes emerged from the first two thematic read throughs of the data based on both initial themes and eventual clusters that were then systematically used to analyze all interviews. For example, after reading through half of the logs, it became clear that faculty were regularly using metaphors. This prompted an intentional read through for metaphors, all of which were individually noted. Then, during the second read through with attention to metaphor, these individual metaphors were grouped into clusters based on similar connotations, before the logs were systematically coded for metaphor clusters. For example, in the case of survival metaphors, figurative language such as "barrier," "tsunami of papers," and "students don't know how to write to save their lives" were eventually clustered under "survival metaphor." Then, once this cluster was established, additional moments in the interview logs emerged as using figurative language in a similar way, like through the concept of providing feedback as connected to the "human limit of what you can do" and the idea of helping students "through the maze [of academic writing] and dropping breadcrumbs along the way."

Although interviewees were never asked to use metaphors explicitly during the interviews, the presence of figurative language across disciplines required close analysis and attention. All metaphors were identified via interview transcriptions and then grouped together based on similar connotations. Clusters were determined in collaboration with another researcher and chosen to maintain some degree of neutrality. Rather than drawing from a pre-existing list of potential metaphors, this research privileges the specific language choices of participants to understand them on and in their own terms. Table 2 presents the coding scheme used:

Table 2: University administrators and disciplinary faculty use of metaphor

Cluster	Example
Therapeutic	The UWP staffs "counselors in the writing center" who "are very good at knowing how to diagnose the program."
Survival	The UWP is helpful because of my own "human limits" and the "burden of paper grading."
Mechanistic	The UWP "is a tool" and partnerships are "like well-oiled machines."
Corporate	The UWP "is a rare amenity" and that "gets the customers."

Therapeutic and Survival Metaphors: UWP as Remedial Lifeline?

While the challenges faced by both faculty and students in regard to teaching writing and learning how to write, respectively, emerged throughout these interviews, attention to figurative language around these struggles indicates a level of depth and complication that in some ways seems to emphasize the importance of writing program support for both groups. When writing and the teaching writing become activities whose work implies the need for therapeutic support and aid as a means of continuing to exist, the possibility of partnership becomes even more essential.

Therapeutic

Overall, participants used metaphor-types in seemingly consistent ways in regard to meaning. For example, sixty-four percent (n=7) of interviewees used therapeutic metaphors, which included the words "counselors" and "counseling," much more frequently than tutor/tutoring, consultant/ consulting, or coach/coaching. While writing center studies in particular has continuously debated what practitioners should be called (McCall, Runciman, Russell, Hallman), more recent, WAC/WID initiatives, such as course-embedded tutoring and writing fellows programs, continue to suggest that counseling does not adequately account for the complexity of the work.

One typical example of how interviewees used "counselor" in their talk about writing comes from Chris (biology), as he explains,

> And so, where I think the WC really benefits the students...when you have well-trained counselors**,** they can break that habit and say, "this is what the assignment says. Where in your paper have you done x?" and that forces the student to kind of confront their own writing to say "ah-hah, it's not there."

Here, Chris connects the role of "counselors" to those who can break student habits so that they better follow Chris's expectations as professor. The habit being broken is not clear, and the work being done in the scenario Chris describes actually seems more focused on teaching students how to interpret discipline-specific assignment prompts than on habit breaking. This role potentially conflicts with UWPs that are more focused on supporting writers than carrying out faculty writing agendas, since the focus is on meeting assignment expectations over students' own perceived needs. Yet, supporting faculty expectations can be simultaneously beneficial for students, as they are often eager to meet assignment guidelines.

The persistence of therapeutic language among those who collaborated with the UWP is telling, especially since the field has not used it to define itself in over two decades. Although UWPs may be inclined to resist identification with therapeutic language because of its seeming association with the remedial, there may be elements worth embracing. Traditionally, "counselling" involves "guidance on personal, social or psychological problems," as well as "guidance in resolving" these kinds of problems or difficulties (OED). A counselor is someone who both "advises" and is an "advisor," as well as someone who "specializes in the counseling of clients," and "one who consults." Given that writing itself is a personal, social, and psychological activity, writing studies practitioners may indeed be called on to work through problems related to these areas (Adler-Kassner and Wardle).

Further, if counselor carries with it the concept of a specialized advisor, then perhaps there is something to be gained from this term and its use by UWP partners. While the idea of a medical clinic staffed with doctors evokes illness, short visits, diagnosis, and medication, counselling involves regular meetings over a longer period of time, where the goal is to "empower" individuals by equipping them with "strategies to overcome obstacles and personal challenges" through a collaborative process of talking, listening, goal setting, improving self-esteem, and encouraging healthier behavior patterns (American Counseling Association). In counseling, the end goal is client autonomy and agency.

Similarly, the concept of diagnosis within the UWP context has some drawbacks while simultaneously communicating something both significant and potentially beneficial. For example, Walt (English department chair) explained that the UWP director and her staff were "very good at knowing how to diagnose the kind of programs that would be good for those units, those departments." Rather than associating diagnosis with an individual, Walt suggests that diagnoses are made programmatically, perhaps indicating an underlying pedagogical issue, and that the UWP is "very good" at uncovering.

To diagnose means to "distinguish and determine its [a disease's] nature from its symptoms; to recognize and identify by careful observation" (OED). While the idea

of diagnosing student writers goes against writing studies pedagogy that recognizes writing as developmental and ever-changing, making programmatic assessments has different implications. Walt's example above positions UWP administrators as the experts who make the diagnosis, or match between the department and the kind of program that will support student writing. When read with Chris's use of "well-trained counselors" who can help students "break" (and perhaps learn new) habits, the UWP becomes not only a place with agency and expertise, but also a place where students can develop agency and expertise in writing without carrying the diagnoses themselves.

Survival

The idea of the UWP as a place of counseling and diagnostics positions it as a place that supports instructors and students who are struggling. This struggle was also implied by the use of survival metaphors, like that used by Chris whose story opens this article. While seventy-three percent (n=8) of interviewees used survival metaphors to talk about writing, how they used survival metaphors were different. For instance, three interviewees spoke about student survival, acknowledging both the necessity of students' writing ability in the university and eventually the workplace, as well as how the UWP could aid students in that survival. In addition, five interviewees used survival metaphors to describe the challenge of managing the workload as teachers of writing as well as how partnering with the UWP helped faculty survive the labor of teaching writing. The presence of both kinds of survival metaphors underscores the value these disciplinary partners place on the UWP as a resource for writers and faculty alike.

Faculty Survival. Faculty who used survival metaphors to talk about how UWP partnerships help alleviate the amount of work involved in responding to and grading papers seemed aware of the labor involved with teaching writing and were often able to differentiate between their role as writing teachers and that of the UWP in supporting student writers. Yet, administrative partners—particularly deans and department chairs—also expressed a concern about the well-being of instructors. For instance, Kyle (dean of business) described the student writing itself as a threat to survival. In his description of staff limitations and the "burden" of evaluating student writing, he explained, "What was happening was, think of it like this tsunami of papers to grade all at once." Although he does not connect this threat to its impact on individual writing instructors, Kyle seems to think about the workload of paper grading as something to be survived with support from the UWP.

Speaking to his own individual experience, Rick (art history) noted that the writing-intensive course he taught was the only one in the college and was far too

big. Rick explained, "forty-nine students in there… It's killer. If it were not for the [UWP] experiences and a good TA, it would be impossible." Similarly, Linda (math) described her original approach to responding to student writing as a two-week process that involved reading, annotating, commenting, and grading. This process was a major component of her pedagogy, as Linda's upper-level writing course were primarily filled with math teachers-in-training who used writing to clarify challenging math concepts. She explained, "It [evaluating student writing] is really intense, and I do it three times during the semester and one-time during finals. Phew, what a job. What a chore." Linda said that conferencing with each student as they drafted these essays, a needed activity, was beyond her, since there is a "human limit on what you can do." Hence, she began working with the UWP to help her manage the labor of teaching writing.

These depictions of student writing evaluation as labor-intensive, chore-like, and taken to the human limit are likely familiar to writing studies practitioners. Further, the awareness that administrators and faculty across the disciplines have of this work is encouraging, as is their understanding of UWP partnerships as necessary to their own survival. While "limit" suggests a boundary, "beyond which something ceases to be possible or allowable," it also may indicate "the worse imaginable or endurable… the last straw" (OED). When coupled with the concept of "burden," the need for a sense of shared responsibility and collaborative work becomes even more necessary, since burden indicates a "load of labor" that evokes both "duty [and] responsibility" as well as "blame, sin, [and] sorrow" (OED).

Student Survival. Alongside metaphors about instructor survival, interviewees also used metaphors that implied that the UWP aided in student-writer survival. For instance, Carol (marketing) described the role of the UWP practitioner as that of a guide. When I first asked her to define her understanding of my role as a course-embedded consultant in her graduate course, she said:

> It's like you're handholding…you know, confidence building. Academic writing is confusing for students because they don't know which way to go. They might know when and why they need to make changes, but they don't really know how to do it. It's like you're literally guiding them through the maze and dropping breadcrumbs along the way.

Here, Carol depicts the role of the UWP practitioner as a guide for students who "don't know which way to go." The maze/breadcrumb metaphor suggests that UWP practitioner can lead students through the wilderness of academic writing by helping them stay on the right trail, so they do not get lost, serving as guides who "direct the course of" as well as "keep *from* by guidance" (OED; italics are mine). Although

the idea of "handholding" is somewhat patronizing for both consultants and students, the task that Carol describes—helping students learn *how* to make changes in their writing—is not. Thus, working in partnership with the UWP becomes an act of survival for both faculty teaching writing and student writers. These metaphors around survival and writing suggest that not everyone makes it through; there are some fatalities in both writing and the teaching of writing. Perhaps the interviewees who used these metaphors recognize that, without the ability to write well, students are less likely to "survive" in the academy, and thus one's writing can be the reason they do not make it.

The presence of therapeutic and survival metaphors in administrator and faculty talk suggests a deep discomfort, and possibly some degree of fear, about the teaching of writing. The urge to label students as problematic writers and to then send them to "counselors" in the UWP reinforces a kind of detachment between student writer and instructor, but also a recognition that students may need more individualized writing support. Still, in these scenarios, writing may become the student's problem (and, in a sense, the UWP's problem), rather than that of the instructor. However,, associating tutoring with counseling and UWP administrators with diagnostics, both of which are linked to surviving academic writing, suggests an awareness of relationality and UWP practitioners' expertise. Thus, UWPs are positioned to both alleviate the instructor's burden and to help "save" at-risk students. These metaphors, although easily dismissible as offensive or problematic, are nuanced such that UWP support becomes remedial yet specialized and necessary. Rather than requiring adversarial deliberation, the presence of therapeutic and survival metaphors in faculty talk about writing open up space for collaborative deliberation because of the implicit value these metaphors imply.

Mechanistic Metaphors: Writing as a Tool for Workplace Writing

In contrast to the generally consistent use of therapeutic and survival metaphors, the seventy-three percent (n=8) of administrators and faculty who used mechanistic metaphors did so in a variety of ways, including UWP partnerships and writing instruction in general as both like and unlike a machine (noun); writing as a kind of "skilling" or mechanics (verb); and writing studies as a profession involving specialized disciplinary content and skills.

Writing (Partnerships) as Machine

Despite similar word choice, some of the same mechanistic metaphor types used to describe UWP partnerships conflicted in terms of how they were used. For instance, Charley (hotel and restaurant management), Kyle (business) and Chris (biology) all

described their UWP partnerships as kinds of functional machines or tools (nouns). Chris (biology) used this kind of mechanistic metaphor:

> When I say collaboration, I mean you guys [the UWP] have the skills and the know-how to have it done, but ultimately, it would be me saying "this is the skill that I want done, right, that I can't accomplish in the context of my classroom," so you become that extra tool in my belt, and that's not a great way to think of yourself…that's a horrible way to think about it (laughs)—I'm the tool in the belt of the faculty, but the fact of the matter is that, even though you're an entity unto yourselves, really you are a tool for all of the other departments to come and say "fix these problems." But at the same time, I don't mean to diminish the role…it's an important role.

In Chris' (biology) description above, the UWP has little agency. While he acknowledges that the UWP serves an "important role," he also says it functions simply as a tool that attempts to teach the desired skills of the instructor. The role of the student is also absent from this depiction of "collaboration." As he speaks, Chris recognizes that reducing the UWP to a tool for faculty use is problematic, yet he proceeds with the metaphor anyway and reinforces the idea a second time, "really you are a tool for all of the other departments."

Working from the same idea of writing (program) as automatic machine, Kyle (business) argues that after several years, his partnership with the UWP was "running like a well-oiled machine." Charley (HRM) suggests the same idea, explaining that "At some point, it [the UWP partnership] has to be put on cruise control. And what I mean by that is, it needs to be like IT—once you build it, it goes on the back shelf and operates. And I know that sounds horrible, but there's too many activities going on." In some ways, both Kyle and Charley seem to believe that writing (instruction), once figured out, can operate on its own, seemingly without need for further updates or maintenance. While letting the partnership run for some time on its own without constantly trying to innovate or change it makes sense, the need to regularly revisit it is also necessary, especially as student needs and abilities change, as well as resources and even genres in the field. When it comes to starting new partnerships, disciplinary faculty may find it helpful to know that there are similar kinds of models working and running smoothly. Describing them as such, even with mechanistic language, may put potential partners or new partners at ease.

Yet, Rick (art history) uses this same type of mechanistic metaphor to describe what his UWP partnership was not, challenging the notion of partnerships working without regular human interaction around their practice:

> For me, it's not providing a service; it's more like forging a team around the practice of writing and feedback. And I feel like I'm just part of that team. I don't feel like [the UWP] is giving me some of the "fuel me service," like I'm getting my car filled up, while I'm here teaching…I think that it started kind of like that, but that did not create the transformational sort of events that I think led to the successful collaboration.

Here, Rick admits that the UWP can function as a kind of "fuel me service" in the way that Chris (biology), Kyle (business), and Charley (HRM) suggest it does—as a tool or service paid to accomplish certain goals. Yet, he also argues that the partnership has potential to become "transformational," when all parties "forge a team around the practice of writing and feedback." Rick's explanation suggests that his partnership with the UWP became more collaborative over time, which indicates that perceptions about teaching writing and collaborating with UWPs to teach writing can shift. He acknowledges that his teaching is not an activity separate from the writing instruction students receive in their work with the UWP, but rather sees them as integrated.

Writing as Mechanical Skill

Even more common than the use of mechanistic metaphor to describe writing partnerships as a machine (noun) was the idea writing as a mechanistic, skill-based process (verb). Fifty-five percent (n=6) of interviewees used mechanistic metaphors in their description of student writing, although none of them described writing as simply skill-based or mechanical. While skill is often considered to be a kind of expertise and ability to do something well, in verb form, the concept of "skilling" is linked to training a worker to do a particular task (OED). The worker who is "skilled" or "skilling" often uses tools to assist in carrying out a particular function connected to physical labor. A tool is a "device…especially one held in the hand" (OED). Just as the pencil or computer can be considered a tool for writing, so too is the skill of writing itself a kind of tool, at least in the etymological sense. As well as being considered a thing, a tool can also be a person who is used or exploited by another. Thus, UWPs and its practitioners can also be considered tools used in the process of "skilling" or helping others acquire a particular skill. When university administrators and disciplinary faculty consider writing to be a skill, they evoke the idea of writing as a tool, which evacuates any mental labor. This way of thinking implies that writing is not about thinking, but about reproducing a physical labor.

Building from the idea of "skilling" as a way of training a worker for a particular task, administrators and faculty regularly suggested a writing-as-skill approach that seemed to work from the premise that writing is a necessary skill/tool for getting a

job, and that writing instruction should work from this awareness. Further, the writing-as-skill approach may overlook the idea that writing is developmental, or that all writers have more to learn, and instead suggest that a generalized definition of "good writing" exists, another contradiction with the field of writing studies.

Making a direct association between writing and skill, Amir (architecture) discussed the "mechanics" of writing as concepts that are best taught by those in writing studies, all the while recognizing that there are some architecture-specific approaches to writing. Amir explained that the UWP partnership allowed him to focus on content, rather than on mechanics and other writing-specific issues. He said:

> A key thing that they [UWP partnerships] offer that I should clarify is that it lets me as the professor really just focus on the content. I don't have to spend as much time…on the mechanics, the structure, the articulation, the formulation of the arguments, the rhetoric of writing. So, [the UWP] really liberates me to really focus on my own expertise as an architect. And that's thrilling.

Amir suggests that his "expertise as an architect" is different from the UWP's expertise in writing. Although he uses "mechanics," he further qualifies what he means by listing four other elements of writing that are higher order writing concerns. While his recognition of UWP expertise shows respect for the work, Amir also seems to work from the idea that content is separate from writing, rather than realizing that the two inform one another. This is another point of tension with writing studies, as is the idea of writing instruction as enslavement, given that support from the UWP "liberates" or frees him to focus solely on disciplinary content.

Similarly, Carol (marketing) explained that her partnership with the UWP meant, "I don't have to get down to the sentence level…I hate to use the word mechanics, but I guess you're handling the mechanics of improving a draft." Although she refers to writing simply as "mechanics" here, Carol offered more nuanced writing and communication advice to students during her class, where she emphasized the importance of clear communication over the grammatical, asked her students to imagine their audience, and spent a large amount of class time having students talk through their research projects for both experts and non-experts. Much of Carol's feedback attempted to repeat back to students their projects, as she understood them, and to help them express their ideas in concrete, rather than abstract, terms. Like Chris's (biology) use of the word tool to describe UWP work, Carol (marketing) recognizes her problematic claim, yet insists on it anyway: "I hate to use the word mechanics, but I guess you're handling the mechanics." These instances suggest a struggle to articulate and make sense of their relationship with UWP via partnerships.

Although not explicit, both Amir's and Carol's descriptions of writing support as mechanics are directly followed by descriptions that extend that work. This indicates that "mechanics" may simply be the first thing that comes to mind when university administrators and disciplinary faculty think about teaching writing; they are not necessarily reducing all writing instruction to a single idea of writing "mechanics." Simplified ways of talking about writing and UWP work as focused on mechanics, sometimes as grammar, may suggest a lack of writing studies knowledge and language more than a narrow understanding of writing and teaching writing. As was the case among these disciplinary faculty, a focus on "writing mechanics" may also include attention to audience, organization, source integration, clarity, analysis and argument.

Writing Studies as Discipline

The mechanistic metaphor types discussed so far have been somewhat problematic in their viewing of writing (partnerships) first, as a kind of machine or tool, and second, as a kind of skill-based, mechanical process. However, there is also a third way interviewees used mechanistic metaphors, and it works against the idea of "skill" as remedial, implying that faculty view UWPs as part of a professional, disciplinary field with valuable knowledge to share. Although stemming from the idea that disciplinary content is separate from writing knowledge, several administrators and faculty made this distinction in a way that suggests they understand writing to be a professional field with content and best practices of its own. For instance, Morgan (computer science) explained that she began her partnership out of frustration: "I didn't have the skills. I don't know how to teach people how to write, so I needed that help from the UWP. And that's what makes it a good partnership." Through her work with the UWP, Morgan learned that her assumptions about them and about writing in general were wrong:

> I thought they [the UWP] would do copy editing on students' work…so clearly, my impression was wrong, but I learned that they actually do something deeper, something more important, which is helping students to effectively express their thoughts in the written form. And so, I think that helps me better understand—I learned that I shouldn't be copy editing students' work. I should be saying "This is clear, you did a good job here. This is not clear, this is why it's not clear, we need to talk about it." I also learned that the writing process doesn't start when pen meets paper—you open your file and you start typing. There's a whole thought process that goes into it. And that you can actually clarify some of your ideas by talking about them and then it's easier to commit them to paper.

Here, Morgan acknowledges that UWP consultants go beyond copy editing and do complex work that involves helping students "express their thoughts in written form," often through talking about writing. Her example comment suggests a working knowledge of effective teacher feedback that includes praise ("you did a good job"), explanations for suggestions ("this is why it's not clear"), and the invitation for a conversation about writing ("we need to talk about it"). Further, Morgan recognizes a "process" involved in writing and that students often benefit from talking about writing and ideas alongside, and sometimes even prior to, the act of writing itself.

Like Morgan, Rick (art history), recognized writing studies as a field with scholarly content. He explained that one valuable aspect of his partnership, perhaps what helped create a partnership that was "transformational" rather than a "fuel-me service," had to do with learning about writing pedagogy as it related to art history. Rick said:

> I did not control any literature in rhetoric, writing pedagogy, you know, just even data, like, the idea of thinking about how students react to comments and when you give them. That was just completely foreign to me… I do not have the time, nor do I really have the inclination to like master the literature myself—but it's really important to have people you trust telling you things that are coming from that…and I think that's when I started thinking about WID more seriously and the idea of students not mastering the discourse but sort of getting into a particular conversation, like art history.

In the above comment, a few important things are happening. First, Rick suggests that basic writing-studies-based practices are "completely foreign" to those teaching writing in the disciplines. Rick even admits that in his work with the UWP, he began to realize that "if you scribble red all over something at the end of the semester and then leave it out in front of your door, it just does not do very much good. And I believed that immediately because I'd seen it for fifteen years." Second, he recognizes the value of learning about rhetoric and writing from people in the field and using that knowledge to inform his own approach to writing instruction. Third, he explains that learning about rhetoric and writing helped him think about writing in art history as *introducing* students to a conversation, not *mastering* the discourse. For him, the partnership was valuable because the UWP administration "respect[ed] the passion of the discipline…[and the UWP partners were] really interested in the art historical discourse. Not that they were going to, like, master it and then tell me about it, but that they really respected the passion that we had here, for turning out really seriously trained people." Rick suggests that discipline-specific knowledge was not necessary for effective writing tutoring; writing studies knowledge and respect for and interest in art history were sufficient.

Administrator and faculty use of mechanistic metaphors put forth several ideas about writing. First, they suggest that UWP collaborations can be both machine-like and not machine-like. Second, they imply that writing instruction is skill-based, that writing is an important tool, and that writing mechanics, although seemingly reductive, involves attention to organization, source integration, clarity, analysis, sentence-level issues, and argument. Third, their understanding of disciplinary content and writing mechanics as separate in part indicates a recognition of writing studies as a professional field with content and knowledge expertise different from other academic disciplines.

Use of mechanistic metaphor in administrator and faculty talk complicates what are often assumed to be simplistic approaches to writing as skill-based; writing as skill, according to some, does not necessarily mean a simplification of writing instruction or a lack of expertise, but rather constitutes some recognition of writing studies. However, these approaches position UWPs as experts in writing instruction, and do not quite acknowledge the valuable role that disciplinary faculty can and should play in writing instruction. This conflicts with scholarship in writing studies that has argued against this kind of duality between writing versus disciplinary expert (Bazerman). It also presents a potential mismatch where adversarial deliberation may be necessary to avoid the development of a hierarchal relationship. If disciplinary partners insist on the premise that content and writing are separate, then they might consider the UWP to be primarily service-oriented, rather than recognizing that content and form are complexly intertwined.

Corporate Metaphors: Building WID Partnerships

While the other metaphor types were used by most administrators and faculty, corporate metaphors were used by every single interviewee. These metaphors surfaced both explicitly and implicitly. For instance, the most explicit use of business-language was in direct reference to the monetary exchanges that occurred between the UWPs and some departments. Although this topic was taboo throughout this research, five interviewees noted that their own departments or colleges were funding the partnerships—Charley (hospitality and restaurant management: HRM), Kyle (business), Tara (law), Linda (math), and Carol (marketing). This literal business-model practice of exchanging goods or services for money was discussed as "the cost estimate process," which took place primarily in the larger programmatic partnerships with deans (business, HRM, and law). When asked about how the UWP partnership approach could be improved, Charley (HRM) suggested that the UWP should, "have a menu of services versus cost and talk about outcomes for each one." The corporate language manifests in a suggestion to run the UWP as a money-making business, where faculty/deans become the customers and the UWP the salespeople

of writing instruction. Unsurprisingly though, these participants also described their relationships using heavily corporate and business-related metaphors. For example, as Charley (HRM) discussed what made his partnership with the UWP work, he said:

> One was realistic expectations. They already had this model working with [the business school], so it wasn't something we were creating from scratch, so they had a model we could use. The second piece is, I think, they were upfront on the deliverables. And I think that's…they never overpromise, and what they said is, a couple times, and I love Sam [UWP administrator] for this, he goes—"if you want this, absolutely. Here's the money associated with this" and then I said "Phew! Can we do this for somewhat less?"… Let's build them into teams and put a graduate assistant there and not a full-time staff member. So, you know, my expectations were modified by their perceptions of what they could do.

For Charley, "realistic expectations" were linked to "upfront deliverables," which were worked out via conversations about cost. Mapping out how the partnership would work in terms of resources and costs seems to clarify to Charley the labor involved in supporting large-scale, programmatic-level writing instruction. Alongside this economic discussion of how the UWP would work, Charley also notes that the success of the partnership was linked to its relationality, collaborative nature, and honesty. He describes his partnership with the UWP as all about building a strong relationship through trust, and explicitly states that they are "not sales jobs…not a service," even though his "menu of options" may suggest otherwise.

While the five interviewees who paid for their UWP partnerships had very explicit business-model relationships with the UWP, the other six partners also used corporate metaphors, meaning that these qualities were present regardless of whether or not there was an exchange of money. For instance, Amir (architecture) described the UWP as a "rare amenity," and one that he, as a new tenure-track faculty member, found "invaluable to the instructors, the professors, and the students too." Perhaps the most enthusiastic UWP supporter, Amir emphasized the advantage of having students work with both UWP practitioners and professors because it provides them with multiple perspectives on their writing. Near the end of our interview, Amir returned to the idea of the UWP as an amenity with success evident in its products:

> I know there are other institutions that don't have this amenity. Since I joined, I've been thrilled to have this amenity available. [The UWP] is a model, in some ways, that other institutions could emulate. I really do feel like the proof is in the product, and they already have a very strong contribution that they're making.

As Amir discusses the UWP as amenity, he highlights the positive connotations of the word; he suggests that UWPs are desirable and luxurious places, that partnerships are pleasant and special, and that these kinds of resources are rare, something that other institutions don't have. But he also links the amenity and its value to the extent to which it provides "proof in the product," although what exactly that product is and how it's measured are not mentioned.

The most prominent corporate metaphor used by administrators and faculty was more implicit. They used the concept of "partnership" to describe the relationship between their program and the UWP. These two parties acted as "partners," who were at times "engaged in the same activity" of providing adequate writing support for students, and at other times, or sometimes instead, were "partners" who had "interests and investments in a business or enterprise, among whom expense, profits, and losses are shared" (OED). In other words, some partnerships kept students and student writing at the center of the relationship while others were more focused on outcomes, product, assessment, and the monetary exchange that should guarantee their satisfaction as customers. Even in those partnerships that functioned via a more corporate model, student writing was still a concern, even if overshadowed by the business-model. Thus, these different kinds of partnerships were not mutually exclusive. Faculty and administrators discussed their partnership work with the UWP in such detail that particular qualities emerged across interviews, including relationality, collaboration, measurability/ transactional awareness, honesty, and flexibility.

The presence of corporate metaphor across all administrators and faculty in their talk about working with the UWP suggests that, at least to some extent, they all viewed their relationships in business terms. Despite potentially problematic business-model implications and perhaps an inclination to engage in adversarial deliberation, the concept of "partnership" as a particular kind of relationship between disciplinary faculty and UWP collaborations seems to speak across disciplines and thus offers UWPs a useful language from which to work, even if within business discourse.

Conclusion

Even though these views of writing across the curriculum came from administrators and faculty at a single institution, they speak from extensive experience with UWP collaboration. In terms of perceptual implications, the partnership approach evidenced by the use of corporate metaphors in particular offers a productive strategy for working across disciplines and programs to support student writing. Given the use of therapeutic, survival, and mechanistic metaphor alongside business metaphors, WID administrators need to recognize the complex, even if somewhat conflicting, ways in which disciplinary administrators and faculty view writing and their meaningful work with writing programs. This opens ample space for both collaborative

and adversarial deliberation across stakeholders as a necessary part of establishing an effective, strategic partnership where stakeholders can work through arguments and mismatch when necessary. For instance, across metaphor types, faculty seem to acknowledge that writing is both social and rhetorical, given their interest in and value of collaborating with the UWP as well as in their use of therapeutic metaphors. This aligns with foundational threshold concepts in writing studies (Adler-Kassner and Wardle). Thus, collaborative deliberation in connection to the social and rhetorical nature of writing provides one way of opening conversations with stakeholders. Through attention to figurative language, we can anticipate and plan for both collaborative and adversarial deliberation, and the likely situation that requires a combined approach. These conversations about writing can help us identify which partnerships to take on, as well as when and how.

Overall, partnership-based, corporate language seems to make sense to those outside of writing studies and English departments. With this in mind, we should reconsider our initial resistance to this language and instead think about how it might provide common ground for collaborative, rather than adversarial, deliberation. For example, corporate language may enable us to work more productively within the twenty-first century university, gaining access to additional resources and sustainable support, while simultaneously resisting privatization, efficiency, and mass-production by the very nature of peer-to-peer writing support approaches that emphasize individualization, process over product, and non-evaluative feedback.

In contrast, the presence of mechanistic metaphor challenges the writing studies threshold concept that all writers have more to learn (Adler-Kassner and Wardle). Unfortunately, this was not apparent in how most interviewees talked about writing. For them, writing, once mastered, is a generalizable skill that can be transferred (as evidenced in the mechanistic metaphors). Further, use of mechanistic metaphors suggests a view of writing that is more about reproducing a physical, automatic skill than about mental labor. This seems to work against another writing studies threshold concept too, that writing is (also always) a cognitive activity (Adler-Kassner and Wardle), even though the presence of therapeutic metaphors (like consultants as counselors) implies some recognition that writing is a cognitive activity. Part of this contradiction may be due to disciplinary faculty's tendency to view writing and content as separate, which conflicts with writing studies knowledge while simultaneously expressing the need for and value of UWP partnerships. This suggests that part of our deliberative work with faculty across the disciplines could be to help them understand the complexity of transfer and the importance and need to teach explicitly for transfer (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak.). In doing so, we can expect to engage in both adversarial and collaborative deliberation, depending on how open disciplinary faculty may be to changing their perception of writing as solely skill based.

Other partners, while committed to improving student writing and to collaborating with the UWP, also found great value in the way that such a partnership lightened their workload of reading and commenting on student writing (as shown in the use of survival metaphors). Similarly, use of therapeutic metaphors initially implies that disciplinary faculty view UWPs as remedial. While these metaphors may suggest a service-oriented role for UWPs that requires adversarial deliberation to redefine roles and level the inherent power dynamics in such a relationship, deeper analysis of survival metaphor suggests that disciplinary faculty recognize the labor of teaching writing and struggle to manage it effectively. In turn, they value their partnership with the UWP as a way to better support student writers.

In terms of WAC/WID methods for partnership deliberations, writing studies programs have traditionally developed university-wide writing support structures from within their own disciplinary knowledge and vocabularies even if with a spirit of collaboration (Harrington, Fox, and Hogue; Barnett and Blumner; Cox, Gallin, and Melzer). Yet, some WAC/WID scholars have argued for the value of bringing disciplinary experts more directly into conversations to collaboratively construct discourse drawing from multiple kinds of expertise (Anson and Flash; Wardle; Bazerman; Anson; Basgier and Simpson; Paretti et al.; Carter; Harding et al.; Gere et al.) as well as the value of student writers themselves aiding in the construction of what writing across the disciplines means (Hendrickson and de Mueller). While writing studies may be well-positioned to lead WAC/WID initiatives, if we do not try to learn how disciplinary faculty understand writing, we may also miss opportunities for establishing joint responsibility and understanding of discourse about writing and communication early-on, which is necessary for building trust, establishing respect, and creating transformational partnerships.

One approach to learning and understanding faculty stakeholder perspectives is through engaging in everyday, narrative-based conversations about writing with attention to figurative language. WAC/UWPs can put this into practice by:

1. Initiating conversations about writing and teaching writing in general terms early on, before working on the nuts and bolts of a how a partnership might work.
2. Identifying the figurative language that faculty across the disciplines use to discuss writing and the teaching of writing, in addition to how they define or think about their collaboration work with the UWP. This will indicate how WAC/UWPs might tackle work with both individual instructors and departments well as more cohort-based, university wide initiatives that engage faculty across the disciplines together.
3. Analyzing faculty talk to better understand both explicit and implicit understandings of writing and partnership.

4. Determining what this means for how to best work together. Where might collaborative deliberation occur easily? What mismatches exist? Where might adversarial deliberation be necessary and useful?
5. Planning for how to balance the collaborative potential with the adversarial. Either anticipate the possibility that some issues and mismatches may arise or initiate conversations to directly address them. UWPs might benefit from encouraging some elements of corporate, mechanistic, and survival metaphors that describe disciplinary partnerships and how they support teachers of writing, while resisting or expanding figurative language that suggests a writing as mechanics viewpoint.
6. Reflecting on our own adversarial impulses in light of what we learn about how disciplinary faculty perceive of writing and partnership to determine when we might be better off conceding.

Finally, this study has pedagogical implications for teaching a WAC/WID curriculum in the writing studies classroom. While writing studies has broadened its definition of what counts as text for study within discourse communities to include multimodal and non-academic genres, rarely do rhetorical and genre-based curriculums emphasize the study of figurative language in talk about writing and language through interview or recorded conversation. Thus, this study implies the value of incorporating assignments that make space for student-driven, primary research into talk about writing and communication, with attention to how figurative language functions alongside more explicit statements often made visible in published and publicly circulated texts. Encouraging attention to figurative language alongside direct statements and other kinds of genre-based knowledge will also help students understand how discourse communities form, change, and grow, while simultaneously introducing critical language skills that highlight the nuances of communication across different groups. This will better prepare writers by not only teaching them to negotiate language and concepts of writing as professionals and community members, but also introducing them to new ways of thinking about language and writing as they learn from their peers and discourse communities outside their own.

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Appendix A

Table 1 is not exhaustive nor is it a comprehensive view of metaphor use in writing studies. Instead, I attempt to track common metaphors in a general sense to synthesize and present metaphor clusters used in writing studies.

Table 1: Metaphor use in WPA and writing studies scholarship

Talent	George; Brueggman; Baker; Ryan and Zimmerli; Harris; Russell; Mendez Newman and Gonzalez; Riley and Colby; Green; Seitz; Rubino; Daniel
Ecological	Brady; Cox, Galin, and Melzer; Bastian; Fischer and Harris; Fleckenstein et al.; Cooper; Reiff; Knoblauch and Brannon; Druschke; Jensen
Movement	McLeod; Baker et al.; Adams Wooten, Babb, and Ray; Harding et al.; Bazerman; McCarthy; Clark; Tobin; Mao; Lebduska
Territorial	Holmsten; Huber; Stanley; Smith and Morris; Gere; Severino; Stanley; Shaughnessy; Sutherland; Dryer; Gere et al.; Enoch; Dobrin and Jensen; Balester
Conceptual	Phelps; Smith and Morris; Warnick; Jackson et al.; Baird and Dilger; Pratt; Seitz; Phelps; Tobin; McQuade; Berthoff; Khost; Dush; Jordan