LISTENING TO STORIES ABOUT WRITING (CENTERS): SITES OF INNOVATION IN (ONLINE)
WRITING INSTRUCTION

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of English

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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By

Rebecca Hallman Martini

May, 2016

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Rebecca Hallman Martini

APPROVED:

_____
James T. Zebroski, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

_____
Paul Butler, Ph.D.

_____
James Kastely, Ph.D.

_____
Carl Lindahl, Ph.D.

_____
Chatwara Duran, Ph.D.

_____
Kevin Dvorak, Ph.D.
Nova Southeastern University

_____
Steven G. Craig, Ph.D.
Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Economics

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I study the University of Houston Writing Center (UHWC) as a site for innovative writing instruction while simultaneously critiquing business-model approaches to the teaching of writing. Using the Writing Center as a microcosm for the larger issues affecting writing pedagogy, I investigate productive ways programs collaborate via Writing in the Disciplines (WID) partnerships across campus to engage with both face-to-face and online/multimodal pedagogies. Using a critical ethnographic approach, I conducted, coded, and analyzed audio-recorded interviews with the UHWC community. In addition, I studied closely through observations, interviews, focus groups, and informal conversations two UHWC partnerships: first, the hybrid/online studio partnership with the Department of English, and second, the College of Technology's Electrical Power Engineering Technology Department four-course, face-to-face, small group partnership. As I both critique (the business model) and forward (the partnership approach) to the teaching of writing, I also put forth a new curricular method that can be used by writing centers, writing programs, and WID initiatives aiming collaboration with a wide range of faculty, departments, and colleges. To get at the larger story of innovative writing instruction that occurs through the UHWC, I ask what stories do UHWC administrators/consultants, university administrators, and disciplinary faculty tell about innovative writing curricula? How does resistance manifest in stories that challenge traditional approaches to the teaching of writing? In what ways do stories about digital disruptions reflect invention, change, or continuity in pedagogical approach? And, most importantly, how and when are continuities in writing instruction masked as innovation?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Your willingness to speak with me about your experiences teaching writing taught me more than I ever realized I could learn.

I could not have done this without the support of the amazing mentors I had throughout my college experience, and particularly over the past year: Travis Webster, Jennifer Wingard, Nathan Shepley, Joanna Wolfe, Karen Kopelson, Bronwyn Williams, Stephen Schneider, Scott Whiddon, Michelle Miley, Marjorie Chadwick, and Mary Gray for all of your support throughout my college experience, but especially over the past year.

My colleagues from the University of Houston offered unending support: Sara Cooper, Erin Singer, J.P. Gritton, Maurice Wilson, Mark Sursavage, Clay Guinn, Liz Keating, Zack Turpin, Conor Bracken, Katie Condon, Sarah McClung, Jonathan Richards, and Adrienne DeLeon. I also thank colleagues from other institutions, including Cassie Book, Sherry Wynn Perdue, Enrique Paz, Beth Hewett, Michael Reich, Michael Miller, Rachel Bracken, Liz Lane, Alex Adkins, Mike Sobiech, Caroline Wilkinson, Matthew Dowell, Matt Wiles, Harley Ferris, Jennifer Marciniak, and Hannah Harrison.

Finally, I want to thank my family: my parents, Rick and Nancy Hallman; my sister, Jamie Hallman; my Aunt Karen and Uncle Bruce; the many Hallman's, the Lara Nettos, and the Martini Paula's.

And of course, I owe absolute gratitude to my husband, Rodrigo Martini, whose patience, support, intelligence, humor, and love fueled me through it all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF APPENDICES

Chapter 1

Listening to (and telling) Stories About Writing: Setting the Context

In a unique response to the "crisis of higher education,"[1] Clayton M. Christensen and

Henry J. Eyring argue for the innovative potential that traditional universities have for

responding to current disruptions in education. These "disruptive innovations" occur when a

new approach, which often presents itself as either cheaper or more user-friendly than what

already exists, challenges the dominant educational paradigm. In the current climate of

higher education, universities need to react quickly when such disruptions occur. Such

responses need to work at changing the inner structure (or DNA) of a particular institution,

instead of using money and resources on attempting to emulate more elite universities. In

2011 when Christensen and Eyring were writing their book, the most significant disruption

identified was online education.

Since the book's publication, educators and researchers have produced a multitude of

books dedicated to considering the influence of online education and attempting to find the

best ways for universities to act in response (Blumenstyk, Bowen, Krause & Lowe). Perhaps

the most important trend across all of these books is that we are no longer trying to determine

whether or not online education is worth investment and engagement; online education is

here to stay and, as Christensen and Eyring predicted, universities must find a way of

innovatively changing with technology if they want to continue to exist. This move was

never debated by academics or university teachers, but rather it is a result of our current

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[1] The "crisis in higher education" is a phrase used to explain whatever current challenges and problems institutions face. Recently, such crises include dropout rates (*Ranking America*), increasing tuition prices (Matthews), disappointing learning (Arun and Roksa), low employment (Weissmann), and the threat of online education and MOOCs (Kolowich).

[2] Adults were interviewed in November and December of 2014 by the Gallup and the Lumina Foundations (Supiano).

[3] Monske and Blair are currently editing a collection called *Writing and Composing in the Age of MOOCs*

political climate that is driven by college administrators who are strongly influenced by a business-model mentality, privatized and corporate interests, and post-Fordist values, including accessibility, efficiency, cost-cutting, and mass-production.

Not only are approaches to online education permeating our research and scholarship, but they are also on the minds of university presidents. In 2014, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* surveyed 350 presidents from four-year public, private, and not-for-profit colleges and found that presidents believe that hybrid courses containing both face-to-face and online components will have the most positive impact on the future of higher education. Yet, this same group of presidents simultaneously believes that ten years from now universities will be quite different from how they are today, that we are headed in the right direction, and that the pace of change is still too slow. This recognition of the need for change, but also the slowness of such change, was recently found among a random sample of adults in the United States.[2] This desire for fast-paced change is partially met when universities develop online courses that, once worked out technologically, often begin without ample teaching training and attention to how the online space changes the climate of teaching.

Since the early 90s but most prominently in the 2000s, online education has been a topic of much debate in the field of rhetoric and composition. As a field with roots in the humanities, the social sciences (anthropology), English Education, and social-constructivism, composition was at first concerned about how online education would impact both student learning and teacher satisfaction. One of the most eloquent texts that raises concerns is the 2003 *Computers and Composition* article, "*Cui bon?*: Revisiting the promises and perils of online learning," by Kristine L. Blair and Elizabeth A. Monske, in which they literally ask

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[2] Adults were interviewed in November and December of 2014 by the Gallup and the Lumina Foundations (Supiano).

who benefits from what they call "the rush to technologize teaching and learning?" (441). These scholars argue that we must continue to politicize online writing environments by considering how these spaces enable and/or disenfranchise both students and instructors.[3] Such concerns have been taken up in further research that attempts to determine how much students learn in hybrid and online first year composition classes (Boyd), faculty fears about how distance-education is introduced to the college environment (Peterson), the amount of time online classes required from both students and teachers (Reinheimer), and how to determine the best learning conditions and practices for online learning (Stackey, Nguyen, and Grabill).

While much research has focused on figuring out how classroom-based writing pedagogies can be transferred online (Warnock), few have looked at how these new online spaces can and should spark innovation. I define innovation in writing instruction as that which disrupts, revitalizes, or reinvents traditional approaches to first year writing, which are often rooted in current-traditional curriculums,[4] textbook method(ologie)s, and face-to-face best practices. At its core, this dissertation project works from two important beliefs: first, part of reacting to digital disruptions (electronic or machine mediated interruptions to in-person, human-to-human interactions), in higher education generally, and within the teaching of writing more specifically, involves making deliberate decisions about when and how to

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[3] Monske and Blair are currently editing a collection called *Writing and Composing in the Age of MOOCs* (forthcoming 2017).

[4] In using this term, I mean to evoke Berlin's description of current traditional rhetoric (CTR), yet I will later argue that most of first year writing pedagogy still falls in line with CTR and forwards teaching modes (Rampage and Bean; Seyler),or presents writing as formulaic and thesis-driven (Birkenstein and Graff; Bartholomae and Petrosky). With the exception of a more recent focus on argument (Lunsford and Lunsford; DeStigter), CTR has for the most part persisted, despite our belief that other approaches have threatened it (see Zebroski's "The Expressivist Menace."

engage in online pedagogies, but also, how and when not to; and second, online writing instruction is dialectically related to face-to-face pedagogy.

Like all research projects, this one began from a particular point of view, and thus with a few biases and assumptions. I am a fourth year PhD student in the Department of English focusing on Rhetoric, Composition, and Pedagogy. After teaching for one year in a traditional, face-to-face environment at the University of Louisville, I began my teaching assignment at UofH as both an online First Year Writing (FYW) and a face-to-face (Art History) studio facilitator. Since then, I have taught in face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online classrooms at UofH. I've also worked as a course-embedded tutor/co-teacher in a UofH WC summer partnership with the Bauer College of Business for three years. I most strongly identify as a writing center practitioner, scholar, and researcher, even though much of my time at UofH has been spent as an instructor in the English Department. I believe that both first year composition and writing centers are valuable sites for writing instruction on campus and that both, despite being traditionally face-to-face environments, are moving quickly to more and more online teaching, which, more often than not, is assumed to be innovative. In addition, I'm working from several assumptions:

- Student writing can improve in first year composition and also through time spent working with tutors in the writing center.

- The shift toward more online writing over the past three years at UofH has, in some ways, created a more innovative environment for the teaching of writing.

- Resistance from instructors, administrators, and students to online writing/teaching environments is worth just as much attention and can teach us just as much as the online writing/teaching environments themselves can.

4

- Listening to faculty/instructors, administrators/tutors, and students talk about online writing and writing center partnerships can teach us about the perceived degree of innovation in writing instruction. These stories and the assumptions they carry matter and are worth investigating and studying closely.

In this dissertation I study the UHWC as a site for innovative writing instruction while simultaneously critiquing business-model approaches to the teaching of writing. Using the Writing Center as a microcosm for the larger issues affecting writing pedagogy, I investigate productive ways programs collaborate via Writing in the Disciplines (WID) partnerships across campus to engage with both face-to-face and online/multimodal pedagogies. Using a critical ethnographic approach, I conducted, coded, and analyzed audio-recorded interviews with the UHWC community. In addition, I studied closely through observations, interviews, focus groups, and informal conversations two UHWC partnerships: first, the hybrid/online studio partnership with the Department of English, and second, the College of Technology's Electrical Electronics Engineering Technology Department four-course, face-to-face, small group partnership. As I both critique (the business model) and forward (the partnership approach) to the teaching of writing, I put forth a new curricular method that can be used by writing centers, writing programs, and WID initiatives aiming collaboration with a wide range of faculty, departments, and colleges.

To get at the larger story of innovative writing instruction that occurs through the UHWC, I ask how, when, and where are stories about innovative writing 21st century writing instruction told? How does resistance manifest in stories that challenge traditional approaches to the teaching of writing? In what ways do stories about digital disruptions reflect invention, change, or continuity in pedagogical approach? And, most importantly,

how and when are continuities in writing instruction masked as innovation? In particular, this project will investigate the following research questions:

- What stories do UHWC administrators and consultants tell about the teaching of writing and their work in the writing center?

- What stories do university administrators and disciplinary faculty tell about the teaching of writing and their work with the writing center?

- How and when do UHWC administrators/consultants, university administrators, and disciplinary faculty tell stories about writing instruction as new, unique, or innovative?[5]

- How are student writers implicated or left out of conversations about writing instruction?

Above all else, this dissertation considers stories to be not more important than information, but the most important *kind* of information. Thus, the interviewees should be thought of as narrators, not simply responders.

Defining the Terms: Critical Keywords in the Teaching of Writing

The framing of this dissertation project, the words spoken by interviewees, and the writing of this story as filtered through myself as researcher-teacher-participant depend upon the use of several key terms loaded with meaning. While I do not mean to offer these words as clearly or easily definable, I do want to point out how and why I use them to explore and explain my study of the UHWC. While I began this project with these concepts in mind, the

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[5] The work of Dorothy Smith on Institutional Ethnography (IE) brought to composition in an article by LaFrance and Nicolas works from the idea that the individual, local, and institutional are mutually constitutive and that we should turn our attention away from the site itself and towards the people who co-create the meaning of the site. Thus, I will pay close attention to how people who are in different positions of power respond differently to digital disruptions and how those positions and/or particular labels/roles/jobs influence how they act in light of DDs.

way that they presented themselves throughout my research was varied, nuanced, contradictory, and sometimes boring. Thus, I attempt to provide definitional frames in this first chapter, all the while asking you to expect these definitions to break down in other moments. I end this dissertation by returning to these same words and rethinking, in light of this research, how we might use and explore them in future studies.

Story

In using the word "story," I do not mean made up or imaginary, but rather I use story to include the experiences, challenges, and feelings that people experience and verbalize, especially as related to the teaching and tutoring writing. Some stories present themselves as the retelling of actual events based on memories, and others seem more historical or theoretical. Many take the form of metaphor. I use "story" to mean both the anecdotal and the conceptual, because this dissertation works from the assumption that stories enact culture, and thus can tell us much about how universities and institutions work, and more importantly, how individuals and groups understand them.

In addition, I work from two key ideas presented by Jerome Bruner in *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life.* First, that "stories are surely not innocent: they always have a message" (5). Second, that "One truth is surely self-evident: for all that narrative is one of our evident delights, it is serious business" (89). Thus, I take seriously the stories told by interviewees and also how I represent these stories in the writing of this larger story.

Innovation

As mentioned earlier, I define innovation in writing instruction as that which disrupts, revitalizes, or reinvents traditional approaches to first year writing, which are often rooted in

7

current-traditional curriculums,[6] textbook method(ologie)s, and face-to-face best practices.

Yet also key to this definition is its market values, especially in terms of how it is used by

upper administrators in the university as a way of *re*presenting educational designs that seem

new. Within and among writing teachers, "innovation" can mean a new and/or subversive

approach to writing instruction, especially those that upset traditional argument genres.[7]

But not always.

In his important book *The University in Ruins,* Bill Readings argues that institutions

work from a "discourse of 'excellence'" that replaces earlier notions of the University as the

place that operates according to the language of culture. Here, I argue that innovation can be

thought of as the new "excellence." In particular, Readings argues the following about

"excellence" that I believe also holds true for "innovation" in today's university:

> 'Excellence' is like the cash-nexus in that it has no *content;* it is hence neither true
>
> nor false, neither ignorant nor self-conscious. It may be unjust, but we cannot seek its
>
> injustice in terms of regime of truth of self-knowledge. Its rule does not carry with it
>
> an automatic political or cultural orientation, for it is not determined in relation to any
>
> indefinable instance of political power (13).

Thus, the word "excellence"/"innovation," does not necessarily carry any specific content,

but is rather used as an adjective to describe the next best thing in pedagogy worth selling.

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[6] In using this term, I mean to evoke Berlin's description of current traditional rhetoric (CTR), yet I will later argue that most of first year writing pedagogy still falls in line with CTR and forwards teaching modes (Rampage and Bean; Seyler), or presents writing as formulaic and thesis-driven (Birkenstein and Graff; Bartholomae and Petrosky). With the exception of a more recent focus on argument (Lunsford and Lunsford), CTR has for the most part persisted, despite our belief that other approaches have threatened it (see Zebroski's "The Expressivist Menace").

[7] In "On the Ascendance of Argument: A Critique of the Assumption of Academe's Dominant Form," Todd DeStigter argues that argument is highly privileged over other forms of writing. In particular, he claims, "the overemphasis on argumentation imposes unwarranted limits on what counts as valid thought, legitimate political subjectivity, and a feasible strategy for addressing economic inequality" (13).

Readings further notes that this "concerns the question of how the University is to be evaluated" (18).

Disruption

In using the word disruption, I mean to suggest an action or structure that changes or alters the process, activity, or event. Like innovation, disruption can be used as a marketing technique that names something new, unique, or different, when really, little has changed. In this dissertation, when I do talk about disruption, I include small change, rather than drastic ones, because determining large-scale disruptions would take more resources and time to determine than a single person over the course of a year-long project.

Resistance

I understand resistance to be the refusal or challenging of following a structure or plan imposed or implicit by existing histories or pedagogies. In addition, resistance can sometimes mean the ability to not be affected by something, or to continue activities or practices by ignoring or overlooking attempts at innovation or disruption.

The UHWC as Site for Innovative Writing Instruction

Digital disruptions occur when current traditional approaches to the teaching of writing are interrupted or complicated by electronic devices that make use of data in digital form. By using the term digital disruptions, I also mean to invoke the term as defined in the field of business to recognize an emphasis on access, economics, and performance (McDonald), and to call attention to how such an approach affects workers and customers due to pace of innovation, increased competition, personalization of interactions, speed of interactions, and integration (Arthur; McQuivey). This reminds us that the move to online/digital in education is a result of the possibility for profit and the popularity of such

moves in the business environment and global economy. Thus, moving online may bring us closer to a business-model approach to education where students are conceived of as customers and clients than we are comfortable with.

Two of the most common sites for digital disruptions of writing within universities are English Departments that house first year writing programs and writing centers.[8] Despite a shared interest and investment in the teaching of writing, the relationship between those who position themselves as writing center scholars, researchers, or practitioners and those who find their identity in English departments is a historically tense one. In his seminal writing center article "The Idea of a Writing Center," Stephen North admits his frustration with and disappointment in his English Department colleagues who misunderstand the work of the writing center, even though they are well-equipped for acknowledging the complexities involved in working with writers through texts. With the growth of rhetoric and composition in general, and writing center studies in particular since the 1984 publication of North's essay, writing centers today are more often compatible with English Departments (Waldo).

Yet the physical and ideological location of the writing center varies across campuses and contexts. For example, writing centers are physically located in a range of places, including the basements of English department buildings, within libraries, in academic tutoring center, undergraduate student dorms, and across campus in satellite locations (Haviland, Fye, and Colby). And, in terms of their ideologies, writing centers are sometimes run by English Department faculty and graduate students who locate themselves within the field of rhetoric and composition (and thus, centers may align themselves with the English

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[8] Although not all composition programs are housed within the Department of English, the vast majority of universities still work from a traditional model in which the majority of writing instruction occurs from within the Department of English (Isaacs).

Department) and other times by full-time staff outside of the English department, referred to as "transplants" from English literature programs (Nicholas; Wallace and Wallace). Oftentimes, these "transplanted" writing center practitioners attempt to develop their own ideological writing center identities informed by practice outside the field of rhetoric and composition and also outside of a Department of English.

At the University of Houston, the teaching of writing occurs in both the English Department and also the University Writing Center. While a pedagogical partnership does exist between the two, they have functioned quite separately for the past decade or so, yet are connected by a shared history, since the UHWC was at first housed within the English Department. Also, since there are no Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) in the Department of English (i.e., no director of composition, no director of WAC/WID), the UHWC, a space with around ten non-academic, full-time administrators, has functioned as the hub for writing instruction on campus.[9] Thus, this dissertation focuses on the teaching of writing that occurs through collaborations with the UHWC, taking the Center (and those who move through it) the key site of inquiry.

Physically housed on the second floor of a business-school-owned building, the University of Houston Writing Center (UHWC) is geographically located completely opposite of the Department of English on campus. All of the UHWC administrators and full-time consultants are staff members who have little communication with the Department of English and little, if any, formal education or training in the professional field of rhetoric and composition or the sub-specialty of writing center studies. Despite this lack of formal scholarly professionalization, the UHWC's presence on campus is impressive. In its 2014

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[9] The UHWC is responsible for WAC/WID support for both students and faculty and most of the English Department's new TA training. It also serves as the site for hybrid/online writing instruction orientations, professional development workshops, and mentoring.

annual report, the UHWC documented 22,928 student interactions, collaborated with faculty across campus in 57 WID partnerships, and led over 30 workshops. In particular, the UHWC developed new projects with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) students, created a new online writing center with synchronous writing support, and developed more support for graduate-level writing.

In Fall 2015, the UHWC 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. In particular, the UHWC sets its mission in the follow way, per the UHWC website:

Mission Statement

Writing is thinking. It is an indispensable activity for every discipline conducting research within a university setting and an essential component of a university education. Ongoing instruction in writing helps to initiate students into the changing intellectual demands of university life and introduces them to the complexities of their chosen disciplines and professions. Because writing provides the tools to discover and articulate solutions to intellectual problems, improved writing remains a continual goal of university education.
To address these concerns, the mission of the University of Houston Writing Center includes the following activities:

Assessment: developing effective means of evaluating student and institutional writing needs that promote curricular innovation and provide informative directions for both students and teacher.
Writing Instruction: providing instruction in writing that meets the diverse needs of a student population at undergraduate, graduate, and professional level.

Curricular Innovation: promoting the creation of new writing curricula to meet changing student and disciplinary needs, reexamining present curricula to respond to new practices in the field of writing instruction.

Community Outreach: establishing outreach programs and partnerships that make available the results of the Center's inquiries and activities in the teaching of writing and foster collaboration with the region's educational and professional communities.

Professional Development: encouraging the ongoing professional development of faculty and staff across the full spectrum of disciplines.

Research in the Teaching of Writing: fostering the creation and dissemination of new knowledge about the teaching of writing in a large public institution serving an urban, multi-ethnic, multilingual community.

As shown above, the UHWC includes as part of its mission assessment, writing instruction, curricular innovation, community outreach, professional development, and research in the teaching of writing, but does not mention improving student writing. Thus, the UHWC projects an image of itself as a hub for writing, a place whose mission moves far beyond writing instruction or one-on-one tutoring.

Building a Methodological Framework for Critical Ethnographic Writing Center Research

When I first stepped foot in the UHWC, I sensed that it was a writing center very different from most others. This sense was informed by what I understood to be the writing center grand narrative described by Jackie Grutsch McKinney in *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers*.[10] The writing center grand narrative states, "writing centers are comfortable, iconoclastic places where all students go to get one-on-one tutoring on their writing" (3). Although she claims that this narrative can both work for and against us, Grutsch McKinney urges the field to challenge the grand narrative, first by acknowledging that it is problematic and limiting, despite being partially true. Second, Grutsch McKinney argues that we can begin to alter the grand narrative and perhaps change it through the act of writing counterstories. Such stories, although often in the form of "'small narratives of specific groups'" (Olson and Lyotard, qtd. in Grutsch McKinney p. 86), have much potential to accrue (Bruner 1991; Grutsch McKinney 2013), thus providing us with more dynamic representations of the work we do in Centers. Grutsch McKinney writes, "So if we make a point of collecting or hearing individual stories, we might add instantiations of counterstories to the grand narrative" (86).

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[10] In 2011, Grutsch McKinney conducted an online survey with one hundred and seventeen respondents. From these responses, the writing center grand narrative emerged.

My purpose in this dissertation is to answer Grutsch McKinney's call by offering a writing center counterstory. To do this, I conducted formal critical ethnographic research in the UHWC in Fall 2015, yet the context and my own experience as a graduate student employee over the past four years informs this research. Drawing from Muriel Saville-Troike's *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction* and Margaret Diane LeCompte's *Researcher Roles and Research Partnership*, I recognize that I communicated with the interviewees in multiple settings, multiple ways, and from multiple positionalities. For instance, several of the UHWC administrators and the English Department hybrid instructors are my friends who I spoke with informally about their administration and tutoring outside of the formal interviews during conferences, over lunch, and in between meetings informal. Thus, while I do draw on the formal interviews, I also draw on unrecorded conversations that occurred in more relaxed settings.

Although there has been a recent increase in writing center research over the past decade, most scholarship emphasizes the value of replicable, aggregable, data-driven (RAD) research (Driscoll and Wynn Perdue; Babcock and Thonus; Eodice, Price, and Jordan). This approach was first defined by Richard Haswell in "NCTE/CCC's Recent War on Scholarship," where he argues for more RAD research in rhetoric and composition. This particular kind of research has the following four major components:

- A best effort inquiry into the actualities of a situation
- Explicitly enough systematized in sampling, execution, and analysis to be replicated
- Exactly enough circumscribed to be extended
- Factually enough supported to be verified (Haswell 201)

In "Theory, Lore, and More: An Analysis of RAD Research in *The Writing Center* Journal, 1980-2009" (2012), Dana Driscoll and Sherry Wynn Perdue argued that writing center studies was also at fault for not doing enough RAD research. They argue, as did Haswell, that we need to "speak a common research language, one that allows others from both within and outside of our field to retrace our steps and to test our claims" (Driscoll and Wynn Perdue 36).

RAD's emphasis on detail of methods, data collection, and research questions, as well as the need to justify methodological choices is commendable and aligns well with qualitative approaches to research (Cauthern; Faber; Thaiss and Zawacki; Mortensen and Kirsch; Schell and Rawson). Yet, my concern here is that first, many qualitative approaches to research (especially critical ethnographic methods, case studies, oral histories, and those informed by cultural rhetorics) have a close connection to the particular contexts in which they take place (Heath; Cushman), meaning that replication out of context is not only challenging and unlikely, but also ethically questionable. If a researcher is flexible enough to allow his/her research context and participants to have an impact on research design and direction, then even the intention of replicating one study for another context goes against the very values from which many qualitative researchers work.

My second concern here in relation to bias is that for some qualitative researchers, the idea of "researcher bias" is better understood as researcher perspective: something that is not only unavoidable, but also an important influence to be brought into the research design, process, and analysis. Some qualitative researchers (especially those rooted in the anthropology and ethnography) would argue that research is always biased and that it's our responsibility to acknowledge and account for those biases, rather than prevent them since

they are unpreventable (see Ralph Cintron's *Angel's Town* for a detailed description of the complexities related to researcher perspective and influence). Going about research objectively in a way that suggests biases do not exist is quite unethical. Instead, some qualitative researchers, especially those working out of the critical ethnographic tradition, argue for a kind of self reflexivity where the researcher constantly questions her motives, practices, and interpretations all while maintaining an awareness of her role in crafting the research story and that in writing, one cannot avoid one's own voice (Brueggemann; Cintron).

Although referring to these qualitative research methodologies that do not fit with the traditional RAD approach as non-RAD wouldn't necessarily concern me, writing center studies' current privileging of traditional RAD research and unfair labeling of non-RAD methodologies as simply "other" or "lore" seems inaccurate. Isn't it possible for a research project to be RAD-like in its approach as a best effort inquiry via explicit research methods, while at the same time resisting some RAD-based assumptions that are inherently in conflict with qualitative approaches because of their insistence that research (can) be replicable, non-biased, and based on "a body of facts" (Haswell 219)?

Thus, in this dissertation, I attempt to create a more qualitative-RAD (or, qual-RAD)[11] approach to writing center research that builds on the concept of critical ethnographic research, which is rooted in the tradition of ethnographic research as developed in the field of rhetoric and composition (Heath; Brodkey; Chiseri-Strater; Cushman; Cintron). In these works, ethnographic methods for rhetoric and composition emerge as those which consist of extremely rigorous research methods including interview, observation, field notes,

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[11] For a more fully developed definition of qual-RAD, see Rebecca Hallman, "Extending Peripheral Visions: A Quest for qual-RAD Writing Center Research," in *RAD Writing Center Research*, Ed. Sunny Hawkins, forthcoming.

reflection, and textual analysis; move beyond description towards critique/action; complicate the participant-observer role; reject the idea of any method or text as easily or entirely replicable; and maintain an awareness of ethnographic text as constructed under the influence of social, economic, political, material, and academic pressures.

In addition, my approach is informed by more recent critiques of ethnographic research (Mortensen and Kirsch; Kirklighter, Moxley, and Vincent; Brown and Dobrin 2004), which develop a *critical* ethnographic approach that is deeply self-reflective in its consideration of the political, social, economic, and historical influences on text production and representation of researcher and participants; aware of the constructedness and limitations of the ethnographic text itself; and is experimental in design and presentation.

While my data for this project consists of observational notes; textual analyses of recent annual reports, syllabi/assignment designs, and audio-recorded interviews/focus groups with UHWC administrators/consultants, university administrators, and disciplinary faculty, my focus has been on collecting stories in any and all contexts in which they were told. Thus, stories are the most important kind of information presented in this dissertation.

Participants and Interview Questions

For this dissertation, I conducted interviews with fifteen administrators/consultants in the UHWC, three college deans, and twelve discipline-specific faculty/instructors. I held one formal focus group among English Department hybrid instructors; observed the UHWC orientation, in-serves, and reading group; attended five partnership-specific project meetings; and observed twelve student/consultant partnership group meetings. In using these methods, I was always listening for stories first and foremost, and the telling of those stories is what I attempt to prioritize in this dissertation.

To determine the extent to which a counternarrative to the writing center grand narrative existed at the UHWC, I attempted to replicate Grutsch McKinney's four major survey questions from her 2011 online survey, via face-to-face interviews:[12]

- In your own words, what is a writing center?

- How do you describe the role of the writing center to others at UH?

- In what ways do you think the UHWC is different from other writing centers?

- In what ways do you think the UHWC is similar to other writing centers[13]?

In my interviews with university administrators and disciplinary faculty, I asked questions such as:

- What role does writing play in your teaching? How do you teach writing?

- How would you define good student writing?

- How did your partnership with the UHWC begin? How did it develop?

- What is your current perception of the UHWC? What about your colleagues'[14]?

Even though I did prepare and think through interview questions, I was primarily interested in letting the interviewees open up and tell the stories that *they* wanted to tell, rather than asking them to focus on answering *my* questions. Drawing from interview method(ologies) in ethnographic methods informed by folklore, and particularly, the work of ethnographer-folklorist Carl Lindahl in "Thrills and Miracles: Legends of Lloyd Chandler" (2004), I told interviewees at the start of each interview that anything they wanted to tell me was more important than the questions I had to ask them. Offering this statement was one

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[12] Other researchers have replicated Grutsch McKinney's research questions, particularly Andrea Scott (2015). Scott's important work involves translating Grutsch McKinney's questions into German and asking them via survey to writing center practitioners in Germany, whose answers Scott then translates back into English.

[13] For a full list of UHWC administrator/consultant interview questions, see Appendix A.

[14] For a full list of university administrator/disciplinary faculty interview questions, see Appendix B.

technique I used to challenge the power dynamic inherent in most interviewer/interviewee relationships: the interviewer has the power, thus controlling and dictating how the interview goes. Instead, I wanted interviewees to decide what we talked about, and to determine their own sequencing and telling of their UHWC experience. Thus, I rarely made it through all interview questions, and instead used them to guide the conversations I had with interviewees.

Also drawing on Lindahl, I worked from the assumption that the interviewee is always right and also that the goal of the researcher is to do their best to represent people on their own terms. While I was upfront about my interest in particular areas/ideas (i.e, how interviewees define and think about the work of their writing center compared with others, how the UHWC works with disciplines across campus, etc.), I tried not to let my own agenda determine how our interview unfolded. Another way that I got at this was by reserving interruptive questions I had for the end of the interview. For instance, if an interviewee mentioned a term or an event that he/she did not explain, rather than interrupting and asking for clarification, I made a note of it and waited until the interviewee was finished talking to bring up my questions (and sometimes, this meant waiting until the end of the interview, some 30-45 minutes later). It's also worth noting here that my intention was not to conduct identical interviews with each UHWC administrator. Prior to conducting this research, I knew many of these individuals as sort of co-workers over the past three years. Thus, I wanted to understand them and eventually represent them as individuals.

Approaches to Data Collection and Analysis

All interviews were conducted via face-to-face, audio-recorded interviews that took place in UHWC during the Fall 2015 semester. I drew on Lindahl for my method for

collecting and logging interviews, a method he describes as "a detailed table of contents for the entire interview." Rather than transcribing verbatim audio-recorded interviews, the logging method allows the researcher to summarize and paraphrase the interview, while reserving transcription for key moments during the interview. Like transcribing, logging is a long and tiresome process, but it does save the researcher some time. As Catherine Riessman argues in *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, I believe that the work of transcription, and thus logging, is deeply interpretive, selective, and informed by the researcher's perspective. In other words, there is no way to create a neutral or objective transcript. Thus, the transcription and/or logging work should be done by the researcher himself/herself whenever possible.

While some researchers, such as Irvin Seidman in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (2013) warn against selective transcription, the thorough logging and noting of the interview still requires careful listening and documentation of the interview in its entirety. In addition, as a researcher logs, she also makes notes about where transcription may be necessary. Then, once the full interview has been logged, the researcher goes back and decides which sections to transcribe. According to Lindahl in *Working the Port Training Manual* (2012), interview logs should do the following:

- Follow the order of the interview
- Focus on the interviewee's words rather than on the questions of the interview
- Begin a new entry when the topic changes (approximately every 1-4 minutes or when the interviewer poses a new question)

- Marks each new entry with the time so that the researcher can go back and find the section easily in case she wishes to return to it

- Short sentences are used to describe what is said, along with brief quotations when preserving the language choice of the interviewee is necessary

This logging process is systematic and thus a replicable aspect of this research project.

After each interview was conducted and logged, the logs were read multiple times with an eye toward patterns. I coded intentionally for the presence of the writing center grand narrative as defined by Grutsch McKinney so that I could understand the extent to which it was present among the interviewees. Thus, I coded for five elements of the writing center grand narrative as defined by Grutsch McKinney:

- Writing Center as a comfortable place

- Writing Center as iconoclastic[15]

- Writing Center as a place for all students

- Writing Center as place for one-on-one tutoring

- Writing Center as place to work on writing

In addition, I used methods first developed by Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater in *Academic Literacies: The Public and Private Discourse of University Students* (1991), and since supported by other qualitative researchers (Seidman; Grutsch McKinney 2015), which allow for the themes and categories for coding to emerge from patterns in the data. Throughout this process, I kept separate notes of my own observations and analyses and, once noting these,

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[15] Although Grutsch McKinney doesn't say specifically how she defined these terms or describe the variations of such terms as she found them in the data, she does provide more detailed explanations of what she means by "comfortable place" and "iconoclasm" (see pp. 20-23 and 36).

forced myself to return to the data itself and to attempt to represent the interviewees the best that I could on their own terms.[16] The following themes emerged and were thus coded for:

- Metaphor

- Writing, the teaching of writing, or writing teachers

- Partnership

- Professional/workplace writing

- Business/corporate terminology

- Time/space in the teaching of writing (for hybrid instructor focus group/interviews)

While this coding scheme did provide a valuable way of approaching the data for analysis, it does not stand as the overarching organizational structure. Instead, I attempted to allow the stories told by interviewees to determine the arrangement of this dissertation.

The Organization of this Dissertation

In summary, this dissertation uses a critical ethnographic approach to investigate to what extent the UHWC provides a counternarrative to the writing center grand narrative. In particular, I focused on how university administrators and disciplinary faculty tell stories about UHWC partnerships, with close attention to stories about innovative and/or online approaches to writing instruction. I began by studying within the UHWC, focusing on the interactions that occurred within it closely via observations and interviews with administrators and consultants. Then, I interviewed those outside the UHWC who were engaged in collaborative partnerships to get a sense of how those outside the Center understood the work that takes place there. Within this context, I chose two discipline-

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[16] Folklore researchers emphasize the importance of representing interviewees on their own terms and resisting the researcher's desire to fit people into categories. Part of this means also working from the idea that the interviewee is always right. For more on these ideas, see Lindahl, Denton-Mendoza, and Cashman.

specific partnerships: one with the Department of English that engaged online pedagogies, and the other with the Electrical Power Engineering Technology (ELET) that met face-to-face.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I draw on interviews both within and outside of the UHWC to present that UHWC counternarrative that challenges the writing center grand narrative as defined by Grutsch McKinney. Then, in Chapters 4 and 5, I present case studies that show how two different partnerships work: one that focuses on the UHWC/English Department partnership with hybrid first year writing (FYW) and online studios, and the other examines the UHWC/Electrical Electronics Engineering (ELET) partnership where students meet in small groups face-to-face to work on written reports, oral presentations, and visual PowerPoint slides/posters. Finally, in Chapter 6, I present implications for writing centers and writing programs, especially as they face pressure from universities to participate in online (and innovative) education and writing instruction.

Chapter 2

Stories From Within the Writing Center

Near the end of our interview, Jeremy, a UHWC Program Coordinator who has also become a friend of mine, talked nostalgically about the "old days" in the UHWC,[17] when consultants stayed in their positions longer and lived closer to campus. Jeremy has trouble articulating what he means, but notes a recent "difference in attitude and mentality," and best explains what he means by telling me two stories.

The first story came when I asked about why the UHWC only puts consultants' initials on the scheduler, rather than their names. For me, this was a little odd, and so I asked Jeremy if he knew why the scheduler worked that way. When I asked Jeremy explained that it used to be something that consultants had strong feelings about, but that it no longer seemed to bother them. I asked Jeremy if he knew why, and he said this about consultants of the "old days":

> I think they wanted their names [on the scheduler], I think they were tired of being numbers, quote on quote, because it's like you go through the system and sometimes it feels like you're nothing but a PeopleSoft number. And so, just to have yourself reduced to initials on a website might come across as being locked into that same train of thought.[18]

As he continued comparing the "old days" with the current ones, Jeremy told a second story about a conversation he had with a new consultant during orientation.

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[17] Jeremy explained that by "old days," he meant when he was a consultant, around 2010-2011.

[18] During my research, someone else explained to me that the reason for having initials, rather than names, on the scheduler was because when the scheduler did include names, students were not making appointments with consultants who had non-American sounding names.

I think, for example, one of our consultants said something in orientation this year, like "Oh I was expecting to come in and just [say] like, 'This is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong. Okay, goodbye. And this is wrong, this is wrong, okay, goodbye.'" And it's kind of like this conveyor belt of students coming in and you're just checking things off and then the next one comes, and the next one comes, and the next one comes, and when she realized that's not really what we do and that's not really what we're about…

Jeremy is careful to qualify this as "what seems to be the perception," explaining that other staff members might not see things this way.

If these two stories represent differences in terms of attitudes and mentalities among consultants, then they may also suggest a shift from feelings of frustration with the sometimes reductionist effects of the push toward efficiency (i.e., consultants who want their names on the UHWC scheduler and are tired of being reduced to initials and numbers) to a willingness to participate in the move toward efficiency (i.e., consultants who conceive of their work like a conveyor belt of students who need to be checked off).

Although the meanings of these stories are somewhat unclear, even to Jeremy, they also align with the UHWC's corporate mindset that comes up again and again in the stories of other UHWC administrators and consultants. A similar link between the university and business has been recognized by many across the university in general (Barrow; Slaughter and Leslie; Slaughter and Rhoades; Bok; Bosenberg; Giroux; Nelson and Watt), and within the field of English studies in particular (Ohmann; Readings; Downing, Hurlbert, and Mathieu; Rose). These texts are primarily in agreement in two particular ways: (1) the corporatization of the university describes our current moment in education, and thus we

must exist within it; (2) the business-like mentality from which the university (and especially administrators) operate is in conflict with student-centered pedagogies in ways that can damage students, despite the positive connotations of words like "innovation" and "entrepreneurship."

One place that has historically resisted the pressure to corporatize is the University Writing Center (Macauley and Mauriello). For instance, there seems to be little trace of the corporate university in what Jackie Grutsch McKinney identifies as the writing center grand narrative: "writing centers are comfortable, iconoclastic places where all students go to get one-on-one tutoring on their writing" (3). While Grutsch McKinney does acknowledge that this grand narrative both works for us and against us, she also argues that we need to "dislodge the writing center grand narrative" (90) by writing counterstories.

In this chapter, I attempt to answer Grutsch McKinney's call by presenting a counternarrative as told collectively by the UHWC administrators, consultants, and myself. In sharing this new narrative, I attempt to present a different writing center story. This story is neither meant to replace the writing center grand narrative nor to encourage that other writing centers tell this same kind of narrative. Rather, the UHWC counternarrative provides a more nuanced understanding of what writing centers do and can do, especially in their work with university administrators and disciplinary faculty across campus.

The counternarrative is this: the UHWC provides a space for students to work on their writing and research projects in one-on-one and small group settings, both face-to-face and online. Support for student writing is primarily linked to UHWC partnerships rooted in a particular program, discipline, or course. As university-wide service housed outside of English, the UHWC works with university administrators and disciplinary faculty on

curriculum, assignment, and assessment design, as well as on mentoring and providing staff development.

In this chapter, I start by telling the historical beginning of the UHWC counternarrative, primarily as told from the perspective of Melissa, the Center's executive director. Then, I establish how the UHWC functions as a "consulting firm," rooted in a partnership-based approach. Next, I explain how the partnership approach in practice has led to the UHWC counternarrative, as told by UHWC middle-administrators, and I share important nuances of the UHWC counterstory by offering insights from the undergraduate peer tutors shared during the Writing Center Reading Group. Finally, I conclude this chapter by critically reflecting on the UHWC counternarrative, and the values and limitations of a business-minded writing center.

The Writing Center "Resurrected": A Context and History of the NEW new Writing Center

My research for this project began with nearly three hours of interviewing with Melissa, the Executive Director of the UHWC. She has a PhD in English from the University of Houston and her background is in British Literature, and admits that she only agreed to direct the Center when, "all of my options had run out." Yet, Melissa grew to love her work at the WC because of its dynamism and the way that "everyday is different." In particular, Melissa describes her own approach to WC work as "open-minded" because she is willing to try anything: "I never say no to anything…There's just not anything that involves writing that we don't do." That being said, oftentimes faculty will approach the UHWC and the Center will have to "sway them [faculty] to try our [the UHWC's] method and then they

stay." Part of Melissa's role, as she describes it, is to "sell our [the UHWC's] idea" to university administrators and disciplinary faculty

Before I spoke with Melissa in a more formal interview setting, I was under the impression that she had been the founder and the first director of the UHWC. Having been in and out of the WC over the past four years, I had gotten the sense that she built the WC from the ground up, and in a sense, she did. There were no traces of previous directors or leadership in the stories told among the UHWC staff or in UHWC's documentation, and hardly any mention of its split from the English Department. For instance, the UHWC website declares the start of the UHWC in 1999 in the basement of Agnes Arnold Hall and makes no mention of English, except as the place from which it "salvaged computers."

Yet when I asked about its history and beginning, Melissa explained that the UHWC "was conceived in the English Department" where it started out as tutoring for students taking first year composition courses under someone else's directorship. When that director left, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences approached Melissa and asked her to take over as director. Shortly after Melissa took over, tropical storm Allison hit in 2001, filling the UHWC with two feet of water. The university administrators at the time "weren't sure if they were going to resurrect the writing center or not," so the WC "conducted business" in temporary "trailer houses."

When administration decided that they would indeed reopen the WC, now on the second floor of Agnes Arnold Hall, Melissa's exchange with someone from the Provost's office caused her to re-envision a new kind of Center. She explained:

"I said, 'I suppose that means that we'll continue to tutor freshman comp and students in the English Department.' And he looked at me and said 'You can do whatever you

want to do. If you don't want to do that, you don't have to do that,' and I said, 'No

kidding?' He said, 'You can recreate the writing center,' so that's when it really

started."

To start this new WC in 2002, Melissa was given a budget of $800,000. She used the funds

in part to bring writing experts in the field of writing studies from composition, WAC/WID,

and studios to help them build the new Center. Another important early move was

"narrowing down" the staff of techs from eight to two, thus allowing her to hire more tutors.

The administration at the time was "pro-writing center," and the Associate Dean who

oversaw the WC was, according to Melissa, "our [the WC's] good angel" who "funded

everything that I asked for… [and] came to meetings and knew what was going on, which

was key as the WC was first getting established. She wasn't always an easy sell, but she was

very supportive."

While I have heard multiple, fragmented stories about the UHWC's split from the

English Department, Melissa spoke with me quite directly about it, explaining that, "the

difference [for the UHWC] came when the English Department cut us loose." Once this

occurred, the UHWC began to hire tutors from various majors outside of English and to work

with students and faculty across the university. Melissa credits the English Department Chair

at the time with signing off on the "separation" which allowed the UHWC to become an

"independent entity." Although Melissa believes that there may still be some faculty in

English who are angry about the split, she still argues that, "it was the right thing to do."[19]

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[19] During an interview with one of the UHWC program managers, Dan, another important detail about the
Center's split from English came up that was never mentioned by Melissa. Dan explained, "One of the things
that happened as a result of the English Department Chair signing off on the WC becoming sovereign was to
graciously allow us to host the developmental courses." In a sense, the developmental English courses seem to
have been outsourced to the UHWC which may have started the partnership mentality or mindset that the
UHWC would build on for years to come.

By 2003, the UHWC seemed to be quite a new place, described in an article released by the Office of Internal Communications as "entrepreneurial" and "pro-active."[20] Although praised by some, Melissa's entrepreneurship was also considered "controversial" because it sometimes involved charging university administrators and disciplinary departments fees for UHWC services. Melissa spoke about this element of the UHWC at various times during our interviews, yet the first time it came up was about five and a half minutes into our first interview as part of Melissa's story about the history of the UHWC and its new beginning. Melissa explained:

> And so we built a writing center. What was controversial at the time, that someone who is no longer here at UofH said, 'you're going to get in trouble for that.' We charged for our services. Not everybody, you know, students could come in, walk-in consultations, but, for example, if a large college wanted to have their students come to the WC, we said, we will develop a program with your faculty and work with your students. Now, I'm talking about a lot of students—Law, College of Business—but you have to pay us, because we'll have to pay the writing consultants who will work with them [students]. And, nobody was doing that at the time, and you know, it worked. And now, we're still doing that and, what's interesting about it is, the College of Business, for example, likes to say that they outsource the teaching of writing to the writing center. And that makes it a more objective kind of process. And, so, that's the very basic. First customers were the Law School and Business, other than the students who would drop in for walk-ins.

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[20] A copy of this article was given to me by Melissa after one of our interviews.

Since this seemed central to the UHWC's approach, while at the same time being fascinating, disturbing, and a little confusing to me, I asked Melissa how colleges like business respond to being charged for partnerships. In her response, she explained that the larger colleges "don't mind [paying] at all" because they think of their work with the UHWC as a kind of "outsourcing…[to] writing experts," which colleges then believe "gives them more legitimacy." Melissa also said that the "cost estimate" is part of the WAC/WID partnership process in that when they begin conversations with university administrators and disciplinary faculty, the UHWC explains that the money needed in order to carry out the project will require the hiring/paying of more consultants at a particular hourly rate. Melissa explained that especially when potential partners from large colleges approach them after the semester has started, the UHWC has already planned its semester and thus the additional project "is not in our [the UHWC's] budget." Thus, the UHWC must hire additional consultants and that is what they charge departments for, "we're not making any money, we're just paying for the people who are going to be in charge for that project—the writing consultants," Melissa said, "and they [the partners] accept it."

When smaller colleges with fewer students and less money approach the UHWC about working with their students, Melissa explains that they try to work with them, supporting the projects from grant money and endowments, since "there's a lot of areas that just don't have any money so we'll do it, you know, gratis. But the big schools, the big colleges who do, and have 800 students, let's say, in a class, like the gen bus class, they don't mind paying." In some of these large, college- or department-level partnerships, the UHWC has over 600 student interactions in a single semester.[21] While even now Melissa recognizes

[21] Rather than tracking the number of students seen, the UofH Writing Center measures it's activity in terms of "student interactions" or number of times that each student interacts with a consultant in a one-on-one or group

and seems to understand why this practice seems controversial to some, she also argues, "I don't know many writing centers that see the number of students that we see either."

Melissa's vision for the UHWC, its move outside of the English Department, and its entrepreneurial model have all led to its growth over the past decade[22]. More recently in 2012, the UHWC also experienced two important moves: the first being an institutional move from under the leadership of the Dean of the College of Arts and Social Sciences to a position under the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Student Success, and the second, a physical move out of Agnes Arnold Hall (a building occupied by the College of Arts and Social Sciences) and into the Insperity Building (a Bauer College of Business building). The UHWC's new physical space places them on the newer side of campus, closer to the new student activity centers, the other Bauer College of Business buildings, and the law school, and far away from the Department of English, which is housed in the oldest building on campus.

The UHWC takes up about 70 percent of the second floor of the Insperity building, consisting of two large meeting rooms with small, round tables (often used for one-on-one general consultations), two smaller private rooms (often used for graduate consultations and small group partnership meetings), a small library, a large computer classroom (used as a TA office for the hybrid/studio first year writing partnership), six individual offices for staff members, and a central office that has a front desk, the offices of UHWC upper-management (including the executive and associate directors), the technology director, a nice kitchen, and

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setting. For the GENB 4350 (Business Writing Tutorial), which consisted of individual consultations, there were 683 interactions in Fall 2013 and 618 in Spring 2014, according to the WC's 2014 Annual Report. More details about this partnership are described in the faculty interview with Dean Kyle in Chapter 3.

[22] As of 2014, the UHWC had worked with all of the university's twelve colleges, except for the College of Optometry.

a storage closet that also functions as the "consultant break room." The consulting rooms have new computers, whiteboards, and clean white walls.

The other 30 percent of the Insperity Building's second floor is taken up by the university-wide testing company, the Center for Academic Support and Assessment, or CASA, a place where students are required to schedule and take exams outside of designated class times. During especially busy times of the semester (i.e., midterms and finals weeks), a line of nervous students wraps around the hallway as they wait to drop off their belongings, provide their fingerprint, and take their tests.

We are, perhaps, a bit far from the writing center grand narrative's concept of the "writing center as cozy home," made evident through writing center practitioners' use of adjectives to describe the Center such as, "soft, calming, welcoming, comfortable, attractive, familiar, non-threatening, and friendly" (Grutsch McKinney, 2013, 23).

Writing Center as Consulting Firm: A Partnership Approach

One unique feature of the UHWC that I believe is directly linked to its ability to work with many departments across campus is its staffing and leadership model. In addition to Melissa working as the Executive Director, the administrative team in Fall 2015 also included an Associate Director, a Technology Director, and eight middle-administrators (including four assistant directors, one program manager, and three program coordinators), [23] in addition to two part-time web developers and twenty-two consultants. The middle-administrators are the ones that make the partnerships function in that they are primarily involved with coordinating with the university administrators or disciplinary faculty,

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[23] These titles, although they seem different, all cover the same kind of job, according to the UHWC staff. Thus, I decided to group them together as middle-administrators. In using this term, I intentionally evoke the concept of "middle managers" as developed by James Paul Gee, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear's *The New Work Order: Behind the language of the new capitalism.*

training/preparing consultants to work with students in the partnerships, supervising/advising the interactions between consultants and students, and keeping track of assessment/follow-up reflections. Although they rarely work directly with students themselves, middle-administrators seem essential to making the UHWC work.

One particularly useful way to think about how these various tiers of writing center staff work together was shared with me by Sam (Associate Director).[24] Sam first described the UHWC as a "hybrid or heterodox of a service center, a program development center, project management, almost like a consulting firm for faculty and administrators, and we also contribute to curriculum development." He then extended this idea to include the following:

Especially in terms of the WC professional, I think a lot of times in terms of engineering, and how an engineer basically looks at systems and functions. The function that we're trying to accomplish is student education/development in terms of writing. And, that's kind of the easy part. The hard part is to allocate limited resources and use the existing systems in order to achieve that outcome, and a lot of times, it's because our students are limited in the time that they can devote to things, they're limited in their motivation…writing is not always a high priority for them, so one thing creative administrators do is try to create a motivational structure to try and get students to commit as much as possible. So thinking of things like incentives and requirements, you know. Connecting the writing program to the existing requirements so that there's an efficiency to the system, so there's a lot of administration that sort of functions like engineering, especially where we're dealing with relatively large numbers of students. And there are, literally, systems that have to get integrated. Our

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[24] In January 2016, Sam retired from his position as the Associate Director of the UHWC to focus on writing a book.

WC relies especially on the online scheduling system, but then also local area

network resources for file management and web-based databases, we have an

intranet. All of those things are to try to use the systems to create efficiency so that

our most valuable resource—which is the writing consultants—spend most of their

time in contact with students. Again, that's kind of the engineering function of trying

to use as many systems as possible to enable the one function that has a really hard

limit on it—the hourly workers, we can only work them so many hours, and there

seems to be a natural limit in terms of how many students we can find who are suited

to the work.

Sam's explanation suggests that the middle-administrators are key in helping the system of

the UHWC function so that the consultants can work with students. This metaphor also fits

well with Melissa's (executive director) description of the UHWC as a kind of "consulting

firm" where consultants work as "independent contractors" who are "in charge of their job."

Similarly, other middle managers, like Jeremy, described the UHWC as "follow[ing] more of

a corporate model…it's very much like we call our tutors consultants, they [students] can

make an appointment, and you can cancel and reschedule, and it kind of sounds like a

doctor's office. That's not necessarily a bad thing, because it's very efficient."[25]

The UHWC's WAC/WID partnership approach must be understood within this

context. In particular, the UHWC seems to develop partnerships by working from an

approach that values the following:

(1) A sense of shared ownership and decision-making

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[25] During our interview, Jeremy also described the UHWC as a crossroads and as "quirky," "like a grandma's quilt."

- Collaboration among disciplinary faculty, UHWC administrators, consultants, and student writers not outsourcing

(2) An awareness of the transactional exchange that occurs from the pooling of skills and resources from all parties involved, and

- Recognizing the disciplinary faculty's and students' expertise in content knowledge and the UHWC administrators' and consultants' expertise in writing[26]
- Creating a plan with a cost estimate

(3) The negotiation of relational terms, including each partner's responsibilities, expectations, risks, and rewards

- Regular conversations among all parties involved throughout the term of the project and continual flexibility to adapt when necessary
- Clear about expectations and what's possible

This approach also requires close attention to local context and an awareness of the need to build unique,[27] context-based, discipline-specific partnerships across campus with a variety of partners. Based on the UHWC's 2014 annual report, the following partnerships have been established:

Table 1: UHWC Partnerships (for a complete list with descriptions, see Appendix C)

Approach	Disciplinary Partners
Discipline-Specific (includes WFPs)	Architecture; Biology; Biotechnology;

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[26] This component of partnership seems predicated on the separation of content knowledge from writing (form).

[27] UHWC administrative staff discussed the partnerships in terms of "uniqueness" multiple times during my interviews with them. Hannah (middle-administrator) is was perhaps most adamant about it, explaining that there is "not a prescribed model…instead, partnerships could take place in any way that they [faculty] wanted." Uniqueness seems to serve as an important selling point for partnerships.

Consultants receive context-specific training to work within a particular discipline or course so that they can work with faculty on assignment design and help students with writing projects.	Business (undergraduate); College of Education; Digital Media; Economics; Marketing; ELET; History; Math; Nutrition; Women's Studies/GLBT
Writing Studio Consultants meet with students outside of class to work on writing assignments and facilitate group peer review.	Art History; English; College of Technology; History; Honor's College (thesis writing groups)
Assessment-based[28] Middle-administrators design student-writing assessment and work with faculty to create writing support based on the results.	Business (MBA and undergraduate); Graduate College of Social Work; College of Education Teacher Education Program, Law Center, College of Technology
Workshop-based Middle-administrators design workshops to take place inside or outside of class to fit particular departmental writing needs	Business (undergraduate); Biology; History; College of Pharmacy; Political Science; Graduate Student Writers
Community Outreach Program/project managers and consultants work with students/clients outside UH to	Wheatley HS; Kashmere HS; Rice University Religious Studies; Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics

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[28] Here, the UHWC seems to focus on pre-partnership assessment via an "assess and address" approach. In my research, I came across only one assessment of student writing post-partnership. While the UHWC seems to emphasize assessment, and "action based research" as Sam describes it, most of it tends to focus on student satisfaction and perceived usefulness of UHWC services, rather than on student writing. A further consideration of the UHWC and assessment is given in the final section of this chapter.

improve their writing.	(TIMES) Research Division
Staff Development, Mentoring, Training[29] Often facilitated by the Associate Director and experienced staff members, these workshops are most often single events focused on professional development.	Bauer College of Business Staff Professional Development; Hybrid Instructor Orientation for English; Hybrid Facilitator Development for English;

Table 1 shows the wide variety of ways the UHWC has collaborated with departments and

colleges across campus, in addition to working with nearby high schools and other colleges.

These approaches take place in face-to-face and online environments, both one-on-one, and

in small groups. Thus, the UHWC does present itself as an "open-minded" place, to quote

Melissa again, that is willing to employ a variety of methods for writing instruction and

support. The partnership-approach to working with university administrators and disciplinary

faculty moves the UHWC's counternarrative far beyond the writing center grand narrative's

emphasis on one-on-one tutoring for students.

Challenging the Writing Center Grand Narrative: The UHWC as Counterstory

The UHWC's partnership approach to working with university administrators and

disciplinary faculty depends on a shared sense of ownership and decision-making, an

awareness of the transactional (and sometimes monetary) exchange that occurs from the

pooling of skills and resources, and the negotiation of relational terms and ongoing

communication. This conflicts with the writing center grand narrative's focus on a place

"where all students go to get one-on-one tutoring on their writing," in that administrators and

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[29] In addition, under "Faculty Services" on the UHWC website, the Center offers assistance with curriculum design, student writing support models, research and assessment, rubric development, and teaching assistant training.

faculty use the Center too, and the consultants' work goes far beyond solely one-on-one tutoring.

In this section, I tell the UHWC counternarrative as it directly challenges three key elements of the writing center grand narrative: the idea of the WC as a place engaged in "tutoring," the WC as a place "where all students go," and the idea of the WC as "iconoclastic."

This story, although only one "'small narrative of [a] specific group'" (Olson and Lyotard qtd. in Grutsch McKinney p. 86), has much potential to accrue alongside other small narratives (Bruner 1991; Grutsch McKinney 2013). As Grutsch McKinney writes, "if we make a point of collecting or hearing individual stories, we might add instantiations of counterstories to the grand narrative" (86), thus providing a more dynamic representations of the work we do in Centers.

Here is one such story.

*"*Not Just Tutoring": Teaching Writing as Thinking and Curriculum Design

Perhaps the strongest point of conflict was the rejection of writing center work as tutoring. In response to all four questions, at least one interviewee disputed this common assumption that writing centers "just tutor." The strongest voice seemed to be that of the executive director, Melissa. After describing the reach of the UHWC and the ways in which its participated in the training of teaching assistants in particular, she says:

> It's more than just tutoring writing. It's hard to get that concept shunted aside and then talk about the other concepts, but it's a lot more than that…I feel really comfortable in saying that we have done a pretty good job teaching writing on campus.

When Melissa discusses how the UHWC works with students, she uses the term "metacognitive awareness." Melissa explained this concept four separate times during our interview, yet most succinctly as "showing them [students] how to think about writing and talk about writing."

The method that the UHWC uses, according to Melissa is "the talking cure," which she describes in the following scenario:

> To get to the point, how we do what we do, we call it the talking cure, like Freud. And, the writing consultants, part of their training [is learning the talking cure]. I'll give you an example. One of the things that they're told is not to hold the students' paper longer than a minute or so. To take a look at it, hand it back to the student, and say, 'What is it that you're trying to say?'…And that works, because then the student gets engaged and tells the writing consultant what he or she is trying to say, or needs to say, or wants to say. And the writing consultants will very gently say sometimes, 'Well what you just said now, to me, verbally is not what you wrote on this paper. Write it like you just said it'…oftentimes they [students] have problems between the thinking and the putting down of what they're thinking…And so the relationship between the writing consultant and the student…is paramount. I mean it's everything.

While "the talking cure" as described by Melissa may sound to us like an approach to tutoring, her emphasis on the metacognitive here makes the exchange between consultant and student writer more nuanced. For instance, before the conversation even begins in the above scenario, Melissa's description suggests the subtle power relations that often precede the start of the session itself. The interaction begins with the student writer handing the paper over to the consultant, and the consultant looking at it briefly, handing it back, and then engaging the

student writer in conversation about the writing itself. Then, the work of the consultant involves trying to determine whether or not the student writers' verbal ideas are represented clearly in the students' writing. The consultant then reaffirms the student writers' thinking and tells him/her to rewrite/revise based on how the ideas were presented verbally to the consultant.

Similarly, Anne (middle-administrator), Hannah (middle-administrator), Max (middle-administrator), and Sam (associate director) challenge the idea of writing center work as tutoring. Anne's language and sentiment is very similar to Melissa's. Anne explains: "The writing center does more than just tutoring, we are raising in students a meta-cognitive awareness of writing." Hannah, in her explanation of how the UHWC differs from other Centers, begins by saying "we're a lot more advanced than just walk-in services." Although "walk-in services" does not necessarily refer to tutoring, the phrase is part of the UHWC's history and its earlier approach, where student writers either walked in and met with a consultant immediately or called and made appointments. Since it began more formally partnering with departments across campus in 2008 the UHWC no longer functions via walk-ins at all; students must make an appointment at least 48 hours in advance to meet with a consultant for a general consultation.[30]

In terms of activity, both Max (middle-administrator) and Sam (associate director) offer alternatives to tutoring by using other language to talk about writing center work. First, Max suggests that writing center is a place where "there are a variety of approaches to teaching writing that compliment writing instruction." Like Melissa (executive director),[31]

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[30] General Consultation is the language used by the UHWC to mean a one-on-one session between a student writer and a consultant that is not directly linked with a class or program.

[31] In other moments during my interviews with Melissa, she hesitates to use the term "teach" to describe what consultants do with students, although an explanation as to why she resists this term is never offered.

Max sees writing centers as places for the "teaching" of writing occurs and where various approaches can be used. Sam these various approaches as both "curriculum development and faculty development," thus making the writing center "function as a program development resource." Because of their emphasis on working with faculty in the disciplines, Sam explains that "we go beyond standard practice by transcending the three standard concepts of university education: faculty, course, and semester." Here, Sam's idea of "standard practice" can be better understood in context of his earlier comment about what makes the UHWC similar to others: "I don't think you can call something a writing center if you don't have writing tutors meeting with students to work on their writing." Yet for him, "beyond standard practice" also means beyond common approaches to university educational structures.

Sam suggests that the UHWC's collaborations with faculty across campus upsets the traditional faculty-teacher and student dynamic (perhaps by introducing WC administrator and peer consultant into the relationship); the concept of course or classroom as site of instruction (opening up the WC as an additional teaching space), and extending beyond the semester as timeframe). During other moments in our interviews, Sam talks about his UHWC work as facilitating assessment at the programmatic level (i.e., all students within a college are assessed during years one and four); creating a writing portfolio project that must be "cleared" in order for students in one particular college to graduate; and departmental collaborations that include UHWC partnerships linked to multiple courses within a particular college. Although none are quite as detailed as Sam, all ten interviewees mention the UHWC's work with faculty/administrators in departments across campus, and eight of the interviewees are directly responsible for managing multiple WID partnerships.

"Not Just for Students": Writers, Administrators, and Faculty in the Center

In her description of what a writing center is, Anne (middle-administrator) explains the writing center in the following way:

The writing center functions as a third space—a voluntary interaction where students can focus on writing as a discipline. Writers don't often get to work on writing when they aren't in the classroom; the classroom isn't very focused on student writers writing. Instead, in the classroom they are students and it's hard for them to get out of that role, but in the writing center they are writer, not students. Thinking of them as students can be limiting. At the writing center, you can focus on writing as a discipline, or writing as its own discipline.

Here, Anne talks about the writing center as a place for writers who aren't constrained or defined by the classroom or their role in the classroom as students of other disciplines. Instead, the writing center functions as a space where writers can choose to act and focus on specifically on writing.

Similarly, Melissa (executive director) argues student writers can build confidence in the Center and that it is part of the consultant's responsibility to help them do so. Melissa explains:

You don't want to take ownership of their paper. They want you to take ownership of the paper because they lack condolence in their writing. And if somebody asked me 'what do you think is the best thing you do?' I think the best thing we do is help the students who come to us gain confidence in their ability to write well, or to at least write coherently.

Thus, refusing to take ownership of student writing and, instead, working with the student writer to help him/her write more coherently is one of the "best" or most important practices at the UHWC, according to its executive director.

Dan (middle-administrator) also describes the importance of working with students so that when they leave the Center, they "feel empowered and more capable of accomplishing tasks in writing effectively overall." This idea of confidence and empowerment seems related to what Jeremy (middle-administrator) deems central to any writing center's mission. He claims that:

> Regardless of what the student is working on, even if only implicitly, we work from an awareness that the student will have to write in the future, regardless of discipline or major, and thus the writing center is always helping students with their academic and professional goals in some way.

Thus, Jeremy imagines his work with student writers as having a reach beyond a single classroom or the particular writing assignment. In a sense, this seems reminiscent of Sam's claim about the way the writing center transcends traditional university structures. Thus, the UHWC's attempt to help students with their greater academic and professional goals is perhaps linked, even if implicitly, to getting them to think of themselves as confident and as writers.

In addition to working with students as writers, the UHWC works primarily via collaborative partnerships that involve the Center, students, and faculty. All interviewees mentioned working with faculty/staff as part of the WC's reach, describing their work with faculty/administrators as focused on student writing, assignment design, the development of rubrics and evaluation criteria and breaking a single major writing assignment into smaller

parts (i.e., helping instructors scaffold formal writing assignments). In one of my interviews with Melissa, she voiced frustration with departments that put pressure on the UHWC to actually grade papers because they wanted to outsource their writing instruction. Yet, Melissa (executive director) pushes back:

> So, they [some departments] think teaching writing, sometimes, not everybody, is having someone who knows how to grade a paper, grade the paper, and that someone is the writing center. Well, we just don't. We're not going to go there, and we might set up a rubric, grade a couple of papers according to the rubric, and give them back to the department, and that generally works.

Here, Melissa suggests a few ways that the UHWC helps to change the way faculty in the disciplines think about writing. In particular, they aid faculty in creating tools to make evaluation of student writing better and even give them some examples of what such evaluation might look like. This kind of work takes place oftentimes absent of direct student interaction.

In addition, the UHWC helps instructors not only articulate their expectations for student writing, but also to share those expectations explicitly with students. Hannah (middle-administrator) provides multiple scenarios in which such guidance is needed. She explains that at first, most instructors aren't clearly communicating what they want to their students. However, working with the UHWC helps instructors realize how others view their assignments and shows them that they cannot assume that students already know what they expect. Hannah also explains the importance of teaching instructors to develop rubrics and formats for helping evaluate student writing. She also tells them "you can know what you want and tell them too," joking that she'd love to have such a saying on a bumper sticker to

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hand out to faculty in the disciplines. Hannah also acknowledges that this process isn't always so simple. Oftentimes, faculty don't really know what they want students to achieve in their writing, and sometimes the process must begin with "throwing away something that's been part of the institution for a while" which is a challenging first step for most.

Writing Center as Growing Service: Working With, Not Against, the Institution

One key aspect of the UHWC is its continued growth. All ten of the UHWC administrators interviewed mentioned the Center's reach across campus. Melissa (executive director) explains this as one of the ways in which the UHWC is different from other Centers. She explains:

> We never say no to anything…we look at every project not just as a challenge, but
>
> how can we make it really work, since the professor or department that bring sit to us
>
> may just have an idea with no idea how to bring it to fruition, so we help with that.

This kind of customization is in part what the UHWC partnership approach to working with faculty across the disciplines is all about, and something that differentiates it from other Centers. The UHWC's concept of growth is also tied to a key element of its overall mission: functioning as a university service.

While "writing center as service" is often linked to marginality, in these interviews, it is instead linked to a far reaching Center that has ample resources. This breaks from the writing center grand narrative's emphasis on iconoclasm. In particular, Grutsch McKinney explains that iconoclasm comes from the idea of an iconoclast, someone who "resists the university system as an institution" via "reject[ing] the dominant pedagogies and relationships encouraged in the institution…compos[ing] their spaces in particular ways to mark them as non-traditional classroom spaces" (36). Iconoclasm is evident in the use of

adjectives such as, "alternative, insolent, rebellious, different, non-traditional, [and] (non)

marginal" (36). The UHWC instead emphasizes professionalism, consulting, clients,

collaboration, and partnerships, all words that align with the university (and especially with

the corporate university).

One way the UHWC puts service ahead of resistance is in their insistence on never

questioning the word of the instructor. Although both Melissa and Lindsay touched on this

idea during interviews, it is stated most clearly in the UHWC Consultant Handbook, in the

section "Conducting a Writing Consultation." The handbook states:

> We retain a strict policy of neutrality in the Writing Center. *Do not under any*
>
> *circumstance criticize or undermine an instructor, teaching assistant, course, grade*
>
> *or assignment.* If a student starts in that direction, remain objective and refocus the
>
> student to what he/she can do to improve the piece of writing at hand and him/herself
>
> as a writer.

Therefore, the UHWC discourages consultants from questioning the university or using non-

traditional approaches that do not align with particular instructors and assignments.

Traces of the Writing center grand narrative in the UHWC Counterstory

Although the UHWC counter-story presents an overall challenge to the writing center

grand narrative, it does perpetuate some elements. These elements became visible when

interviewees were asked about how the UHWC was similar to other Centers. The idea of the

WC as a "place where all students go to get one-on-one tutoring on their writing" appeared in

some variation among all ten interviewees. This part of the writing center grand narrative

was presented most fully in Sam's (associate director) response:

We're similar in that we're a service provider, where students come to get help, a

tutoring shop. We also offer individualized service to students. I don't think you can

call something a writing center if you don't have writing tutors meeting with students

to work on their writing.

In this instance, Sam forwards an important part of the writing center grand narrative, in

particular the function of the WC as a place for students to get individualized help with their

writing from a tutor. His phrasing suggests this may be more so a quality among all WCs,

rather than a sufficient way to describe the UHWC.

Like Sam, Hannah (middle-administrator) also suggests that the writing center is "a

place where students can go to get help with their writing" via "the peer-to-peer model," yet

she uses this language to describe what a writing center is. The most prominent element of

this part of the writing center grand narrative was the idea that the writing center is a place

for students to "work on their writing." Hannah, Lindsay (middle-administrator), and Dan

(middle-administrator) described the WC particularly this way. None of the interviewees

described the writing center as place where students work on multimodal forms of writing,

including those that have visual and/or oral elements, even though my own observations of

UHWC sessions suggest otherwise.

More prevalent than the writing center grand narrative in their talk, the UHWC

administrators argue that the UHWC is similar to other Centers in terms of how it functions

operationally. For example, Jeremy (middle-administrator) explains that the UHWC "has

similar policies, like you have to make an appointment, uses WCOnline, and is tied to the

university." Lindsay (middle-administrator) adds similar items to the list, including having

"prescribed time limits for appointments," but she also understands similarities in terms of

"letting writers who come for help know what expectations they should have realistically, we don't offer line editing services, we can't comment on course content." Here, Lindsay suggests that the UHWC is similar to others in terms of how they describe what writing centers do and don't do to students (i.e., we do not line edit or comment on course content).

While there were a few ways that the UHWC counterstory aligned with the writing center grand narrative, there were far more ways that it conflicts with or complicates it. In particular, the UHWC counterstory extends the idea of writing center work as "tutoring students" to include working with writers on meta-cognitive growth, professional development, and confidence building; aiding faculty in curriculum/programmatic design; and expanding its reach as a university service center.

Consultants Building Bridges: Undergraduate Peer Tutors Create A Community of Practice[32]

During my interview with Jeremy (middle-administrator), he showed the most excitement when he spoke about the Writing Center Reading Group that he helped start as a senior consultant several years ago. Designed in part to supplement the middle-administrator-led In-Service professional development sessions overseen by the associate director, [33] the reading group's purpose is to "offer consultants what we would be offering if they had to take a writing center class…because they are reading more about writing center theory," according to Jeremy. He leads reading groups, along with another consultant-turned-middle

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[32] In using this term, I intentionally evoke Etienne Wenger's 1991 concept drawn from the field of cognitive anthropology and the value of having those who share a particular craft or activity getting together and sharing their experiences with the group. To see more about how Wenger's concept applies to writing centers, see *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice* by Anne Ellen Geller, Michelle Eodice, Frankie Condon, Meg Carroll, and Elizabeth Boquet.

[33] According to Jeremy, in-services are cut and dry, practice-based, long-standing, hour long lecture/presentations that are rarely interactive, with the exception of an occasional short activity or writing task. Full-time UHWC staff members take turns leading in-services, yet tend to repeat the same topics and lessons over and over again. Topics for in-services included: the resistant writer, strategies for working with ELL students, writing center work and hospitality, and learning from failure.

administrator staff member who is also relatively new in her full-time position. Reading

groups occur between four and six times every semester as an informal, book-group like

conversation over a short piece of writing center scholarship, drawn from journals like *The*

Writing Center Journal, *Praxis, Pedagogy, College English*, and *College Composition and*

Communication. Eventually, reading groups became a more formalized part of consultant

training, in that consultants could attend either reading groups or in-services to meet

professional development requirements, for which they were also paid.

Although it was a goal of mind to find, explore, and participate in the unofficial

culture of the UHWC, the organization of the space made doing so a challenge. For instance,

there is no office for the consultants. Instead, they have a "Storage Closet/Breakroom" in the

main office right behind the font desk and behind the kitchen. This space is always quite

public, and is hardly used. Otherwise, the consultants gather at a long table in the back of the

main consulting room, but usually talk in low whispers, if at all, since multiple consultations

with students are going on around them. Thus, the best opportunity I had to explore the

UHWC's "unofficial culture" was by attending the Reading Group gatherings.

As part of my research for this dissertation and also as part of my assigned work as a

Writing Center Pedagogy and Program Development Fellow, I attended most in-services and

all reading groups.[34] This approach allowed me to understand the consultants as a community

by way of hearing them interact with one another in a group setting. Thus, I heard them agree

with one another, raise questions, challenge one another, and speak from their own

experiences, pointing out connections and conflicts along the way. Although I still found this

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[34] Although I originally intended to interview consultants (and did conduct some), I found greater value in observing the reading groups as a way of understanding the consultants collectively. Since this year there were more new consultants than experienced ones, I worried that one-on-one interviews about the UHWC may be uncomfortable and perhaps seem premature to newer members of the UHWC staff.

to be a bit of a constructed setting in that the consultants were attending a professional development activity, it was the best opportunity I had to gather with them and listen to them interact without much oversight from the UHWC upper-administrators or senior staff members.

In preparation for Fall 2015 reading group sessions, we read the work of Lester Faigley, Barbara Schapiro, David Bartholomae, Muriel Harris, Bonnie Devet, and John Nordlof published in wide range of journals including *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal, Pedagogy,* from *Journal of Basic Writing, College English,* and *The Writing Center Journal.*

As a participant-observer who started out as quiet and became more active as time went on, I was blown away by the quality of sophistication of the conversations among the consultants. Jeremy and Anne, both middle-administrator leaders, took on non-directive roles, raising questions and encouraging participation, but ultimately, leaving the direction of conversations up to the consultants themselves, who felt comfortable raising their own questions, disagreeing with one another, and using their own experiences, both with and as student writers to support their claims and responses. These consultants, who were primarily undergraduate students but included some recent graduates, brought a critical eye to these texts and challenged claims made by these scholars using their own experiences.

For instance, during a reading group focused on Harris' text, consultants raised questions first about how Harris distinguished between the roles of instructor vs. tutor. One consultant (Sydney) criticized Harris' argument that students cannot come up with their own knowledge within a classroom, because, from her own experience, the best teachers were those who understood pedagogy and the value of activities liked small-group work. Another consultant (Clint) asked whether students see consultants as teachers who hold academic

authority and expertise, and questioned if, while debunking such perceptions (like tutor as writing expert) is nice, does it actually lead to the tutor losing credibility? As we continued our discussion about when consultants might embrace the role of expert and when they might distance themselves from it, a new consultant (Claire) offered another way of thinking through the expert/non-expert (or, perhaps, peer) role:

> It seems difficult to imagine us [consultants] as a bridge. Instead, maybe the bridge is like the writing process, even if it's rickety and not as functional, the consultant is making it a little more concrete and safer to cross. [The consultant is] not really a bridge or a translator, but fills in the gaps that people don't have the knowledge for yet.

The conversation eventually moved to the second text, Devet's, at which point students discussed their understanding of discipline-specific and genre-based writing. Felicia, an experienced graduate student consultant, explained that she "[had] a problem with seeing that the discipline accommodates the writer—instead, it's usually the writer who has to accommodate to the discipline, but the discipline does not accommodate to the writer." She argued that assuming the writer shaped the discipline (and thus, genres), was a "romanticized" way of understanding disciplines, because "when new students come to the university, they don't necessarily feel that they can contribute [and] instead we as tutors can help them find their own voices—'you can be a good writer if you know how to express your thoughts clearly.'" Tim then chimed in, asking "is that [contributing to and shaping disciplines/genres] really the job of the student at the undergraduate level?" Sydney responded by sharing what she often tells students:

I tell them [students] a lot that it isn't necessarily their job to be perfect. They don't have to contribute hugely ground-breaking ideas. Instead, it's about developing skills more so than aiming for a product. It's more vocational than we want to admit. And, genre expectations are primarily constrained by professors.

Max, the only middle-administrator who participated in reading groups other than the leaders (Jeremy and Anne) during Fall 2015,[35] told Sydney that he thought the vocational approach seemed "more honest and less manipulative." As the conversation continued, the consultants questioned the extent to which non-traditional students are really trying to master a discipline or genre or if they're "just trying to finish," whether or not the idea of metagenre could be multidisciplinary, and whether tutoring from a metagenre approach reinforces formulaic, rather than creative, approaches to writing.

During another reading group discussion focused on Bartholomae's text, consultants questioned the use of the term "basic writer" as a label for student writers, raised questioned about how academic discourse is related to privilege, asked how students are expected to contribute to the university when the system itself is so focused on that which is quantifiable, argued about how contributing to the university by replicating it is an "act of violence" for those who do not come from privileged backgrounds and instead want to offer new discourses (and informed by fields like queer theory), questioned whether or not teachers can read as audience rather than as intellectual/academic critic, and agued for the value in "butting heads with professors" as a valuable (rather than harmful, even though it's prohibited by the UHWC guidelines) because of the way that it allows consultants and student writers to "bond over shared attitude," among other things.

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[35] Lindsey did attend the reading groups, but she never participated. Once, Jeremy even attempted to bring her into the conversation, yet she said that she "wasn't feeling well enough to talk."

The Values and Limits of a Business Minded Writing Center: Implications for Future Research and Practice

In this chapter, I have shown how the UHWC operates from a business-model mindset in its approach to working with university administrators and disciplinary faculty. While this approach has successfully led to the UHWC's reach across campus, it also seems to place greater focus on administrator/faculty satisfaction than on student writing support and progress. In addition, the UHWC provides a counternarrative to the writing center grand narrative (Grutsch McKinney), which suggests that it operates differently from most other writing centers. Yet, the extent to which the UHWC's narrative may be similar to the direction in which most WCs are moving is yet to be determined, since the writing center grand narrative was established based on survey data from 2011. I have also shown how the undergraduate consultants, through a ground-up established reading group, have created an intellectual community within the UHWC that was perhaps not there prior to its existence.

The UHWC states that its mission includes assessment, writing instruction, curricular innovation, community outreach, development, and research in the teaching of writing (in that order, per the UHWC website that was created January 2016). Much of this approach depends on its emphases on innovation, partnership, and staff structure that includes middle-administrators. The concept of "partnership" has not received much attention in the field of rhetoric and composition, with the exception of a few texts technical communication and service-learning/community-based research (Bridgeford and St. Amant; Carpenter; Nall and Taylor; Bulmner and Childers).

Most recently in *Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships*, Tracy Bridgeford and Kirk St. Amant argue that creating partnerships between academia and industry is

essential "for strength and sustainability as a field [technical communication]" and that both can come together over a "shared goal…in job placement" (v). Although these editors recognize that industry and academia are often perceived to be very different in terms of culture, values, and attention to research, they still insist that there is much potential in developing academy-industry partnerships. These researchers do not develop a particular kind of "partnership approach," but rather use this language to talk about the ways in which academy and industry can work together. While the use of "partnership" and its business-like connotations may lead to operating like corporation or industry, it also seems to communicate well across colleges. With Bridgeford's and St. Amant's research in mind, it's no wonder that the UHWC was able to establish strong partnerships with the College of Business and the College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, among others.

Although my research focused specifically on the workings within one particular writing center, it offers implications that may anticipate where some writing centers/programs are headed, especially because of the way that it takes a site Center that embraces pressures set by the corporate university and operates according to them.[36] In addition, the UHWC, despite its reach and the investment that many colleges have made in it, still acts under the fear of possibly being wiped out by upper administration. Melissa (executive director) even said at the beginning of the semester orientation in Fall 2015 that she was trying to get the UHWC endowed and did not want to retire until she had done so. Thus, the pressure to make itself valuable to university life is understandable, and my intention is not to criticize the way the UHWC exists within that reality. In addition, the

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[36] In thinking beyond the University Writing Center, Departments of English and Writing Programs are increasingly developing Writing Studies and Professional Writing majors at the undergraduate level, perhaps making our relationship with technical communication (and perhaps through that focus, industry) not only key to the sustainability of English Departments, but also crucial in helping us create visions for how such programs can/should operate.

University of Houston, both in terms of its diverse student population and its recent move to be recognized as a research institution via its recent promotion to tier-one status, may be representative of how many universities and colleges are trying to progress today. This research suggests that there are benefits and drawbacks from conceiving of the writing center as a consulting firm, that WCs required to function also as WAC/WID centers struggle to balance both faculty and student needs, that WC assessment may be too focused on student satisfaction and perceived confidence building rather than on quality of student writing, and that undergraduate peer consultants offer valuable nuances to our (counter)narratives. Hence, the following implications can be drawn from this chapter:

(1) Writing Centers may benefit from acting as a consulting firm that operates outside of the English Department via WAC/WID partnerships, but there are also some drawbacks. The business-model approach to partnering with colleges across campus seems to make sense to most of the UHWC's partners. Thus, the UHWC can build relationships by using a model that is familiar to university administrators. Since its first large scale partnerships began with reputable colleges like the Law School, Bauer College of Business, and Hotel and Restaurant Management, the UHWC was able to use such examples to help set a model for future collaborations.

One reason why the UHWC has been able to function this way is because of its separation from the Department of English. Conversations about where WCs should be located have a long and complicated history in the field. For instance, writing centers have long been places with a "history as not a place but a method" (Boquet 466) and as "a gap in the university structure" (Hemmeter 42). This is significant since, as Carol Haviland, Carmen Fye, and Richard Colby point out, "location is political because it is an organizational choice

that creates visibility or invisibility, access to resources, and associations that define the meanings, uses, and users of designated spaces" (85).

Such locations are usually influenced by the WC's proximity to certain departments, the English department or writing programs, campus wide tutoring centers, student service organizations, second-language learner programs, residence halls, and libraries. Because of their lack of locatedness, WCs must establish themselves via networking across departments and within various student services. While building such relationships isn't necessarily a bad thing and can indeed be very beneficial (see Macauley and Mauriello), the larger institutional valuing of academic capitalism makes it difficult to sustain such relationships in ways that support students.

While the UHWC's split from the Department of English seemed necessary for allowing the WC much needed autonomy, allowing it to function as a truly University-wide Center, it also led to the UHWC developing its own non-academic (and non-intellectual) approach to assessment and research. Since none of the staff are in tenured or tenure-track positions that value and require research, the UHWC does not conduct assessment or research that attempts to add to a broader field of knowledge. Instead, as Sam (associate director) put it:

> We have a number of full time staff who really are in the project management business, and that's what I mean, that everyone has to have action research as part of their approach to the job, so that we're always assessing our effectiveness. We assess our cost, we look at student progress and if something changes, we have the ability to measure…They [middle-administrators] don't have to force the research because they aren't required to publish. My own perception of faculty research is that some of it is

57

because it has to be done, and there's a sense of forcing it, whereas, as staff…it's

okay if nothing unique comes out of it, you know, you don't have to have a thesis,

you just have to have a measurement. If everything is going well, everything's going

well, whereas the faculty researchers are always looking for that gap in the research.

We don't care if this is unique or not…we can concentrate on project management

values without forcing the research agenda that tenured faculty would be forced to do.

Yet, Sam seems to be conflating research with assessment here. One middle-administrator

actually stated in an interview that the UHWC really needs to do more research, since

currently:

Research isn't seen as having much value, and this sometimes limits curricular

design. Then, in turn, the consultants are limited by not being able to do research, and

this negatively impacts individual staff members because there is too much repeated

work going on because not enough sharing of resources…without the academic basis,

the work of the WC becomes more about project management and not about

intellectual engagement—they worry about being successful as far as it needs to go

for the project, but then it stops. There's not an interest in engaging intellectually…

This lack of research actually ends up limiting what the writing center can do and under-

utilizes consultants as valuable contributors to the knowledge production and research that

could be taking place in the UHWC.

An additional limitation of following a more business-minded model is that it insists

on the separation of disciplinary-expert-faculty from writing-expert-writing center

consultants. The majority of UHWC staff I interviewed insisted on not referring to their work

as "teaching writing," with the exception of Max who defined the work of the WC in exactly

that way. For example, Melissa (executive director) at multiple moments, said things such as "I don't want to say teach, but we show them [students] how to think about writing and talk about writing," and another time "We work with students, I probably shouldn't use the word teach, but we work with students." Yet, many of the middle-administrators, as mentioned earlier, also say that they do "more than just tutor." This begs the question, if writing centers are not teaching but are doing more than tutoring, then what is it that they are doing?

In part, this was a way of maintaining the hierarchy between faculty and staff, between customers (who are always right) and service workers. Yet when the writing center encourages a culture where consultants are discouraged from thinking of themselves as writing teachers, an act that may contribute to the consultants' lack of confidence,[37] I wonder whether making themselves subservient to university administration and disciplinary faculty may ultimately prevent them from being the writing teachers that students need.

(2) When writing centers perform a dual function as both Writing Center and WAC/WID Center, they must figure out a way to balance faculty needs/requests with student needs/requests. This is because when college or departmental money is exchanged for writing center work, university administrators and disciplinary faculty become the customers worth pleasing and support for student writers may suffer. The UHWC functioned as both a writing center and a WAC/WID center, and was thus tasked with supporting faculty who were learning to teach writing and students who were learning to develop as college writers. Although these two purposes overlap, balancing attention and support between faculty and students can prove difficult. For example, in my interview with Hannah (middle-

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[37] Jeremy (middle-administrator) mentions that the consultants seem to lack confidence because they tend to "view themselves as on the same level as students," which can make their work especially challenging when they work with students in disciplinary fields vastly different from their own (i.e., history majors who work with engineering students).

administrator), she explained the value of having beginning and end of partnership meetings with the project manager, faculty, and consultants. Part of the value lies in the way that consultants point out where assignments are confusing, which in turn this helps instructors. Hannah explained:

> [consultants] tell the truth about how the students seemed…It's better to have the consultants because they don't have the fear 'Oh, this is my partner that I'm, you know, that they're paying us' so it becomes less of like a consulting firm and more of these consultants, who really don't have any direct tie to it, other than that they work with the students, any direct tie, I guess, to money…so they feel a bit more comfortable speaking the truth

Therefore, whenever possible, writing programs (and administrators, faculty, and students) will all benefit when WAC/WID programs are conceived of, supported, and run by WPAs whose job it is to focus particularly on administrative/faculty needs, thus allowing writing centers to remain focused on student writers. I do not mean to suggest that WAC/WID and Writing Center programs or initiatives function separately, but rather that when one Center is tasked with supporting administrators, faculty, and students, maintaining a fair balance is unlikely, and perhaps, impossible. We might ask, when WAC/WID and Writing Centers function as one entity, who benefits?

(3) Writing Center assessment may focus too much on student satisfaction and perceived gains in confidence/abilities and not enough on evaluating student writing. In *Building Writing Center Assessments that Matter*, Ellen Schendel and William J MacCauley offer advice for writing center directors about creating meaningful assessment that works from within already established, local writing center frameworks. While they offer a variety

of methods and examples of such methods in practice, these authors seem especially focused on the intended audience: readers of assessment reports, stakeholders (often university administrators) and writing center staff members. Although such audiences for writing center assessment cannot and should not be overlooked, this results in a lack of attention to assessing both the ways in which the teaching of writing is approached by those working in the Center, and also the kinds of feedback provided by writing center practitioners themselves.

In addition, Schendel and MacCauley seem more focused on preparing writing center directors to assess their own services and success, rather than on using student writing as a measure for reflecting the writing centers' approach to writing instruction. I found the same limitation in my own research of the UHWC, where an emphasis on assessment and "measurements," as Sam (associate director) called them, was without attention to how student writing changes (or doesn't) when students meet with writing consultants over time. One reason why there may be some resistance to assessment of writing is because it is messy and is not easily translatable into numbers, in addition to being time consuming. For instance, in his interchapter within *Building Writing Center Assessments that Matter,* Neal Lerner makes a case for the value of both qualitative and quantitative assessment of writing center practices. Lerner explains "And this [deciding whether to use quantitative or qualitative approaches to research] is not merely a conflict between numerical data versus qualitative data or numbers versus stories, but instead a conflict in the fundamentals of knowledge making" (109). Yet, Lerner also argues that quantitative and qualitative methods to research and assessment need not be mutually exclusive, even while recognizing their differences.

While collecting high numbers that provide evidence for amount of activity/usage and student satisfaction are valuable and do communicate well to upper-administrators, if we are truly engaged in the teaching of writing and improving student writing, then we also need assessment of student writing (both quantitative and qualitative). Since writing centers are indeed a crossroads (as Jeremy calls them) for writing instruction, they provide a rich opportunity and context for assessing (and researching) writing in a variety of contexts and at a variety of stages. Writing Centers have much to offer writing programs, English Departments, WAC/WID initiatives, and university administrators who are interested in understanding writing across campus, but they must start building assessment of student writing into their ongoing research and assessment practices.

(4) Undergraduate, peer consultants are dynamic, smart, and lively thinkers of writing center work who provide important nuances to writing center (counter)narratives.

Undergraduate peer consultants provide meaningful reflection rooted in lived experiences with student writers and have much to offer in terms of developing the field of writing center studies and the teaching of writing. In "Undergraduate Researchers as Makers of Knowledge in Composition in the Writing Studies Major," Joyce Kinkead recognizes the value of UG research in her contribution to Massey and Genhardt's *The Changing of Knowledge in Composition*, which reflects on North's 1987 seminal composition text *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*. Although she focuses on what undergraduate writing studies majors can offer, Kinkead's claim that students have more right to textual authority than what has traditionally been offered to them is an important one. I think what she is saying here appeals to peer tutors and the work that they do too. Similarly, although again, not focusing specifically on peer tutors, Ian Barnard, in his invaluable book *Upsetting*

Composition Commonplaces, discusses the ways in which compositionists' own research practices in rhetoric and composition, especially that which we call ethnography, can often skew student identities, thus preventing them from being considered "real authors" or "real knowledge makers."

Particularly within the field of writing center studies, several scholars have argued for the value of peer tutors as researchers and knowledge makers (Fallon; Fitzgerald; Fitzgerald and Ianetta). For instance, in "Undergraduate Writing Tutors as Researchers: Redrawing Boundaries," Lauren Fitzgerald argues that writing tutors work at the site of practitioner inquiry, receive support from ongoing tutor education and mentoring, and authorize writers and tutors. Thus, she makes an argument specifically for the ways in which peer tutors can contribute to the field of writing center studies. This conversation has become so key to writing center studies that in 2016, Lauren Fitzgerald and Melissa Ianetta wrote *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors,* a text that aims to teach new tutors to approach their work as researchers as they begin learning the practice itself. Findings from this dissertation also support their claim that undergraduate researchers have much to offer the field of writing center studies, so long as we invite them into research and give them the opportunity.

In Chapter 3, I move outside of the UHWC in an attempt to understand how university administrators and disciplinary faculty perceive of the teaching of writing and the writing center. The findings from this chapter are put into a broader, university-wide context that complicate the UHWC's concept of partnership and shows more specifically how such a model is understood and practice among disciplinary administrators and faculty.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I look at how the UHWC and those outside the it come together to focus on writing instruction by using a case studies approach to investigate how the

teaching of writing happens. Since I focus on the UHWC's partnership with the hybrid/studio

first year writing model in the English Department (Chapter 4), I can begin to understand

how a writing center removed from a Department of English can/should still participate in

first year writing initiatives. This partnership also is one heavily defined as "innovative"

because of it uses a studio approach, takes place in the online space, and requires students to

work in an instructor-less small group environment. Then, in Chapter 5, I focus on a STEM

based, four course partnership where students meet face-to-face in the UHWC and work with

a consultant to develop multimodal group projects.

Chapter 3

Stories From Outside the Writing Center

When I sat down with Kyle, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Business

Programs, I wondered whether or not he would bring up the 2010 controversy that involved

the outsourcing of business writing assessment to a third party that employed Virtual TAs.

The situation became public and controversial when the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ran

an article titled "Some Papers are Uploaded to Bangalore to Be Graded," where writer

Audrey Williams June claimed that the high numbers of business majors and the amount of

writing feedback required caused Bauer Professor Lori Whisenant to "outsource assignment

grading to a company whose employees are mostly in Asia." This story disturbs writing

teachers, and rightfully so, because of the ways in which it represents the strength of the shift

toward global neoliberalism that universities are facing.[38]

Yet, one important part of this story that has been overlooked is the reason why Bauer

made the decision to outsource their writing in the first place: it was because the writing

center suggested it to them. At the beginning of their partnership with Bauer, the UHWC was

providing writing assessment and feedback, in addition to working with students one-on-one.

During our interview, Kyle explained that:

> it really got to be too much for them [the UHWC]. They didn't have the staff to do it,
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> because what was happening was, think of it like this tsunami of papers to grade all at
>
> once. Well, they just weren't equipped to ramp up staff. They had staff for all year

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[38] See Rebecca Dingo, Rachel Riedner and Jennifer Wingard pointed out in "Disposable Drudgery: Outsourcing Goes to College" (2015) for a case study of this UH outsourcing scenario via textual and feminist rhetorical analyses.

round, but they couldn't get it back to us in a timely fashion, and so they

recommended that we look for a third party and they suggested EduMetry.[39]

While I did not ask Kyle to speak about EdMetry at first, I was very interested to hear his

perspective and his story. During our over two hour interview, Kyle kept circling back to

Bauer's use of EduMetry, almost as if he was trying to justify the decision in a way that

would help me understand. Early on in the interview, Kyle said:

> Because actually, in reality, from an accreditation point of view, having an objective
>
> third party evaluation makes more sense because if you're evaluating your own
>
> students' writing, you have a vested interest in them doing well, and if a third party is
>
> evaluating, they're just giving you a third party perspective. And so, from our point of
>
> view, as long as we're only using it as bookend measures, it makes sense, and that
>
> was our argument. So, anyway, that's my story.

I was surprised to find myself somewhat sympathetic when listening to Kyle explain the

EduMetry scenario from his point of view. By the end of our interview, he told me "anyway,

I think the headlines from the Chronicle article really misrepresented what we were doing,

just to create a sensation."

And, despite the article, Bauer continues to outsource writing assessment in this very

way, and to have students deemed underprepared to work with UHWC consultants. While

this situation is complex and could make for an entire chapter in itself,[40] I do think there are a

couple important things worth noting here. First, the way that the UHWC was the first step in

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[39] EduMetry has since changed its name to Rich Feedback. Both are used in this dissertation to refer to the same third party writing evaluation and assessment company.

[40] In addition to talking with me about the EduMetry controversy, Kyle printed off writing assessment data, some of which was longitudinal, that Kyle himself conducted to determine the extent to which the UHWC and EduMetry was helping students, the official rebuttal that Bauer wrote, in response to the *Chronicle* article, and offered to put me in touch with others involved, including the head of the third party company.

outsourcing writing assessment and instruction and that it was their recommendation to use a third party. Thus, how much is Bauer fully to blame for the decision to outsource writing to EduMetry?

Second, I think Kyle's telling of this story is an important one to consider, especially since others have been told about this scenario with seemingly little concern for the Bauer perspectives. Although I find the EduMetry story disturbing as told from all perspectives, I also think it is a complex story, one that engages and affects multiple stakeholders. Rather than dismiss or ignore these perspectives, we should attempt to understand them. For Kyle, as an administrator, making writing a priority was a choice, and not an easy one: "I mean, we wouldn't have to make writing our learning outcome for accreditation, it could be something else that could be measured with a Scantron. But the reason we picked writing was because we cared about that as a skill, and that's what employers cared about."

As employers continue to let universities know that they value writing and university administrators and disciplinary faculty start to listen, writing centers can expect to do more writing instruction, some of which involves outsourcing. The importance of examining stakeholder experiences[41] with WAC/WID was recently recognized by Anne Ruggles Gere, Sarah C. Swofford, Naomi Silver, and Melody Pugh in their *College Composition and Communication* article, "Interrogating Disciplines/ Disciplinarity in WAC/WID: An Institutional Study" (2015). Their findings indicate that, "traditional conceptions of disciplines bump up against the lived practices and interests of WAC/WID program stakeholders" (243). Instead, Gere et al. argue for a "new disciplinarity" which allows them to "affirm the still existing institutional and epistemological features of disciplines while at

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[41] Gere et al. define stakeholders as faculty, graduate student instructors, and students.

the same time acknowledging the intersections, subversions, and interrogations of disciplines" (261).

In particular, this means recognizing that, rather than assuming faculty and students want/need to learn how to master the discipline-specific conventions of academic writing: (1) most faculty work from an awareness that the majority undergraduate students (95%, according to one interviewee) will be have professional lives that require writing very different from the kind practiced in academic disciplines, and (2) most undergraduate students are interested in learning general writing conventions that they believe will prepare them for nonacademic careers, for which a component writing ability will be important. Thus, Gere et al.'s study suggests that our own understandings, approaches to, and goals for WAC/WID from a writing studies perspective sometimes conflict with the goals and beliefs of university administrators and disciplinary faculty.

In this chapter, I share insight into how those outside of the UHWC who are involved in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)/Writing in the Disciplines (WID) partnerships understand their relationship with the Center, its administrators and consultants, and the teaching of writing. First, I attempt to chart the kinds of metaphors used to talk about writing and the teaching of writing, and argue that these metaphors give us important insight into how university administrators and disciplinary faculty conceive of writing. Second, I provide evidence for a shift among disciplinary faculty away from discipline-specific academic writing toward the development of Writing in the Professions (WIP), or a kind of quasi-WIP.

Next, I show how university administrators and disciplinary faculty seem to work from the premise that writing and content are separate, rather than interconnected, a finding that challenges much of what we in writing studies argue. Then, I discuss the ways in which

those outside of the writing center perceive those who teaching writing, including English teachers. Finally, I end by considering how university administrators and disciplinary faculty as partners describe and add to the partnership approach to collaborating with the UHWC, including an alternative telling of the UHWC's history that conflicts with the history told in Chapter 2.

Revolving Doors, Tsunamis, and Well-Oiled Machines: Using Metaphors to Talk About Writing Across Disciplines

In *Metaphor and Writing: Figurative Thought in Written Communication* (2011), 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. In particular, 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). While his research focuses on composition's disciplinary talk about writing, Eubanks' argument still speaks to the value of recognizing metaphor as a way of attempting to define and talk about that which is difficult to put into language. During my interviews with university administrators and disciplinary faculty, metaphors became especially valuable in helping us talk across disciplinary divides and functioned as a way of making common language.

In particular, university administrators and disciplinary faculty used metaphors that fall into four overall types: clinical/medical, mechanistic, survival, and corporate/business-related. These types are displayed below in Table 1:

Table 2: University Administrators and Disciplinary Faculty Use of Metaphor

Metaphor Type	Example	Who Used It[42]
Clinical	The WC staffs "counselors in the writing center" who "are very good at knowing how to diagnose the program."	Seven interviewees from math, law, HRM[43], biology, business, English, and art history
Mechanistic	The WC "is a tool" and partnerships are "like well-oiled machines."	Six interviewees from architecture, biology, HRM, business, marketing, art history
Survival	The WC is helpful because of my own "human limits" and the "burden of paper grading."	Six interviewees, including math, architecture, biology, computer science, business, and art history
Corporate/Business-related[44]	The WC "is a rare amenity" and "the WC gets the customers."	Eight interviewees, including English, business, creative writing, law, math, HRM, architecture, and art history

[42] These represent the minimum presence of metaphor types, as they were drawn from over 100 single-spaced pages of logging/transcription notes. I'm bound to have overlooked additional metaphors, and perhaps metaphor types.

[43] HRM stands for Hotel and Restaurant Management, an academic degree program in the greater field of hospitality that attempts to prepare students for careers in lodging, restaurants, food and beverage management, casinos and gaming, events, sales, and marketing.

[44] Also evident in several interviews was the way in which the UHWC charges colleges for their services. In particular, this was explicitly stated during interviews with university administrators and disciplinary faculty in HRM, math, business, and law, with knowledge of the extra expenses involved in some partnerships also acknowledged in art history and biology.

Although metaphor-types generally fell into the four categories shown in Table 2, there was some variation in terms of how the metaphors were used. For example, the most consistent metaphor used to describe writing center practitioners was "counselors" or the work done by practitioners as "counseling." While there has been much debate in the field of writing center studies over what writing center practitioners should be called (McCall, Runciman, Russell, Hallman), the idea of writing centers as staffed by counselors is not one that we have used. If anything, the use of this term dates back to the field's early naming of spaces (i.e., writing clinics, writing labs). Yet, its persistence among those who collaborate with the UHWC is telling. Similarly, survival metaphors were used in seemingly consistent ways to talk about the ways in which the writing center helps alleviate the amount of work involved in grading papers.

In contrast, the uses of mechanistic metaphors among interviewees were in at least one instance in direct conflict. For example, both Chris (biology) and Kyle (business), described the UHWC as a tool in the following way:

> …When I say collaboration, I mean you guys 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"…

71

Yet, in Rick's (art history) discussion of what makes his work with the UHWC successful, he talks about the relationship in other terms:

> …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 writing center 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…I wasn't just signing up for something, although I know you guys do that really well too—because, like with Bauer, right? Basically, they pay you money and you just make sure that x and y are happening, I get that…"

Here, Rick acknowledges that the UHWC can and does function in the way that Chris suggests it does—as a tool or service paid for in order to accomplish certain goals. Yet, he also argues that his partnership with the UHWC functions in a different kind of way.

While Table 1 depicts the most commonly used metaphor types among interviewees, others were used as well. For instance, Linda (math) math is a language: one that requires the process of translating symbols into words. She explains:

> We have actual phrases in math that are directly English related. We have what we call a well-defined set. If you say a set is well defined, you mean that a reasonable person could pick up an object, look at the object, look at the definition and say whether that object is or is not in the set. That's called clarity. It's an English precept. It has everything to do with English. If you don't have a well-defined set, people can't work with your ideas, can't solve problems in that domain, because they don't

know what's in or out of the set. So we have actual basics that are related to language

in math.

Here, Linda connects the concept of a "well defined set" in mathematics to clarity in English.

There are also similarities here in terms of definition (what kind of thing is the object?),

evaluation (does the object belong in the set?), and audience (could a "reasonable person"

understand whether or not the object belongs in the set, based how each is defined?). Linda

also makes a connection between these concepts (well-defined set and clarity) and

communication—in order for people to "work with your ideas," they have to understand your

explanation.

In an interview with Carol (marketing), the role of the UHWC consultant, which was

myself at the time[45], was described as a kind of guide. When I first asked her to describe how

she understood my role as a course-embedded consultant in her graduate-level academic

writing and research course, she explained my role in the following way:

> 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 the 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.

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[45] I worked as the consultant for the Marketing 8397 partnership between the Bauer Business School and the
UHWC for three years over the summer in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

While Carol has always shown me much respect and emphasized my role in the course as that of co-teacher to students, her description suggests still a service-focused role that seems without expertise.[46]

"Lawyers are not always going to be communicating with lawyers": Writing in the Profession, not in the Discipline

Similar to the faculty responses in Gere et al., many of the university administrators and disciplinary faculty I interviewed placed greater emphasis on preparing students for workplace than on teaching them to master the disciplinary academic discourse. This focus on preparing students for writing (and thinking) in discipline-informed ways conflicts with traditional approaches to WAC/WID that sets as its model scholarly publications in academic journals. In particular, over half of the university administrators and disciplinary faculty[47] mentioned the kind of writing students would do in the workplace beyond the university. For instance, Charley (HRM), who has over twenty years of industry experience, claims that writing at the beginning of a career in hospitality is minimal and primarily "operational," but that "as you move up in your career, writing plays more of an important role or [can be] an important barrier." As a Dean of HRM, Charley has been partnering with the UHWC for ten years.

In contrast, some university administrators and disciplinary faculty work from the premise that writing well is necessary for students to be qualified for jobs after college. For, Kyle (business) says that the department decided to make improved written communication a learning outcome because "we [the College of Business] cared about that [writing] as a skill

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[46] For a more developed account of my co-teaching with Carol, see Hallman "Re-envisioning Course Embedded Programs at the Graduate-level: A Tutor's Experience in a Doctoral Translingual Marketing Class" in *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, 2014.

[47] These university administrators and disciplinary staff were in the academic fields of political science, math, law, HRM, architecture, business, and biology.

and that's what employers cared about." He further explains that he tells students, "You can graduate and get a diploma. You might get that first job, but you will not rise and shine in your company unless you're an effective communicator and that includes writing." The kind of writing and communication that Kyle discusses is something, for him, that is different from what he calls "academic writing within the disciple." Kyle writes:

> Writing in the Disciplines, if you're a biology major and you're going to do research in graduate school and publish in a respected medical professional journal, that's academic writing within the discipline. But, if you're a business student, the writing you're going to need to do would be, maybe a project analysis of why we should build a refinery in Azerbaijan, or a memo to your boss, or maybe a marketing report. And it's very different from what gets published in business journals, which is the kind of writing business professors write.

Yet, in my interview with Chris (biology), he seems to approach the teaching of writing from a mindset that aligns better with Kyle's than with "academic writing within the discipline" that aims to teach students how to write in scholarly disciplinary conventions. Chris explains:

> my goal is in my class is, well certainly, I'm trying to teach the material, but really what I'm trying to expose them to is, what the world is really like as a scientist…They're going to forget about the physiology I teach, but what I really want them to know, you know, you're going to leave here with a biology degree and you should know how to communicate as a biologist—I don't care if you're planning on medicine, I don't care if you're planning on working on a lab, I don't care if you're working at McDonald's. It doesn't matter what field you're going into, you're going to have to learn to write a report, you know a technical report.

Thus, "thinking like a biologist" is linked to communicating and writing like one. Here, Chris emphasizes the importance of preparing students to think and communicate from the position of a professional in their field.

While Charley, Kyle and Chris identify overlap between the kind of writing that they teach students within the discipline and during their college experience as part of the university curriculum, some university administrators and disciplinary faculty, like Tara (law), recognize a difference between the kind of writing students are sometimes required to do within the university and that which they will be expected to do on the job. In particular, Tara emphasized writing for three different audiences: (1) writing for the workplace; (2) writing for law school/coursework; and (3) writing for the bar exam. First, Tara links the beginning of the term assessment that students take to workplace writing, where students are not necessarily expected to know how to do legal analysis, but are still expected to write with a particular kind of "style, structure, and flow." She then notes that students don't seem to understand the connection between this kind of writing and more specific legal writing:

> I think for them [the students], if it doesn't have law in it, then it doesn't really have importance, and it's like no, you can really take this and apply it to a different situation people, because communication is communication, and you're not always going to be communicating with lawyers, you're going to be communicating with others so you need to be able to get a clear message across.

Thus, Tara seems to imply that there is a distinction between law-specific or specialized writing and writing for an audience outside of law (a more common audience). Later during the interview, Tara discusses memo writing, a writing genre that practiced both during law school and also in the workplace. Memo writing is very dependent on the particular audience,

oftentimes the legislature or other stakeholders, who should then "determine the level of detail and explanation you need to use in your communication. And whether you can speak at a high level or if you really need to get down to the basics so that people can understand just the basic issue at hand." While these two different audiences and ways of writing are identified, Tara's idea that "communication is communication" seems to suggest that some aspects of writing are transferrable, regardless of situation.

While some genres, like memo writing, are practiced both inside and outside of law school, others may require conflicting elements. For instance, Tara explains the differences between writing for the bar exam, which also seems somewhat related to workplace writing, and writing for coursework. Here, she emphasizes analysis:

Because even in a law review article, just with you guys, you know, you're going to state your thesis/problem, what you're trying to address, and then, as you gather your materials—your different cases, your other articles—I mean, you're going to analyze that material against what you're trying to do, so again, you're always going to come back to that analysis, which is the meat of your project, your exam, the bar. I mean, on the bar exam, that's what they're looking at—how do you analyze the problem? And then they want you to come up with a definitive conclusion. That's what's different for law students, because in law school, you can take the rabbit hole down here, down here, down here, down here, you don't have to decide. You can just show all the different ways this could come out. On the Bar exam, it's your professional license. Well, the client doesn't have time to go down all these holes. What are you going to have them do? That's what they want. So, if you're writing it like an exam, you're not going to get full credit for that. You can get some, but definitely not full.

Tara explains that most law professors want "everything," all of the possible answers, down all of the rabbit holes, but the bar examiners want to know "specifics"—what should be done, which is similar to what firms will want in the workplace. Tara's phrase "just with you guys" seems to suggest that she's making a comparison between the kind of writing WCs, or perhaps English teachers/scholars, are familiar with (thesis-driven), and that which is expected for the bar exam/law workplace. Yet, law school is different in that you are expected to consider and share multiple possibilities.

Similarly, Amir (architecture), who works with graduate students, explains that part of what he focuses on in teaching writing is getting students to simplify and write clearly for people outside the specialized discipline of architecture. Amir explains:

They have to move away from jargon. They have to move away from language that becomes hyper-specific to just architecture and design and I think that's really encouraging in a way because as architects that are trying to practice in the field and interface with the community and with the built world, and broader culture as a whole, that kind of interface with the WC reinforces the trans-disciplinary foundation. So I really value the fact that the WC and the consultants are trans-disciplinarily-oriented.

The move toward more writing to prepare students for their professional and workplace lives outside of the academy has been one reason for the beginning of a several new partnerships for the UHWC in Fall 2015. For example, Fred (political science) began working with the UHWC for the first time, in part because he decided to "completely change" his writing assignments so that he could "teach them in a way more useful beyond college." Rather than having students write research-based, academic-style essays, Fred now

asks students to write two Op-ed pieces to be posted publically on a class blog with the hope that students will "be creative" rather than "writing in a dry academic style." In addition, students are asked to write two Policy memos, one of which aims to "advise the government of Houstonia, a country ruled by a hegemonic party for several decades, and the second of which is written from the context of being "employed in the market research division of Lone Star Oil and Gas Co., an energy company that sells oil extraction technology."

"That's in their wheelhouse": Writing Centers Do Writing and Faculty Focus on Content

The majority of university administrators and disciplinary faculty seemed to be working from the assumption that writing and writing instruction was separate from content and discipline-specific content. This view seriously conflicts with what rhetoric and composition has argued about WAC/WID for decades; that WID is an important and necessary part of the content and that people with discipline-specific knowledge should be teaching writing within their specific disciplines. For example, Charley (HRM) explained that he began partnering with the UHWC when the WAC curriculum initiative began, and thus they worked together to incorporate writing into already existing courses. Charley says:

> We never claim to be the [writing] experts. The writing lab really did the best job of working with us to lay that out. So, we didn't tell the writing lab 'these are the three things' what we said is, ' we want them to improve their writing,' and they came to us with a good plan.

Here, Charley suggests that the UHWC took the lead on determining what needed to happen so that HRM students would "improve their writing," rather than telling the UHWC what the HRM wanted from student writing. This idea suggests that there is a "good writing" that the

UHWC is "expert" at defining and extracting from students. In a more hands-on approach, Kyle (business) describes one of the two partnership courses that the undergraduate business school has with the UHWC called the Business Writing Tutorial (BWT). The BWT is linked to a Business Writing Evaluation (BWE) that business majors complete after their first year in the program to determine whether or not "they have minimum competency to write a business memo." Kyle describes the BWE in the following way:

> We wanted to find out—do they have minimum competency to write a business memo? And if they didn't, we didn't want them to be penalized, we wanted it to be a positive experience. So, they didn't get a grade for it. We talked about it being cleared, not passed… If you didn't clear it, you simply did a writing portfolio, which we called Business Writing Tutorial [BWT], which involves writing a resume, cover letter, and short business proposal that has an ethical topic.

Here, it becomes clear that this assessment was not meant to be part of the business curriculum[48], but rather is a way of determining which students needed more assistance on their writing. The BWT is something to be "cleared, not passed," and a "positive experience," rather than a graded one. Students who take the BWT work one-on-one with the same consultant over at least one semester where they meet about eight times to work on the portfolio materials. In addition, Kyle explains that "having individual tutoring in a non-threatening environment" helps students to "envision writing as a skill that they know they

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[48] Kyle did tell me that eventually, the BWE/BWT did become linked to a career prep course so that students were required to take it at a certain time. Yet even when linked to a course for "administrative reasons" and to increase "compliance," the BWE/BWT was not something that was part of the course curriculum or grade. Some additional reasons why the business school likes the tutorial model are because it does not require students to pay for an additional course and also it does not delay graduation because they can complete it while taking a full course load.

will be doing and will need for their job," thus emphasizing the connection between the BWT and workplace writing beyond college.

Several other university administrators and disciplinary faculty made similar assumptions about writing being separate from disciplinary content, but they also identified particularities within their own discipline's approach to writing. While these were not necessarily discipline-specific academic conventions, they were ways of thinking about and approaching writing that seemed to be informed by their content area. Thus, denying a link between writing and content appeared to me to be a contradiction. For example, Tara's (law) claimed earlier that "communication is communication" and that law students need to learn how to communicate with people other than lawyers. Yet, within the field/profession of law, students are taught to "read and writing critically and analyze" according to an approach Tara referred to as IRAC (issue, rule, analysis, conclusion). She explained that many people can spot the issue and the rule, but "it's the analysis they get caught up with, and that's where you get to your critical reading and your ability to analyze and how do you take that rule and apply it to this new set of facts?" While IRAC is perhaps similar to other approaches that we in English and those in other disciplines take to teach critical thinking/reading and analysis, it is also still quite particular in the emphasis on identifying and then applying a rule. Thus, when law students are taught how to write, their instructors and consultants should be informed of this discipline-specific approach to writing that informs what is written (the content) and how (the form).

Similarly, Amir (architecture), who thinks of the UHWC as "a rare amenity" and speaks with great enthusiasm and appreciation, uses particularized language to talk about writing in architecture while also claiming that his work with the UHWC allows him to focus

his writing feedback on content, rather than having to spend time on writing-based issues. Amir explains two specific components of written communication in architecture: the ability to move back and forth smoothly between visual and written communication and critique. Amir explains:

> For them [architecture students], writing is a critical medium for communication. As architects, we often do visual communication—models, drawings, etc.—but part of it is also helping them to understand the value of writing and working through the project, for many of them, it's the first time, even as graduate students, that they've had to pursue a structured research endeavor…And for architecture, critique is so key to us in terms of what we do. For us to achieve quality design—and I mean this in terms of buildings and in terms of research—critique is really important.

In addition, Amir is adamant about referring to the assignment as a project rather than a paper. This again is related to writing in architecture, as Amir notes, "for architects, the term project means something more then simply just one piece of a larger equation. The project encompasses the different tactics, mediums, strategies that we employ to solve issues. So I call it a project. I don't call it a paper." Again, the idea of approaching writing assignments as projects is an important aspect of the mindset needed to approach writing in architecture. The idea of visual and written communication, in addition to thinking of writing as a project, seem related to composition's somewhat recent recognition of thinking about writing as multimodal (Palmeri, Shipka, Sirc, Selfe). This research from our own field suggests that "paper" based writing, primarily in the form of an essay, is a very different kind of writing than that which includes visual and/or oral elements. Again, we're seeing how a disciplinary

mindset should inform writing in architecture, even when the audience for such writing is not expert architects.

Despite his recognition of these architecture-specific approaches to writing[49], Amir still claims that the UHWC partnership allows him to focus on content, rather than on writing.

> A key thing that they [UHWC partnerships] offer that I should clarify is that it let's 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 WC really liberates me to really focus on my own expertise as an architect. And that's thrilling because I no longer have to spend as much time discussing the mechanics of the writing itself.

Here, Amir suggests that his "expertise as an architect" is separate from his expertise in writing. This may speak to something that Tara (law), Kyle (business) and Carol (marketing) have also identified as a limitation that some disciplinary faculty have when it comes to teaching writing: the kind of writing faculty that faculty do in the disciplines, especially in terms of publishing in academic journals, is not similar to the kind of writing most of their students will need to learn how to do in the workplace.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, even in disciplines where students are working towards graduate degrees within a field, some disciplinary faculty still may think of writing and content as separate. For example, Carol (marketing) explained that her partnership with the UHWC meant, "I don't have to get down to the sentence level…I hate to use the word

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[49] In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that architecture is the only field that values or emphasizes these particular writing conventions. Amir himself refers to architecture as a "design discipline," thus suggesting that there are others in like in within that broader category. However, I do mean to argue that the writing knowledge suggested here is particular to architecture and may not apply to other disciplines like business, biology, English, or political science.

mechanics, but I guess you're handling the mechanics of improving a draft." This came to somewhat of a shock to me, since as I mentioned I was the one working with Carol's graduate students, yet I did not consider my focus in working with students her class to be on sentence-level issues and mechanics. Carol also offered more nuanced writing and communication advice to students during her class, where she emphasizes the importance of clear communication over any other grammatical or writing-based issues, asks her students to imagine their audience as they write, and spends a large amount of class time having students talk through their research projects for experts and non-experts. Much of Carol's feedback is attempting to repeat back to students their projects, as she understands them, and to help them talk in concrete, rather than abstract, terms.

When I asked her about the writing issues that students tend to face, Carol describes her concerns about graduate-level writing in the UHWC partnership course in this way:

> The papers are written unexcitingly…boringly…without thinking of the effect on the reader, who is capable of being board, I guess would be the biggest complaint I would have. And, when you see one that is well written, one of the ways that it isn't boring is that it's different from most of the other papers that are boring, so right away, two things going for them: conspicuously well written so you think, ah hah, smart person. And, you're not slogging through it…what's the story? That's what doctoral students seem not really focused on. They're kind of following a template and that template is based on the fact that most academic writing is bad, so it isn't as though they are imitating ineptly. The problem is that they are imitating competently stuff they shouldn't be imitating. And they think more is better. That's wrong. And they think

passive voice is better. And they aren't really willing to rewrite the 25 times it takes

to turn this into a piece of good writing.

Here, Carol articulates a problem with "boring" writing that attempts to "follow templates" and "imitate" models rather than focusing on the more important question, "what's the story?" Carol attempts to disrupt common assumptions about writing that students hold tries to get them to think about revision in a new way.

In contrast, both Morgan (computer science) and Rick (art history) had some awareness that writing studies (or, rhetoric and composition) was a disciplinary field with content, and that part of what made the UHWC and WID-based partnerships successful was figuring out how to communicate across disciplinary boundaries. For instance, Morgan (computer science) reflects back on the beginning of her successful partnership[50] with the UHWC:

When I look back on that now, as we were kind of like two people from different worlds coming together and we both kind of spoke different languages and overtime…we kind of assimilated. Not completely, but we learned enough about each others' worlds that we could really effectively work together. So I think in these kinds of partnerships there is that initial, you know, I talk one way, certain words mean certain things to me versus someone from a different field has different words to describe different things and we might not all be on the same page immediately.

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[50] In using the term "successful," I am referring to evidence-based research that Morgan and Michelle Miley conducted to investigate how the UHWC partnership that used writing studios impacted student writing by raising the quality of student writing by one full rubric point. For a published account of their research, see Miley's publication with Jamison Kovach and Miguel Ramos titled "Using Online Studio Groups to Improve Writing Competency: A Pilot Study in a Quality Improvement Methods Course" (2012) in *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*.

She also explains that through her partnership with the UHWC, and from working with Miley in particular, Morgan learned that "the writing process doesn't start when pen meets paper…There's a whole thought process that goes into it, and you can actually clarify some of you're ideas by talking about them." While Morgan does not identify this as writing-studies based knowledge per se, she does acknowledge that there is a "process" involved in writing of which she was not always aware.

Yet despite this recognition of the process behind writing and her own awarenss of the way people from different fields talk about writing, Morgan still notes a separation between content and writing. For instance, Morgan notes that one important way to prepare UHWC facilitators to work with students in computer science is to show them examples of instructor feedback on student writing, so that UHWC facilitators "know what students are hearing from us [instructors]…[to] help them [UHWC facilitators] tailor what they're going to say to students." The instructors can also see how the facilitators are working with students, thus both partners have a sense of how provides writing instruction. While this level of transparency is valuable, Morgan still notes a separation between the different kinds of writing feedback each partner offers:

> UHWC facilitators need to reinforce the idea that when students don't understand the content, they need to be point them back to the instructor. Whereas if its like "I'm trying to explain this and its not clear. Can you help me make it more clear?" well, that's in their wheelhouse, that's what the facilitator can help with.

Here, Morgan seems to be operating from the assumption that "clarity" is a generalized writing convention that exists outside of discipline-specific writing knowledge and that students should approach UHWC facilitators with writing-specific questions and their

instructors with "content" related questions. Thus, she seems to overlook the way that that content and writing instruction come together in computer science.

Like Morgan but with a bit more conscious awareness, Rick (art history), recognizes writing studies as a field with scholarly content. He explains that one valuable aspect of his partnership with the UHWC had to do with them making the writing pedagogy accessible to him while also respecting and appreciating the particularity of discourse within art history. Rick explains:

> 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 [rhetoric and writing] 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/discourse 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 admits that in his work with the UHWC, 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 15 years."

Second, he recognizes the value of learning about rhetoric and writing through 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 to think about WID as introducing students to conversations in art history. Rick further explains his awareness of WID in part as recognizing "this sense of excellence in some writing that just isn't there in others and you need to start figuring out how that works." For him, this is linked to recognizing and "respect[ing] the passion of the discipline," something he believes the UHWC does well. By this, Rick meant that the UHWC, "was 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."

"The English Department ruins them!": How Disciplinary Faculty Think About English (Teachers) and the Writing Center

The assumptions that university administrators and disciplinary faculty make about English teachers, the teaching of writing, and writing teachers/consultants were ever-present throughout these interviews. In one of the most eye-opening interviews I conducted over the course of this project, Chris (biology) was honest about how he understands the contributions of the UHWC and also how he views English teachers and their impact on students. This comes across most clearly in the exchange below, which occurred just over 15 minutes into our interview after Chris explains that when he teaches writing in his courses, he works from the assumption that "students don't know how to write to save their lives." Since I knew that Chris taught introductory biology courses often taken by freshmen and sophomore-level students, I ask him "And a lot of them haven't done a lot of writing in bio when they get to your class, right?" assuming that the issue is related to the lack of discipline-specific writing experience students have. Yet, Chris corrects me:

No, no, and I mean, not to be offensive, but the English Department ruins them

[students] also…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,

you're doing the same thing, but the idea [in science] is to express their ideas in a

succinct way. In other words, to 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 "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 its not a bad habit, it's just not appropriate for the field.

Throughout the rest of our interview, Chris makes the following assumptions about English

and the teaching of writing:

- English teachers focus on "expressing yourself,"

- English teachers allow students to "write about any topic"

- English teachers don't use rubrics. His students "have never seen a rubric before."

- English teachers "ruin" students

- English teachers tell students that "write essays [that are] three paragraphs: intro, body,
  conclusion, where the conclusion repeats the what the intro does"

- English teachers don't use models, because sometimes his own "students don't even
  know how to use models"

Like Chris, Kyle (business) seems to think that English teachers are not teaching writing the

most useful way. Instead, Kyle says that he believes writing courses, particularly first year

composition, would be better taught within a disciplinary frame, allowing students with

similar majors to be enrolled in the same writing course. He tells me that the business school once tried to organize this, but that it failed because "The English Department wanted to charge us money to do it. And we were like, 'No, we're not going to pay you extra to do your job." Thus, Kyle's perception of the English teacher's job is to teach writing in a way that best serves the university disciplines, and that asking them to specialize their teaching of writing in such a way does not merit extra pay.

In addition, the idea of writing instruction as mechanics-based comes up more often than not. For example, Carol (marketing) distinguishes between her own concept of what makes good writing (creativity, story-telling, and an ability to anticipate and answer potential reader questions), and the role of writing teachers/consultants who focus on mechanics, sentence-level issues, and proofreading. On multiple occasions, Carol referred her students in various courses to me for such help, and while I do find mechanics and sentence-level issues, including proofreading, to be in my purview as writing teacher, I find them to be only one small part of how I actually spend my time working with students. Carol never sends students to me to work on idea development or organization or clarity. She does not seem to think of WCs as places with writing teachers/consultants who are engaged in the same project of promoting creativity, story telling and audience awareness. While she has always treated me with much respect, Carol's actions and articulation of my role seem (unfortunately) reductive and closely aligned with the WC as grammar-based fix-it shop and marginalized university spaces.

Other disciplinary faculty think about English (teachers) in ways that seem to be less in conflict with writing-studies and its history overall, even though some such ideas may be a bit outdated. For instance, Linda (math) explains a compare/contrast paper, which she defines

as a "very traditional English major format," yet with a focus on modern geometry. She also makes a distinction between "writing in the context of understanding" (i.e., in homework as "breakout problems" that require short written answers or as in class writing) and "papers themselves, as objects of things to do" that "consolidate what the students know [and] exercise them in the real basics of communicating." Here, Linda seems to be distinguishing between what writing-studies might call informal writing focused on writing to learn and formal writing.

In addition to recognizing writing as dynamic, both Morgan (computer science) and Rick (art history) admit to learning more about how to write meaningful feedback in the way that has been informed by consultants in the UHWC. For instance, Morgan acknowledges that teaching writing involves more than "copy editing students' work" and instead is about "helping students effectively express their thoughts in the written form," which can be achieved by providing feedback that identifies where students are writing well (praise) and identifying where there are issues or confusion and explaining why she as a reader is struggling. Rick also learned to recognize the value of talk about writing as an important part of the process. This concept led him to "stage the writing, but not in a prescriptive way" so that students receive feedback from an active audience as their ideas are forming. He also notes that his students' work with a UHWC facilitator in small peer review groups has helped students to articulate a "coherent theme, or thesis, or idea that is pursued in relation to the object," something that he notes "you can't create a coherent argument or narrative in that amount of time [last minute] and without mentoring, it's impossible."

Another surprising finding from these interviews was that disciplinary faculty seemed to recognize the value and importance of the UHWC function outside of the English

Department. Rick (art history) relates this to the UHWC, and Melissa in particular, being able and willing to think about the needs of various departments, such as business and engineering, which "may not be the same sort of humanities passion, it may be something else, like we need competency in x, y, and z, and so she'll just got after it." For Rick, this is something that "if you [the UHWC] were under the thump of the Department of English, wouldn't necessarily be on the radar, certainly not to the same extent." Those within the English Department also noted the importance of this move. For instance, both Walt (English) and Justin (creative writing) acknowledge that the UHWC has more flexibility than it would if it were still in the English Department. Walt explains, "it was felt that the WC, especially if it was going to have its research and innovative element, needs to be free from some of the restraints that an academic unit has to work with." While noting the resources and funding the UHWC has, Walt also claims that, "a writing center will always need a close partnership with an academic unit…The writing center will always need the intellectual validation that an academic department provides."

This idea of research and innovation was actually part of the vision of the new UHWC when it was reimagined for the first time. Justin, a creative writing administrator with a background in rhetoric and composition, was the lower divisions chair at the time. In collaboration with a few other English Department members who are no longer at the university, Justin developed the following vision for the new UHWC:

Where we started from is, the central to the mission of a writing center would be ongoing, continual conversations among teachers of writing about what the teaching of writing is and how it's possible. That if it really was a Center, and it was a center not simply to fix up writing or remediation, then it ought to be, then writing is a

subject matter or the teaching of writing is a subject matter that one ought to be

conducting research into and our further assumption was, that you ought to be making

actors who could…figure out what's working/what isn't working, figure out where

they want to take it, and then figure out what are potential ways of getting it from

Point A to Point B, basically…[and that] there would be a lot of, sort of, narratives

coming out of it. Just simply say, 'here is the problem I encountered, here's what I

tried to do, it worked kind of, it failed kind of, here's what I'm going to try next' …so

there would be this continual [blog-like] way of posting what's going on and, our

assumption was not so much that people would be getting practical tips from each

other, as they would be part of an ongoing dialectic where people would respond and

help you think about what you were doing or what you weren't doing. And so, we

imagined that being sort of, the sort of intellectual backbone of the WC and, what

would then be spinning off would be by and large experiments.

I quote at length here because Justin is in sense providing an earlier narrative and history of

the UHWC from before the time when Melissa became its director, a history of which most

UHWC administrators and consultants are unaware[51]. Justin explains that from the

beginning, "What we were trying to really prevent ourselves from doing was creating another

fixed institutional structure that wasn't responsive to people."

When Justin's position changed from lower-divisions administrator to creative

writing administrator, he lost track of the particularities of the UHWC. Still, he shares his

perspective of what the UHWC seems to be:

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[51] According to the UHWC website's pre-November 2015 "History of the Writing Center," the UHWC "began humbly in 1999, in the basement of Agnes Arnold Hall." Yet, Justin's history of the UHWC mentions an earlier Center located in the basement of Farish Hall, in addition to the details about the vision for the new UHWC, pre-Melissa's hiring.

And, it seemed from the outside what happened is there became a shift in the model,

and the model, or the aspiration, the aspiration of it being a research center focused

on teaching, focused on being a place where researcher teachers were made, and so

that there was a sense of this bringing people inside an activity where you're

constantly reinventing, that simply disappeared. And what happened is kind of a

franchise model. What it began to do was to seek partners in various units and to

figure out how the writing center could assist those units I guess in teaching the kind

of writing that they wanted taught.

In particular, Justin identifies two other issues with the UHWC partnership model: first, that

the focus become more faculty satisfaction and "getting their students to do what these

people want their students to do" than about student writing, and second, that writing

becomes something solely instrumental, with "no intellectual integrity of interest in and of

itself."

"What happened was a kind of franchise model": The Writing Center Does Consulting

Firm

As Justin explains, the partnership approach has in some ways become a kind of

"franchise model." Another one of the stories that Justin shared with me as part of the history

of the UHWC was about how the UHWC became responsible for teaching English 1300, a

basic writing course that seems to me to be the earliest version of the UHWC partnership.

English 1300 was a course that was originally taught by adjunct faculty from the University

of Houston-Downtown campus who "financially benefited" from coming into UH-Main

Campus and teaching the courses, which Justin described as "the teaching the English

Department didn't want to do."

94

Eventually though, the state of Texas cut the funding and the courses "got kicked back to the English Department with the promise of funding." Originally, the English Department was supposed to hire adjuncts to teach the course, but after a year of this approach, the central administration cut the funding and the English department had to staff the courses and ended up doing so with Graduate Teaching Assistants. Justin picked who he considered to be "really strong student-centered TAs" to teach English 1300, but these TAs ended up exhausted.

After assigning himself two sections of the course to teach, Justin realized that "1300 could not go forward as a regular composition course," and that instead it "needed to be broken into small groups…and to work in a situation that was non-threatening but that gave them [students] fairly specific and practical guidance." Once Justin figured out the best pedagogical approach to teaching the student writers in English 1300, the following unfolded:

> Politically, the Dean's office, and in particular the Associate Dean, Steven Miller of History, was engaged in machinations, and what he wanted to figure out was how to cut the number of TAs in English, and what he had come up with is, if he lowered the verbal SAT score that was acceptable, he could claim anybody that got higher than that score placed out of 1303/1304 and that would save him 30-40% of the TAs each year. So, the WC was beginning to start and there was that kind of thing going and so I said, 'No, you can't do that, I mean, it's absolutely unprincipled, these students really need work. Let's figure out ways to make the teaching of English 1300 more financially viable if that's what you guys are concerned about.' And they said okay, so then what we decided to do, since we couldn't undo the way courses were listed,

was have students sign up for courses, but what they would do is on the first meeting

they would be broken into four small groups, each would then be led by an

undergrad, an advanced undergraduate facilitator and that person would meet with

them on a weekly regular basis and what they would have is four kind of set writing

assignments that they could do as many times as they wanted and that the facilitator

would give them feedback but never grade them. And, at the end of the semester what

they had to do was turn in a portfolio in which they had a one page cover statement

and a selection of their writings. And what we then did was we hired TAs who were

teaching 1303/1304 and I think we paid them something like $25/hour, and said we

want you to speed read the portfolios and the only question you have to ask is, does

this person have a reasonable chance of getting a C- in your course? And, what we

found out is that the pass rate which had been around 30-35% jumped to about 80%

and that the real key was having smart, upper division undergraduates who could

speak practically about writing and were not so large of an authority figure that the

students were intimidated by them or embarrassed about their writing. And, this

became an incredibly successful model and it was going really well…at one point,

Melissa and I went over and asked [a vice-president] for $100,000 and they gave it to

us, and at that point, we realized we were sitting on a goldmine.

This "goldmine" idea of having student writers work with undergraduate writing consultants,

oftentimes in small groups, was one kind of partnership model eventually became a UHWC

staple.

While the some of the partnerships that seem to have grown out of this model do

seem to be more about outsourcing a kind of teaching that university administrators and

disciplinary faculty do not want to teach, others have a greater degree of faculty engagement and interest in teaching students to work better. Rather than wanting less to do with student writing, some UHWC partners instead seem to recognize the value of the undergraduate, peer-to-peer writing environment where some struggling students may feel more comfortable. Collectively, the following components of partnership emerged from these interviews:

Table 3: Administrators and Faculty Perceptions of UHWC Partnerships

Quality of Partnership	Definition	Who Recognized It
Relational	Partnerships are about building "relationships" that "work because [they] trust each other." They are "not sales jobs" and are "not a service."	Eight interviewees from HRM, business, English, math architecture, computer science, art history, and political science
Collaborative	Partners "work together to create something" via "listening" and "talking through the process."	Eleven interviewees from HRM, law, business, English, math, marketing, architecture, biology, art history, computer science, and political science
Measureable	Partners are "upfront on the deliverables," and focus on "outcomes" rather than solely	Four interviewees from HRM, law, business, and computer-science

	on student satisfaction. Partnerships often begin with some kind of assessment of student writing.	
Honest	Partnerships are "built on trust," and thus, partners must try to be "transparent," have "honest discussions," work from "good faith effort," and set "realistic expectations,"	Ten interviewees from HRM, law, business, math, marketing, architecture, biology, computer science, art history, and political science
Flexible and Adaptive[52]	Partners meet regularly to discuss "how the project went" and to "provide feedback" to one another that is then used to "improve for next time."	Seven interviewees from English, math, marketing, architecture, art history, computer science, and political science.

As Table 3 shows, the most interviewees emphasized the ways in which their partnerships with the UHWC were relational, collaborative and honest. These fit closely with the ways in which UHWC administrators described the partnerships (see chapter 2).

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[52] Note the contradiction between building partnerships that are meant to be "flexible and adaptive" and the presence of mechanistic metaphors on page 3 of this chapter.

While my focus in this section has been primarily to share the history of the partnership approach via Justin's story and also to present the partnership approach as it emerged in stories told by university administrators and disciplinary faculty, I also want to note the prevalence of corporate and business-like language used to describe the UHWC partnerships, which made for the most common metaphor, used multiple times by at least eight interviewees. While I spend more time examining this in Chapter 2, I do want expand the story that began this chapter, told by Kyle (business) that resulted in nationally recognized controversy while also being closely linked to the business school's partnership with the UHWC. This story, perhaps, provides an example of how business-minded approaches to writing instruction manifest.

On April 4, 2010, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published an article called "Some Papers Are Uploaded to Bangalore to Be Graded," which called out the business school for using a "virtual TA service" called EduMetry, now Rich Feedback, where student essays are uploaded to a third party site staffed by people from all over the world who hold at least Masters-level degrees. This decision was actually made in collaboration with the UHWC; one of the Center's assistant directors is actually referred to by name and quoted in the *Chronicle* article. Although I did not every ask Kyle (business) and this, he brought it up multiple times during our interview and explained from his perspective how and why using Rich Feedback worked for the business school.

Kyle admitted that both the BWE/BWT extra curricular UHWC partnership and also the course-based (Business Law and Ethics) UHWC partnership are "heavily determined" by how student writing is assessed by a third party vendor: Rich Feedback. In the first partnership, the BWE is sent to the third party who then scores the student writing to

determine who will be required and who will be recommended to complete the BWT. In the second partnership, each essay draft is sent to Rich Feedback for comments. Then, students bring their drafts with Rich Feedback commentary with them to the WC to work through the feedback with a consultant. Recently, since "Rich Feedback was providing such meaningful comments," the Business, Law and Ethics instructor stopped requiring them to go to the WC; consultants were pretty much agreeing with Rich Feedback's commentary and so business students felt that these mandatory visits were unnecessary.

While Kyle and myself were both aware that our interview was meant to be focused on the business school's partnership with the UHWC in particular and the ways that the business school approaches writing in general, much of our conversation was focused on the controversial use of the third party vendor, Rich Feedback, to help them with assessment. First, Kyle explained that their decision to use Rich Feedback was not to determine grades for students, but rather for reasons associated to the cost and time spend training in-house instructors to grade/provide feedback for hundreds of students, as a resource to help them meet accreditation standards, and to increase the consistency and calibration among readers/scorers who could be objective. When they attempted to create an in-house BWE, Kyle explains that it didn't work so they decided to consider a third party. He explains:

> …it [training/hiring graduate students] was a revolving door in terms of training and it was still costing us a lot of money because they were in salary. So, we thought 'what if we identified a third party and off loaded the training and that revolving door to them?' [Then] they would be required to maintain consistency in terms of calibrating was the 1, 2, 3, or 4 on the BWE and providing the written comments that

students would get back on their papers so that then the students could go to the WC

for one-on-one consultations, but offloading the evaluation.

In a sense then, for Kyle (and also for several of the WC administrators I talked with), the

third party would "remove the burden" of evaluating student writing so that then the WC

consultants could focus on conversations about the writing itself. This suggests that the doing

of both: writing evaluation and conversations about improving/revising the writing, was

beyond the scope of what the WC could do. Approximately 50-100 students from each

cohort begin the BWT, and some of them continue to meet with consultants well beyond one

semester's time. Over 1,000 incoming students take the BWE each year, resulting in a huge

amount of writing requiring assessment. Kyle explained that no one in-house was equipped

to deal with this "tsunami of papers to grade all at once."

While Kyle does admit that they've found the use of Rich Feedback to be appropriate

for their accreditation requirements and assessment, not grade-based or curricular purposes,

he also acknowledges that using Rich Feedback is not the most pedagogically effective

option:

> If somebody said we're not going to do a third party, that's fine. Provide us with
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> funding, to fully staff the kind of in-house staff [needed] and we'll do it. Or...instead
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> of hiring another accounting professor, hire a PhD in rhetoric and composition to
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> teach business writing and do that in house. It's all a matter of funding. If you've got
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> the funds, it probably would be better to do it all in house. And, it'd be better to have
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> sections of only 30 students and embed writing in every single [business] course.
>
> That'd be great. That'd be ideal.

In addition to these details, Kyle said that he worked directly with the director of Rich Feedback to create the assessment, and Rich Feedback "customized" the assessment to their particular program. For example, Kyle explained that business faculty, in collaboration with the WC, created the their own rubrics that were then used to determine what the department would consider a 4, 3, 2, and 1. These essay models for each score were all part of the material used by Rich Feedback as "a training tool" that was "in tune with what we want." This scoring/norming and exchange between the business school and Rich Feedback happens periodically. Although the partnership between the WC and the business school in its current form is very linked to Rich Feedback, Kyle says that Rich Feedback "is not intrinsic to the partnership."

A Bitter Pill To Swallow: What University Administrator and Disciplinary Faculty Talk Tells Us

In this chapter, I have shown how university administrators and disciplinary faculty across twelve areas think about writing, approach writing instruction, and perceive writing teachers and the writing center. I have tried to establish the prevalence of metaphor in administrator and faculty talk and also to extract the UHWC partnership approach to WAC/WID. For the field of rhetoric and composition, these findings have important implications for understanding how those outside of our discipline approach and think about writing. In their invaluable book *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies,* Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle five overarching threshold concepts (and 37 in total) of writing that they say are "provide a core for the field in terms of what we know" (xviii). These overarching concepts include the following:

- Concept 1: Writing is a social and rhetorical activity

- Concept 2: Writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms

- Concept 3: Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies

- Concept 4: All writers have more to learn

- Concept 5: Writing is (also always) a cognitive activity

Based on the interviews conducted for this dissertation, I have found preliminary evidence

that suggests university administrators and disciplinary faculty are aware of Concepts 1 and

2, but they are not yet talking about writing in ways that recognize Concepts 3, 4, and 5.

Their interest in collaborating with the UHWC supports their understanding of the social and

rhetorical aspects of writing: many of the mentioned that UHWC partnerships help students

become more aware of audience by requiring them to share earlier drafts of their writing

sooner with peers and UHWC consultants.

Their awareness of the need to prepare students for workplace and professional

writing genres speaks to Concept 2 and offers important implications for writing programs

who may still be operating, much as the University of Michigan was prior to their research in

2015, under the assumption that WAC/WID should aim at preparing students to write in

specialized academic discourses. Perhaps this awareness also speaks a little to the ways in

which writing enacts and creates identities, thus recognizing the importance and role that

writing will play in shaping students' professional and workplace identities (Concept 3).

Yet, this research suggests that university administrators and disciplinary faculty, for

the most part, do not recognize that all writers have more to learn (Concept 4), and actually

work from the opposite belief that writing, once mastered, is a skill that can be transferred

and will run mechanistically (as evidenced in the mechanistic metaphors). Part of this may be

due to disciplinary faculty's tendency to view writing and content as separate, thus making

the teaching of writing easier and more convenient to outsource the UHWC, for some. Others, while committed to improving student writing and to collaborating with the UHWC, also find great value in the way that such a partnership lightens their workload in terms of reading and commenting on student writing.

During several interviews, faculty voiced their surprise at my interest in studying how they teach writing. Linda (math) in particular admitted to me at near the end of our interview that she was "quite startled" when I contacted her to talk about how she teaches writing in her courses. She continued, "I was like 'interested in this? Okay… A little weird, but okay.'" Similarly, at the beginning of my interview with Tara (law) she asked me to explain my project and then told me, "I'm not sure I'll be able to say anything helpful." Then, at the end of the interview 83 minute interview, she admitted, "Wow, I'm surprised I had so much to say."

Since I knew Carol (marketing) and felt somewhat comfortable with her, I asked her directly about how others in her department think about the UHWC and whether or not she ever spoke with them about her work with the UHWC. Her response was "No," followed by what felt like a long silence. She told me "If the WC wants us to think about them, then they need to come to a department meeting…If the WC wants to raise our consciousness so to speak, I don't know any other way." Her response suggested to me that such a question was perhaps odd to ask. Why would they talk about the writing center? Why would anyone be interested in the teaching of writing? Who has much to say about that?

More research with university administrators and disciplinary faculty across a variety of institutions is needed to determine whether or not the five major findings from this chapter are widely held. They also hold important implications for writing centers/programs,

especially those involved with WAC/WID initiatives and/or who work heavily with disciplinary faculty and students. A list of these findings and their implications are provided below.

(1) Administrators and disciplinary faculty use metaphors that suggest writing and the teaching of writing is mechanistic and clinical. University administrators and disciplinary faculty do not always have a language in which to talk about writing and writing instruction in the way that writing studies scholars do. However, they use some specialized discourse of their own (i.e., Tara's (law) use of IRAC, Amir's (architecture) use of critique, Linda's (math) well-defined set) to talk about writing. Metaphors provide a necessary bridge across disciplinary languages to talk about writing and the teaching of writing. While it may be difficult and dangerous to claim that the use of certain metaphors mean particular things, it is still worth investigating probable/possible meanings from them.

The use of mechanistic metaphors evident in the idea of writing centers as places staffed by "counselors" who then "diagnose" writing issues shows that the remedial history of writing centers is still in our present. For example, in "What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Our Metaphors: A Cultural Critique of Clinic, Lab, and Center," Peter Carino recognizes how the climate of open admissions in the 1960s-70s led to the use of "clinic" and "lab," both of which, despite best intentions, came to be thought of as remedial (see also Boquet 1999; Lerner 2007; Macauley and Mauriello 2007).

Another problematic assumption embedded in this metaphor is the way in which it assumes that student writers are the ones with the deficiencies and the administrators/faculty simply have the job of sending them to the proper place to receive diagnosing and counseling. However, the interviews conducted for this study among both the UHWC

administrators and the university administrators/ disciplinary faculty point toward a common problem of how the teaching of writing is approached in terms of the assignment length and timing, confusing assignment prompts without explicit guidelines, and the lack of necessary time for revision.

Finally, since university administrators and disciplinary faculty talk about the teaching of writing as burdensome and their partnering with the UHWC as necessary for their own human survival, there may be a stronger potential to consider the partnership to be a way of outsourcing the teaching of writing. When this occurs, the likelihood of collaboration diminishes because the emphasis is on alleviating the workload rather than improving student writing. As Rick (art history) noted, incorporating writing studios does require more work from faculty, even though for him, "it's totally worth it." Thus, writing centers/programs should be careful when committing to WAC/WID partnerships and make it clear that they expect to work with, not for, university administrators and disciplinary faculty.

(2) Administrators and disciplinary faculty focus more on preparing students for workplace writing, rather than discipline-specific academic discourse. As Gere et al. have pointed out, traditional approaches to WAC/WID within composition studies do not account for a more workplace writing, non-academic, beyond the university writing scenario. Thus, it is crucial for writing programs/centers to rethink what it means for students to develop the ability to think/write with disciplinary knowledge.

To my knowledge, first year writing programs and writing centers do not think of workplace or professional writing to be in their purview. If writing programs/centers want to (or claim to) focus on preparing students for writing in the university, then these kinds of writing should be at least somewhat on their radar, especially because the significant

differences between writing for the workplace and writing for the academy have been noted fairly extensively (Beaufort; Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Pare; Faber). Thus, if we are to prepare our teachers and consultants to work with students on more workplace and quasi-professional writing projects, we need to do the following:

a) Prepare teachers and consultants to think of student writing as geared toward new kinds of audiences, rather than solely for disciplinary-expert professors (see Fred's—a political science instructor—assignments in the appendix that are to be written for a non-academic yet professional audience).

b) Introduce teachers and consultants to writing in new genres that are more common in workplace scenarios. In other words, knowledge about traditional research essays and basic science report writing are not sufficient and often do not fit actual writing assignments students may be doing.

c) The overwhelming emphasis on teaching writing in such a way that the meaning is clear and accessible to non-experts challenges the assumption that specialist, or discipline-specific, teachers/consultants are preferable readers and teachers of student writing than generalists. Within writing center studies, this finding challenges Susan Dinitz and Susanmarie Harrington's "The Role of Disciplinary Expertise in Shaping Writing Tutorials" (2014), which argues that disciplinary tutors are better. While this finding may hold true for student writers who are asked by their instructors to attempt to master the academic conventions of a particular discipline, it be less true when student writing is geared toward non-expert audiences.

(3) Administrators and disciplinary faculty view discipline-specific content and writing as separate; content does not impact form and form does not impact content. This has

somewhat tricky implications for the field of rhetoric and composition because of the ways in which our claims that we are the most qualified to teach writing has ensured our need in the university structure. This is made visible in the UHWC, where the administrators use the writing vs. content binary to: (a) ensure faculty that the WC will not overstep it's reach and will maintain a somewhat submissive position; (b) to further validate their own expertise and work with students. To be clear, I am a writing studies teacher and consultant and I do believe that I have (and we have) scholarly and disciplinary expertise when it comes to the teaching of writing and the best practices for teaching writing. I also recognize the pressure all disciplines seem to be under to make themselves valuable within the university climate today that suffers from increasing budget cuts.

However, I also believe, as much of our field does, that content and form are always influencing one another in writing and that separating them sets up a false binary and problematic assumptions about writing and the teaching of writing. For example, if writing can be taught separate from content, then it might make sense to think of it as primarily skills-based, and that kind of thinking is problematic. If we work from writing studies research that argues that learning genres should occur within their particular disciplinary contexts (Barwarshi; Bazerman; Devitt; Freedman; Freedman and Adam; Freedman, Adam and Smart, Pare; Wardle), then perhaps our focus should be more on preparing disciplinary graduate teaching assistants and faculty to teach writing in their disciplines by sharing best practices of composition, rather than doing the majority of our teaching from a solely English-studies expertise and perspective. As Wardle argues, perhaps in first year writing we should "teach students *about writing* in the university." As part of such teaching, we might show students how and why content and form are deeply intertwined in writing.

(4) English teachers, according to the interviewees, overemphasize expressive, formulaic, open-ended writing in ways that do not prepare students to write in other university contexts. Again, the implications here are tricky. We as a field should ask ourselves: (1) Is this a fair reflection of our current approaches to teaching writing?; (2) Do we agree that teaching writing according to this approach aligns well with research-supported best practices in our field?; (3) Do we (or should we) care about the way we are perceived outside of our own departments?. These findings remind me of Elizabeth Wardle's valuable article "'Mutt Genres' and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?" in which she argues that perhaps our goal in first year writing should not be to "promise to teach students *to write* in the university"(765). Wardle further argues that, based on her own analysis of approaches to first year writing, most assignment sheets can be described as "mutt genres," which she defines as genres "assigned to mimic genres that mediate activities in other activity systems, but within the FYC system their purposes and audiences are vague or even contradictory" (774).

(5) Business-minded writing centers that work from a partnership approach speak across disciplinary contexts and can benefit university administrators and disciplinary faculty in ways that sometimes benefit students but other times do not. This research suggests that there may be some benefits to working in accordance with a business-like model, especially because it speaks across disciplines and helps alleviate a common concern that most writing programs (especially writing centers) face: how will we continue to be funded? The UHWC's decision to charge faculty and colleges (especially the big ones like law, business, and hotel and restaurant management) provides it with more resources to do it's work and also allows for the UHWC to be involved with student writing on a larger scale

at the programmatic level. Writing centers also may be able to offer valuable insight into how to create meaningful assessment of student writing, design explicit and clear assignments, and aid faculty in developing tools (rubrics) and approaches to evaluating writing. These services can and sometimes should be financed by colleges that are well funded.

Yet, there are also drawbacks to writing programs/centers working from a corporate mindset. One major issue is the ways in which the monetary ties to university administrators and disciplinary faculty make their satisfaction important for "continued business." Thus, the student writer and his or her concerns may become less important. An emphasis on faculty as client or customer seems to reinforce neoliberal ideologies that value efficiency, profit, and product in ways that conflict with prominent writing center pedagogy that emphasizes collaboration, community, and the composing process (Hallman 2016).

At a time when the university is strongly influenced by such neoliberal ideologies that favor privatization, [53] corporatization, free markets, and individualization over the public, regulatory practices and social welfare (Duggan), we must ask ourselves: who benefits from the use of business-model terminology in the WC? How does the labeling of WC practitioners as "consultants" and student writers as "clients" change the ways that WC practitioners view themselves, the ways that student writers view WC practitioners, and the ways that WC practitioners view student writers and student writers view themselves? Is the seeming public and scholarly preference for and use of business-model terminology the WC's attempt to professionalize itself in response to the growing pressure faced by universities to corporatize? If our conversations about WC terminology seem to be in a

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[53] Like Nancy Grimm, I use the term ideology "as a way to call attention to a system of intertwined ideas, beliefs, and values designed to maintain the status quo" (80) and to refer to the manufacturing of an unconscious consent that begins to feel "naturalized through discourses that suggest the obvious ways that 'normal' people are supposed to think, write, act, speak, and believe" (81).

moment of flux, what potential might the WC have for being a place of resistance to the reinforcement of the business-like terminologies and neoliberal ideologies that are already accepted and used across the university?

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 have set a context for understanding the teaching of writing as it occurs in partnership with the UHWC. In particular, I have shown how the partnership-approach to WAC/WID is understood and practiced by UHWC administrators and university administrators/disciplinary faculty. To get a better sense of the particularities involved in these partnerships and to determine the extent to which innovative writing instruction occurs (or doesn't) in the context of these partnerships, in Chapters 4 and 5 I look more closely at two UHWC partnerships: one with the Department of English through the hybrid first year writing initiative that functions in connection with online studio groups facilitated by first year graduate students in English who are trained by the UHWC, and the other with the College of Technology's Electrical Engineering Department, where students meet face-to-face in small groups with a UHWC consultant to discuss their multimodal team writing projects in a four-course structure.

Chapter 4:

Teaching (and) Writing in Hybrid Spaces

My participation in the hybrid/writing studio partnership as a member of both the English Department and the Writing Center make this chapter different from the rest. Thus, I start with a story of my own.

At the 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication in St. Louis, I was a prospective UH graduate student and thus decided to attend a UH-led panel called "Thirdspace Portals: A Hybrid/Writing Studio Model for First-Year Composition." I listened to a facilitator,[54] an instructor, and a WC administrator speak about piloting the first hybrid writing courses with online studio facilitators. I sensed collaboration but also complication and something very new and strange. While I don't remember exactly what was said, I do remember this—an uncomfortable, somewhat anxious, visceral reaction to what I considered to be a radical approach to teaching first year writing. I remember wondering—*they do what to teach FYW? Are all of their classes like that? Surely, I wouldn't have to teach that way if I decided to go to UofH, would I?*

I never would have guessed that my own dissertation research would explore this partnership more closely, and that I would embrace the online space. I was part of the first new TA cohort who, instead of teaching FYW, would spend my first year in the UHWC facilitating studio groups, mostly for hybrid FYW courses.[55] My experience as a facilitator was frustrating. I was a new teacher who was eager to keep teaching, and as a facilitator, I

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[54] A facilitator is someone from the UHWC who leads students through peer-review like conversations about writing. The facilitator functions as both a discussion leader and a respondent to each student draft/post, in addition to writing the prompt that begins discussion, raising questions and trying to make connections across student comments, and wrapping up each studio session.

[55] In addition to facilitating online groups for English, I also led face-to-face studios for a section of art history and a section of human resource development. About 80% of my work and that of the other TAs in my cohort was rooted in the WC/English Dept. p-ship.

had trouble getting students to engage in the online studios. This led me to put together a presentation for the 2012 December Teaching Conference about student resistance to studios, where I analyzed studio conversations and identified three kinds of student resistance: absolute, engaged, and critical. I concluded that, in the FYW hybrid/studio course, "we are pushing boundaries and challenging traditional models of writing."

Despite my struggle as a facilitator, I requested to teach hybrid courses for the following year. I did so based on two assumptions about teaching hybrid/online writing: first, I believed it was the way of the future (and thus would make me more hirable), and second, I thought it would be less of a troublesome time commitment (meaning that I would spend half the time on campus). Yet as I began to teach the hybrid course, I became engaged in the challenge of figuring out how to teach one class in two spaces (online and face-to-face), all the while realizing that there seemed to be little research about how to teach in such a setting, and no local research/experience at UH in particular upon which I could draw. I tell this story of my own experience with FYW hybrid/online facilitating and teaching because it has absolutely informed by decision to conduct this research.

My initial (and sometimes still ongoing) resistance to teaching online is not unique. For instance, other scholars have raised questions about the speed at which writing instruction has moved online and called for more online writing research (Blair and Monske; Peterson; Lederman and Jaschik; Reinheimer). While some have attempted to answer this call, most scholars focus on the teaching of writing online in either absolute terms (i.e., the course is either fully online and never meets face-to-face) or general terms (i.e., the course includes the use of digital tools, like a blog, but still meets primarily face-to-face).[56] Thus,

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[56] For instance, see Krause and Lowe 2012; Hewett and DePew 2015; Stackey, Nguyen, and Grabill 2015; Monske and Blair forthcoming 2017.

the idea of a "hybrid" or "blended" writing course is used to mean any writing course that has online components, rather than one that evenly splits its time between face-to-face and online instruction. While I can see the overlap among all web-enhanced courses, my research in this chapter aligns with Jason Snart, who argues that "hybrid is its own unique kind of course," in part because "[it] is a balance of onsite and online environment and pedagogical strategies" (94). Thus, this chapter is particularly interested in considering the hybrid-writing course, not writing courses that merely have online components.

In addition, the hybrid-course at UH presents a unique scenario for studying writing instruction because it is also linked to an online writing center-facilitated studio. While WC scholars have developed research around approaches to online tutoring, the focus has been primarily on the one-on-one model in either asynchronous (not in real time, like email exchange) or synchronous (in real time, like live-chat) settings (Katsman Breuch and Racine; Healy; Van Horne; Harris and Pemberton; Coogan; Hewett).

Since this chapter also explores online tutoring linked to FYW, it builds on previous writing center research that explores collaborations between these two sites for writing instruction. For example, in their recent edited collection "Special Double Issue on Course-Embedded Writing Support Programs in Writing Centers" (2014) Russell Carpenter, Scott Whiddon, and Kevin Dvorak include six articles about WCs working with specific FYW courses. While these articles offer valuable insight into how students, faculty, consultants, and WC administrators can work together, all but one occur in one-on-one, face-to-face scenarios.[57] Thus, this dissertation adds to current research about FYW/WC collaborations by

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[57] In particular, DeLoach et al., Pagnac et al., Gentile, Racia-Klotz, Titus et al., and Bugdal and Holtz all take place in face-to-face settings. DeLoach et al. explores "roaming" and small group tutoring, in addition to one-on-one. Bugdal and Holtz provide the only small-group based scenario.

extending the site beyond the classroom into an online setting where the UHWC tutor serves as a group facilitator.[58]

In what remains of this chapter, I update the story of the hybrid/online studio partnership between the WC and the English Department that Miley (mentioned before?) began in 2013. Whereas Miley focused more on the online studio "talk" about writing, I root my research in the stories hybrid instructors tell about teaching during focus groups and interviews.[59] First, I begin by providing a short history of the partnership and its changes over the past five years. Second, I provide insight into how hybrid instructors conceive of time, work, student writing, and the social dynamics in a course that meets both face-to-face and online. Third, I share one example of a recent online studio conversation described to me by one UHWC administrator as a "negative interaction," yet, I argue that such conversations can be authentic and productive.

Also in this chapter, the reader will see how the UHWC counternarrative challenges the grand narrative of WCs as "places where all students to go to get one-on-one tutoring." Instead, the UHWC is a place where new TAs, not students, go for training in the teaching of writing and where hybrid/online writing curriculums are developed. This chapter also forwards the UHWC counternarrative by moving beyond the grand narrative's emphasis on "one-on-one tutoring" and into the online studio space where facilitators work with students in groups.

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[58] All six articles work from a course-embedded program model, where consultants are embedded in specific classes, and thus involve the writing consultants' regular attendance to face-to-face classes. However, the UHWC writing facilitators only meet their students face-to-face once, and while they do have access to some course documents, they are not present during class conversations/activities that occur face-to-face or online (the studio shell is placed outside the course shell in Blackboard Learn).

[59] Since I knew that the UHWC does assess partnership projects and the English Department recently conducted an assessment of student writing in 2012, I assumed that would be recent assessment data of student writing in hybrid/studio courses to include in the appendix of this dissertation. However, no such data exists publicly and thus is absent.

A Short History of the Hybrid English/WC Partnership

The UofH Department of English is an odd bird. Not only is it made up of five distinct graduate degrees (MA in Literaure; MFA in Creative Writing—fiction, poetry, or non-fiction; PhD in Literature; PhD in Creative Writing—fiction, poetry, or non-fiction; and PhD in Rhetoric, Composition and Pedagogy), but it also has 50 faculty members, none of which are technically Writing Program Administrators (WPAs). Yet, the Lower Divisions Committee, in part through its collaborations with UHWC has in the last three years done the following:

- Revised the FYW curriculum to meet the new 2014 Texas Core Standards

- Instituted hybrid first year writing classes (English 1303 and 1304)

- Piloted fully-online first year writing classes (English 1303 and 1304)

- Adopted new common textbooks for first year writing classes (English 1303 and 1304)

In addition, the larger structure of graduate student teaching has changed drastically, since incoming graduate students spend their first year as UHWC studio facilitators, primarily within the context of first year writing, but also in other disciplines. Thus, new TAs are, as Beth Hewett claims in *Reading to Learn Writing to Teach* (2015), learning how to teach in three distinct ways simultaneously: how to teach writing, how to teach online, and how to teach writing online. Although these graduate students are not developing assignments, designing syllabi, or assigning grades per se, they are writing discussion board prompts, responding to student writing, and facilitating online discussions about student writing among students.

This hybrid partnership between the English Department and the WC was established after a successful pilot study led by Miley,[60] who was the Assistant Director of Writing in the Disciplines (WID) at the UofH WC and also a graduate student in rhetoric and composition. Seeking an alternative to the generic workshop model, Miley approached WID via an interactive, face-to-face studio group approach.[61] Her practices were disrupted when one of her partners from the College of Technology requested online studios instead, since her course itself was already hybrid. Eventually, Miley agreed to try them and after their success, she created another pilot study: online studios in hybrid first year writing classes.

When it was first designed, the hybrid partnership was thought of as beneficial to all parties involved. As Mary Gray argues in her forthcoming chapter "Something Gained: The Role of Online Studios in a Hybrid First-year Writing Course," the hybrid/studio courses "addressed needs of students, graduate student instructors and administrators" because they allowed for more flexible scheduling, provided the opportunity for graduate students to gain hybrid/online teaching experience and pedagogical training, and required less classroom space, thus making scheduling easier on the university at large (Gray, forthcoming). Logistically, the course involves the following components, per Gray's description:

Table 4: Structure of the Hybrid/Studio-supported Writing Class

Face-to-Face (1 day per week)	Online Class Activity (Conducted in Blackboard)	Online Writing Studio (Conducted in Blackboard)
Traditional face-to-face instructor-led activities, e.g.	Weekly instructor-directed online activities, e.g., online	Additional writing support in facilitator-guided online

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[60] This partnership with the English department is the first since the writing center's intentional move outside of the English department in 2002[60].

[61] Miley's approach was based on the model established by Grego and Thompson in *Writing in Third Spaces*.

lecture, group activities, individual student presentations, in-class peer review	blogs, journals, discussions, quizzes, instructor-created or outside videos, research activities	Writing Studios. Small groups of students (5-6) asynchronously post and respond to each other's works-in-progress during a weeklong studio session

Table 4 shows the three-part course structure that hybrid courses follow. Hybrid instructor syllabi present week-by-week following the same format, thus suggesting to students the course should be thought of as three somewhat separate, but also equal, components. In most courses, there are three studios (one for each major assignment), and students are asked to participate in each studio three times[62].

Also worth noting is the dependence of the hybrid/studio course on the collaboration between the UHWC and the Department of English. In an interview with Walt, the English Department Chair, he explained that "it [the development of the hybrid course] was always driven by an attempt to get the best in multimodal teaching in the department and it could only be done with the collaboration of the WC. Absolutely essential." In particular, Walt noted the UHWC's resources, space, budget, and environment as "kind of a third space…that allows for innovation to take place much more creatively than if you're working through the coordinating board." Walt also mentioned that him and Melissa (WC director) approached the Provost for funding together, and received approximately $135,000.00 of support for the project. Surprisingly, in his story of getting the hybrid/online studio partnership started with

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[62] For example, the first major writing assignment begins Studio 1. Then, students might participate in a brainstorming studio (studio 1-A), an introduction/thesis statement studio (studio 1-B), and a final, full-rough draft studio (studio 1-C). Then, this same kind of structure is followed for Studios 2 and 3.

the UHWC, Walt does not mention consulting the rhetoric and composition faculty at all, and instead seemed to bring them in once the money had been secured and the plan to move forward was in motion.

In practice, the UHWC hosts professional development workshops held by invited online scholars in the field of composition, host the orientation for new English TAs, hybrid instructors, and fully-online instructors, and provide ongoing training for an entire year to new TAs in English who work as online studio facilitators. These new teachers rarely have training in rhetoric and composition or experience in teaching composition prior to their time at UH, and primarily come from literature or creative writing backgrounds. Yet, the UHWC administrators are responsible for much of the TA training (especially in the first year when TAs serve as online studio facilitators) and curriculum development that otherwise may not be happening in the English Department.[63]

After their initial pilot years, the FYW hybrid/studio model grew quickly; when it began in Fall 2010, there were 9 sections; by Fall 2015, there were 24 sections. This is somewhat surprising, since there was no assessment of student writing showing that this model led to improved student writing. Yet, in 2012, Miley, along with co-authors Jamison Kovach and Miguel Ramos from the College of Technology, assessed student writing in the College of Technology's hybrid/studio course and found that "students who participated in online writing studios performed better (i.e., at least one rubric level higher) on their final written assignments for the course compared to students who did not" (363). These results

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[63] These UHWC administrators have no background in rhetoric and composition as a discipline and little to no experience with teaching first year writing.

were then seemingly assumed to be sufficient evidence of the hybrid/studio partnership

model in general.[64]

Since Miley's and Gray's research about the hybrid/studio pilot years, several

changes have occurred. During interviews with Molly (and English Department hybrid/studio

FYW administrator, developer, and teacher), and Max and Anne (both UHWC middle-

administrators who work specifically with the hybrid/studio FYW partnership), the following

changes were noted:

Table 5: Pedagogical Changes in the UHWC/English hybrid/studio FYW Partnership

Pilot/Early Years (2010-2011)	Current Model (2014-2015)
One UHWC administrator wrote process-driven studio prompts that asked students to share the details of assignment prompts, class content and essay drafts.	All facilitators write individualized, content-driven studio prompts based on instructors' course materials; rarely do facilitators ask for an entire draft.
UHWC facilitators were experienced undergraduate peer tutors and hybrid instructors were adjunct English faculty.	UHWC facilitators are first year English graduate students and hybrid instructors are second/third year English graduate students.
Hybrid instructors allowed the online studio to serve as the online portion of the course and online studios were held within the course, making them visible to instructors.	Hybrid instructors develop the online portion of the course using discussion boards, private journals, and blogs. The online studios are located in a separate shell that is inaccessible

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[64] The University of Houston Writing Center's 2012 Annual Report notes that, "In a quantitative assessment of a typical writing studio, TELS 4343 (an upper-level course in the College of Technology), students who participated in studio meetings raised their writing score one full rubric point over the course of the semester" (10), and then a few sentences later that "the Writing Center will engage in 20 course partnerships employing the writing studio methodology in the Spring 2013 semester. It is estimated that the total number of 822 students will be enrolled."

	to instructors.
Hybrid instructors were required to count studios as 30% of students' overall grades.	Hybrid instructors weigh studios in any way that they want, mostly ranging from 10-30%.

Table 5 shows the major pedagogical, administrative, and structural changes that occurred in the hybrid/studio partnership over the past five years. The UHWC facilitators became graduate students (rather than peer tutors) and were given more autonomy (began to write their own content-driven prompts). The hybrid instructors also became graduate students (rather than adjunct faculty), began to develop online content, and made their own decisions about how to count or grade studio participation.

While the student writing produced in the hybrid/studio English partnership has not been assessed recently,[65] there has been assessment of student satisfaction, levels of confidence, and perceptions of the course and its impact (Gray, forthcoming). Similar data was included in the University of Houston Writing Center's 2014 Annual Report, which notes that 66.7% of surveyed students agreed that hybrid and face-to-face course formats are equally effective.[66] Students' continued satisfaction with these classes and their increase in writing confidence (both with over 70% agreement) have contributed to the programs' growth and sustainability. Gray's important research also shows strong consistency over time among students' perceptions. Still, this research is not sufficient for indicating the hybrid/studio model's success in terms of improving student writing. However, student

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[65] According to University of Houston Writing Center Annual reports for 2012, 2013, and 2014, there has been no formal assessment of English 1303/1304 hybrid/studio partnerships. Assessment of other partnerships is mentioned, although the results are not shared in the report.

[66] The number of students is not mentioned in the UHWC's report.

satisfaction and interest in the hybrid/studio online course structure may be of more value to upper administrators than best practices in the teaching of writing.

Yet as teachers of writing, we need to be concerned with the quality of student writing, and we also should know better than to assume that evidence of success in a hybrid/studio online model for a discipline-specific course of upper-level students is not necessarily indicative of that same model's success in FYW. In fact, Michelle Miley notes in her forthcoming chapter "Writing Studios as Countermonument: Reflexive Moments from Online Writing Studio in Writing Center Partnerships" that there were some complications involved in moving the hybrid/studio model itself into FYW. For instance, unlike the hybrid/studio TELS 4343 course, instructors in English resisted the separation of spaces and attached a high percentage grade to the value of students' participation in studios. In addition, prompts (also called HostPosts) that were intended to encourage process became too concerned with the eventual product (Miley). Although she ultimately argues that "the Studio Model has become the monument," Miley also notes that she believes the project's "fossilization" is directly related to the status of the instructors' involved, who are primarily in contingent, and often temporary, positions. Thus, there is little time to dedicate to research/assessment of the project, especially if the current approach is functioning comfortably.

Yet, it should not be overlooked that neither the UHWC nor the Department of English have done any large-scale, programmatic assessment of student writing in regards to these recent changes that has been made public. In particular, we might ask: what is the impact of removing new TAs from the role of FYW instructor of record? What is the impact of hybrid courses on the quality of student writing? What is the impact of fully-online

courses on the quality of student writing? Not only are these questions about student writing assessment important, but we also might ask, how do teachers new to FYW develop when first introduced to online pedagogies rather than face-to-face pedagogies? What best practices do hybrid/online FYW instructors use when compared with face-to-face instructors? How does the constant shift of role (from facilitator to instructor) and teaching environment (from fully-online, to hybrid, to fully online, to face-to-face) impact teacher development?

The research in this current chapter begins to fill a gap in the local research by interviewing the hybrid instructors about their perceptions of teaching writing. In addition to conducting one-on-one interviews, I wanted to get a sense of how the instructors interacted with one another, especially as they told stories about teaching hybrid FYW and talked about their experiences as new instructors.

The six hybrid instructors who participated in a focus group and interviews are a dynamic bunch. Two of these instructors are PhD students in rhetoric/composition (Mike and Scott) and the other four are graduate students in creative writing (Elaine, John, and Lucy are PhD students. Nick is an MFA student). With the exception of Nick, who is a first-time teacher, the other hybrid instructors have a wealth of experience teaching first year writing, primarily in face-to-face environments.[67] All of the hybrid instructors spent their first graduate year at UH working as WC facilitators for hybrid courses, so they did have some familiarity with Blackboard Learn and with leading online discussions about student writing. All hybrid instructors noted that they were interested in teaching hybrid because, as Mike put it, "it seems to be the way ahead" and/or would make them more competitive on the academic job market, and many also wanted to teach it because of the greater flexibility.

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[67] Only John has previous experience with hybrid teaching.

Both Nick and Lucy also had pedagogical interests in the hybrid format because of the way it may work better for students.

In the section that follows, I share insight into how the hybrid/online writing course works from the perspective of the hybrid instructors. First, they emphasize the new sense of time and space the hybrid course creates, especially in terms of breaking down the online and face-to-face components and figuring out how work operates in the space. Second, the instructors discuss how the hybrid environment impacts student writing and the social dynamics of the course. These interviews reflect how UHWC-trained English TAs understand their work in the hybrid course.

"Reading the Textbook in my Jammies and Lesson Planning with my Dog": Adapting to a New Sense of Space and Time

In conversations with hybrid instructors during individual interviews and the focus group, there were multiple structural/environmental challenges that surfaced. The online component was perceived as something that should be equivalent to 90 minutes of in class time. Navigating how to represent 90 minutes of in class work online and to balance that with additional out of class work (or homework) was something that instructors struggled with throughout the semester. For the hybrid instructors, concepts like time and work were complicated by the online space, a difficulty that resonated with my own experiences as a hybrid instructor. In addition to these challenges, there was a sense that figuring these things out was necessary because, in many ways, instructors felt as though they were exploring unknowns in the teaching of writing. In other words, there was no handbook to consult and there were not many experienced hybrid instructors giving advice or telling them how to translate face-to-face teaching to the online space. Overall, I noticed four major themes

related to navigating a new class structure/environment.

Connecting the Online Component to the Course

Of the challenges that hybrid instructors faced, finding ways to make the online portion of the course feel like its part of the class (for both instructors and students) was at the forefront. While hybrid instructors did sense that they could do more with online space than they had originally thought, they were still unsure of *how* to do it. For Mike, this was a surprise. He admitted that getting used to having only one weekly face-to-face meeting has been a slow process for him, but that he was "discovering that I'm able to do more with the online space than perhaps I thought I was, and I need to take advantage of that." For instance, when he needed to miss a couple face-to-face meetings due to conference travel and family-related issues, Mike struggled with how to make up for lost time. Then, he realized that he could create video lessons, just like those that a colleague who teaches fully online does. Mike explained

> Last year I sat and watched Patrick make all these video lessons and it hadn't occurred to me that I could do the same thing, in this space. I was like, why did I not think of that? My mind, I guess, is still fixed on the brick and mortar structure and hasn't yet freed itself to say, how much more can I do with this?[68] Now the light is sort of coming on, and I need to make this work to my students' advantage and not feel like I'm at a disadvantage because I'm only in the class half the time.

Mike's recognition of the ways in which awareness doesn't necessarily translate into pedagogical habit is reflective of the other hybrid instructors' experiences. Hybrid instructors themselves had trouble viewing the online portion of the course as part of the class, rather

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[68] Although Mike seemed to perceive of video lessons as something different from approaches used in traditional "brick and mortar structure[s]," such pedagogical methods attempt to mimic the face-to-face lecture style approach to content delivery.

than something tacked on, and they realized that this attempt at change would take mental work, not for them, but also for their students. Hybrid instructors both recognize their own tendencies to think of the online portion as "extra" rather than "inter" curricular, and also seem to fear, as Mike does here, that students often come to the hybrid classroom with the same assumptions and habits of mind. Despite Mike's recognition of this challenge, he still presents the scenario of the hybrid class as being "only in the class half the time." Thus, he is, in a sense, unintentionally perpetuating the idea that the face-to-face portion is the only "in class" time, while at the same time carrying over face-to-face practices as he fills the online classes. For instance, although Mike seemed to perceive of video lessons as something different from approaches used in traditional "brick and mortar structure[s]," such pedagogical methods attempt to mimic the face-to-face lecture style approach to content delivery.

Similarly, Elaine compares the online portion of the hybrid class to "homework," another traditional face-to-face practice. She explained, "When I do person-to-person [face-to-face teaching] all week, I very rarely give homework, and this is basically just giving homework. Like, substantial, meaningful assignments." Elaine's comparison here is not entirely inaccurate; the online portion of the course functions asynchronously, meaning that students are not meeting in real time. This means that oftentimes students are checking in and out, sharing their work/assignments as they finish them by meeting preset deadlines. However, this conflation raises an important question: how should hybrid instructors distinguish between "homework" (out of class work), and the online portion of the course (equivalent to 90 minutes of in-class time)? Does a distinction between the two matter?

While hybrid instructors recognized the challenges that a hybrid format involves, some

126

noted the ways in which such a structure may lend itself better to scaffolding writing assignments. For example, Lucy confronts the challenge of making the online space part of the classroom by directly linking it to the students' larger writing assignments:

> My goal is to make the online space directly connected to the class in some ways, so a lot of it has been, no matter what, you now have to start…we did introductions one day, we did a thesis day, we talked about multiple body paragraphs. I've liked watching their essays develop. And, I've been able to catch a few of them, like "Hey, that's not a thesis, we should address that before you write the rest of the paper." That has been really lovely, and it's much harder to pull that off in a face-to-face full time class.

Here, Lucy notes the ways that the weekly online discussion board exercises provide a useful structure for breaking down larger assignments and getting students to work on them piece by piece. This prevents students from procrastinating and allows the instructor to, as Lucy puts it, "track their [students'] essays" by requiring students to post smaller "chunks" or parts of their writing assignments at a time, thus giving her a sense of how students are building up to the full essay.[69] Nick also mentioned that he found that student engagement in the online portion of the course increased when he more directly linked their work to larger writing assignments. At first, Nick was using the online space as a place for students to practice the strategies they were learning in class so that they could then apply those same strategies when they started to write their essays: students did the work, "but a lot of them seemed like

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[69] One major concern I had while listening to the hybrid instructors was how they seem to be doing nearly the same kinds of online activities as they did as UHWC facilitators (and as the facilitators assigned to their courses also do). Lucy's description sounds almost identical to how a studio might run. Thus, there may be quite a bit of overlap between the instructor-led online portion and the facilitator-led studio portion of the hybrid course. Not only might this prove boring an unproductive for students, but it also suggests that TAs are carrying over the same practices, despite the change in role (from facilitator to instructor) and environment (from online to hybrid).

they were just doing it so they could check them off." When Nick tweaked his approach "to make it more geared towards their papers" by having students write about the same sources they would use for their first larger writing assignment, "they got a little more involved with it then, because they were like, well, if I do a good job on it, then I can integrate it into my paper."

Navigating a New Sense of Time

As instructors transition to the hybrid writing course, they have to change their sense of classroom-based time and make decisions about how to spend their 90 minutes face-to-face and their 90 minutes online. While not all instructors necessarily think about the break down this way, hybrid classes are technically conceived of this way and presented to instructors as such during orientation the summer before they start to teach. Mike voices his difficulty with figuring out what 90 minutes of class time looks like in the online space:

> I do find myself wondering from time to time, am I doing enough? Have I assigned enough work? And then, airing on the side of caution, perhaps not giving them the type of substantial assignments I otherwise want to because I'm afraid I might be overloading them…I'm not sure what the facilitator is doing, or how I would spend 90 minutes worth of online work to make up for the Tuesday class they're not in. I haven't quite figured that out yet…when I get the responses back from students and I read and it doesn't look like they engaged it well enough, then I think, well, maybe I should have pushed them further and given them more…I think I just get discouraged when I don't see the results from the students, like 90 minutes worth of investment, in the results I'm getting back online.

While this kind of uncertainty about how much work is appropriate to assign students is also

experienced during face-to-face teaching, it is further complicated by most instructors' lack of experience with both teaching and taking online courses. Mike admits to being unsure of how he would spend 90 minutes worth of online work, trying to imagine what the students might be able to accomplish in that amount of time, and attempts to set his expectations that way. This activity is especially challenging when teaching online, since most instructors have little to no experience as students enrolled in online courses. He also voices another valid concern here that's an element of the hybrid course at UofH specifically—the studio component. Here, Mike veers on the conservative side to make sure that he's not overloading the students with too much work. Even though we are told as new hybrid instructors that we should teach our courses in such a way that we ignore the studio element, what Mike suggests here is that doing so is nearly impossible.

What's also evident above is that same tendency to view online work as not an actual part of the course. Mike talks about not being sure how to represent 90 minutes "of online work to make up for the Tuesday class they're not in." Rather than seeing the online portion as a significant part of the course, here it is presented as though it is "making up for" a lack that the class inherently has (meeting only once face-to-face). Since our students in first year writing are often, although not always, new to college work, Mike worries that they might think that since the hybrid class physically meets half the time, it is also half the work. Although he is careful not to generalize, Mike suggests that keeping up with hybrid coursework requires a level of maturity and initiative that some students may not have in their first year. Mike also raises important questions about the extent to which we can gauge how much students are spending on their online course work.

In addition to figuring out how face-to-face class time translates to online class time,

most hybrid instructors struggled with first, how to best spend the 90 minutes of face-to-face time, and second, to what extent certain kinds of work could be "translated" to the online space.[70] Similar to Mike's recognition that he could actually do more pedagogically online than he at first thought, John too began to realize that some of the activities he usually did face-to-face work just as well online. For example, sharing videos and having students conduct visual/rhetorical analyses through informal blog writing worked well, and also gave him the opportunity to more directly tie such assignments to their essays. John explains, "I'm always pulling it back to their essay and the structure of their essay." John was motivated to move some work online because he had less face-to-face time with students, but the online space actually ended up lending itself well for what he was trying to accomplish.

For Lucy, the hybrid structure has caused her to "cut out busy work." She admits to feeling like she has less time for community building and covering tangential writing concepts or skills,[71] and that she speeds up, moving more quickly than she normally would because of the need to cover more materials.[72] This also leads to less time for review and repetition of material with students. For example, she talks about teaching students rhetorical devices in one class period and then trying to review them a week later; students don't often remember. Lucy explains, "You can't remind them three times a week like you do in the face-to-face.

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[70] Similar to the challenges that new TAs face when teaching traditional face-to-face courses, these TAs also struggled with figuring out how to productively use class time. Yet, the additional complication in the hybrid scenario is that instructors are teaching half the time face-to-face and half the time online, and alternating their instruction in one space and then the other. This makes it especially difficult for new TAs to become familiar with either teaching environment and thus, it may take them much longer to develop effective teaching practices in either space.

[71] Lucy mentions comma usage and community building as examples for of what she might spend additional face-to-face class time on. However, it is unclear as to whether she thinks not having such additional time (or not) has impacted her students' learning and writing.

[72] In theory, Lucy has the same amount of class time, since the course credits that students receive for face-to-face and hybrid is the same.

Similarly, Mike talks about a kind of deliberate time management that he has found he must use in the face-to-face portion of the hybrid class. Not only does such management require him to resist the urge to elaborate, but he also posts a very specific schedule with the amount of time to be spent on each item in class that he shares with students.[73] Mike even uses a timer on his iPad to make sure that he stays on schedule. In addition, he explains, "I rehearse more than I used to, so I can make sure that everything that I wanted to say, I say in that time." When students have additional questions or want one-on-one feedback from him and he feels the need to move on, Mike asks students to stay after class and talk with him then. This has resulted in having several students follow him out of the classroom on multiple occasions. Mike explains, "Even yesterday, five students followed me out of the classroom, and another hour and a half goes by as I help them each with their perspective." Lucy and Elaine sympathized with Mike's frustration in not having enough face-to-face and one-on-one time with students and said that they tend to refer students to seek additional support via the UHWC. Thus, Lucy, Mike, and Elaine recognize that students are more in need of outside of class support than they perhaps would need if they spent more time face-to-face.

Despite this frustration with the shortened of face-to-face time, these hybrid instructors collectively agreed that students were doing more writing. Elaine said she was told during training that, "statistically, students generate more text in hybrid." Scott added that "the more they [students] write, the better they will be at it,"[74] and that "[about] 1,000 words not graded that you've read before you have to grade them. That's got to be a comfort level for them."

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[73] This structured planning and resistance to elaboration suggests that hybrid instructors feel rushed during their face-to-face time, since they have less of it. Thus, rather than giving students a chance to slow down and take their time in learning new writing concepts and exploring new writing environments, the hybrid environment encourages a speeding up.

[74] This was recently disputed by Paul Anderson, Chris Anson, Robert Gonyea, and Charles Paine in "The Contributions of Writing to Learning and Development: Results from a Large-Scale Multi-Institutional Study" (2015).

With the exception of one, all instructors seemed to agree that the hybrid classroom leads students to write more and thus, they become better writers.

How Much Work Is It (Really)?

Just as it is difficult to predict how much online coursework takes students to complete, hybrid instructors themselves struggled with determining how much time they felt they spent on teaching hybrid compared with face-to-face teaching. At the beginning of our focus group, Elaine admitted that "it [teaching hybrid] seems like less work to me," which she liked, since she feels like she is balancing many different jobs. Later in the conversation though, Elaine changed her mind and decides that perhaps hybrid teaching "might just feel like less work." She explained:

> I'm a night person, so a lot of my planning, I'm doing at 11pm, and I guess it's the same [kind of work I'd be doing face-to-face], but I'm doing it wearing different clothes. You know, I don't have to park and dress professional…It feels like less work because I'm reading the textbook in my jammies, doing my lesson planning, and reading, with my dog next to me.

While this may seem like an odd way to gauge time spent on teaching/working, it made plenty of sense to the other hybrid instructors, including myself. We spent a good couple of minutes making jokes about teaching in our pajamas (i.e., dressing up our top halves to create course videos, while wearing sweatpants). All of the instructors seemed able to relate to this perk of doing work from the comfort of their own homes, rather than dealing with the hassle of getting to campus. For Scott, teaching a hybrid class means three hours a week less driving. That kind of time saving is at least as significant as the fun Scott says he has when he teaches the online portion of the course. He explains, "The work stuff is fun. I really don't

keep track of how much time I'm working because I enjoy it so much."[75]

For John too, the hybrid format makes teaching feel like less work. When he first admitted this to a peer, John says he felt a little guilty, like he was suggesting that he didn't value the time as much or put as much effort into his teaching. John explains:

> What I realized is that where I cut out the workload is in the planning for the in-class days. Just being so shy, when I know I have to stand in front of 30 people, I'm like, rehearsing this, and so that takes away one or two times of that per week…and its like when you translate that just to a written assignment without the performance, its so much easier and quicker. I don't second guess myself as much in terms of structuring it and having backups in case something fails, so it does seem to me like a lot less work to me in that way.

When John explained this, other hybrid instructors nodded along in agreement.

Better Organization that Requires New Skills

Perhaps as a result of the constrained in-class time, some hybrid instructors admit that teaching hybrid has forced them to be better organized.[76] For Mike, this led to strict time management in the classroom and easier cataloguing, and thus tracking, of student progress. In particular, this allowed him to "easily show students a snapshot of their performance" and that they can see whether they are doing well or not, what they have submitted, how their attendance has been, etc. Not only is it better for him to be more organized, but Mike also

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[75] Although enjoying and being comfortable while one works is important and stands for something, it is also worth noting here that this kind of casualness and comfort that one may have while completing work may be dangerous in that he/she may end up spending more time on the work than one would in more traditional teaching environments. In addition, the casualness may impact the quality of the work the instructor completes, especially if he or she is distracted or multi-tasking, two things that may be less likely in traditional teaching environments.

[76] While being better organized and planned for teaching has many positive impacts, it may also lead to too much structured time, leaving little room for the spontaneity that face-to-face classes often benefit from, especially when students become active participants.

suggests that such is the case for his students as well, who will more easily be able to keep track of their work. For Elaine, hybrid resulted in better planning, as she feels that the hybrid structure with the studio component requires her to set her schedule and deadlines earlier so that they can be communicated to facilitators. This keeps her a couple weeks ahead of schedule, rather than planning her time class-to-class.

At the very end of our conversation, Elaine brings up her concern about how the hybrid format changes her process of reading/responding to student writing. In the past, she always had students print out their essays and turn them in at the beginning of class, allowing her to read and grade student writing using a physical rubric. She then admitted, "Everyone says its so easy to look at it [student writing online] and do it [read/respond/grade], but like, you have to learn new skills. You have to learn to put your rubric online, how to access your papers…" This very real change from dealing with hard copies of student writing to electronic ones required Elaine to learn new skills, and ultimately, to change her process.

What About the Writing?: Instructors' Perceptions of Student Writing and the Social Dynamics of the Hybrid Course

While the structural and the social elements of the hybrid classroom influence writing in multiple ways, there were two key changes the hybrid instructors experienced as being specific to the hybrid course.

Students Expand Their Concept of Writing and Audience

The online component of the hybrid course encouraged instructors to experiment more with multimodal texts and themes, thus leading to more student engagement in writing projects and wider perceptions of writing.[77] For example, Nick, a hybrid instructor who is

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[77] Some research suggests that multimodal assignments may encourage students to become more rhetorically aware (Takayoshi and Selfe), more cognizant of the relationship between content and form (Poe), and more

also new to teaching overall, struggled quite a bit at the beginning of the semester to get

students participating in face-to-face class time via discussion and engagement. What

eventually started to work for him was breaking students into small groups and also

incorporating other modes of writing/communication into the classroom. For example, he

talks about spending class time watching videos online and analyzing commercials. When he

does this, Nick says that in part what he's doing is "trying to reinforce that writing doesn't

just happen on a piece of paper in the classroom, and that seems to be the stuff that

they[students] get excited about." Nick talks about incorporating multimodal texts into his

teaching as useful not only to get students to expand their concept of writing beyond the

traditional essay style, but also as a means of engagement. Furthermore, Nick says that

incorporating such texts is one way that he's able to bridge the online and the face-to-face

portions of the course. Similarly, John uses a news literacy theme to "get students to see that

an essay doesn't have to be words on a page, so I push that a lot in the beginning, and we

look at clips of Shark Tank like a form of a mini-essay."

In addition, both Nick and Scott said that the studio component of the online course

encourages students to consider multiple perspectives on their writing. Scott, Mike, and Nick

all received questions from students about how to navigate conflicting responses to their

writing. Scott began the conversation with this scenario:

> I had a couple [students] ask specifically, half my studio said this about my paper and
>
> the other half said that. What do you think? That was kind of cool…I told them what I

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motivated and/or interested in their writing projects (Powell, Poe, and Borton; Anderson; Brooks et al.; Kuhn). However, there is no research that I am aware of that suggests multimodal teaching methods improve student writing or that multimodal composing improves students' alphabetic writing overall. Instead, just as Thomas Rickert points out in *Acts of Enjoyment: Rhetoric, Zizek, and the Return of the Subject* in his critique of cultural-studies based pedagogies*,* writing teachers may be mistaken when they assume that multimodal pedagogies are the best for teaching composition.

thought and then said I'm the teacher so write it the way that I want it.

In contrast, Mike and Nick encouraged their students to consider a range of perspectives. Mike admits to not wanting to "undermine the facilitator." Instead, Mike saw this as a teaching opportunity to tell the student "there are multiple ways to approach the problem, the facilitator isn't wrong, however, knowing how you're wanting to write this paper, this is the strategy I think you could see is more effective." Like Scott, Mike gives the students some guidance based on his position as teacher, and ultimately, the one who will be assigning the grade. Nick, on the other hand, says that he doesn't give students an answer, but instead:

> I just keep telling them, there's lots of ways you could do it…I don't want them to
> think that there's a formula. I don't want them doing the five paragraph essay, so, the
> fact that they get so much response…its like you have these two authority figures and
> then you have your peers. I mean, I'm sure some of them are wrong sometimes, but
> you get all the right answers.

Another perceived element of the hybrid course is that students do more writing and that they often may not even realize how much additional writing they do.[78] Scott says he was told that, "statistically, students generate more text in hybrid." He also believes that "the more they [students] write, the better they will be at it."[79] Perhaps what's even more important is that, Scott notes, students write, "[about] 1,000 words not graded that you've read before you have to grade them. That's got to be a comfort level for them." Thus, Scott suggests that the hybrid classroom creates more opportunities for instructors to read/respond

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[78] While this may be the case, much of the writing students do online is informal and thus does not necessarily transfer to academic writing scenarios. Thus, students who take hybrid or online composition classes may not be doing more *academic* writing, meaning that assuming they have more practice with such writing is unfounded.
[79] This was recently disputed by Paul Anderson, Chris Anson, Robert Gonyea, and Charles Paine in "The Contributions of Writing to Learning and Development: Results from a Large-Scale Multi-Institutional Study" (2015).

to student writing. This, in turn, may make students feel more comfortable, according to Scott.

Writing Becomes More Public

One observation shared by nearly all hybrid instructors was that writing became more public in the hybrid course. For example, Elaine had her students write a 300-600 word Letter to the Editor or Pitch to the Editor of The Daily Cougar based on their summary/strong response paper, an online activity she would not normally have students do face-to-face. She also noted that during the face-to-face class meetings, she often pulls up the online discussion boards and speak directly about the student writing in that space. She uses such opportunities as a way of bridging the online and face-to-face sections of the course and also to show students what they are doing well. Similarly, Lucy shares the public and online student work during the face-to-face class. As Elaine puts it "So, I pull up their work, so it's like their work is public, actually, its like they don't have any private homework at all that you would give your teacher." Instead, students are almost always writing for a full class audience. Mike similarly points out that he has found the hybrid environment, and online component especially, is conducive to making writing more public. His concept of public writing seemed to mean outside of the course, beyond the students/teacher.

In contrast, two other hybrid instructors do recognize the more public element of writing in the online course, but they also see it as having a potential downside. John talks about a time in his hybrid class a different institution where he caught a student "Frankensteining" a discussion board post by cutting and pasting together an entry based on his peers' post that preceded his own. Thus, when crafting public writing assignments, the instructor has to be careful about creating prompts that make cheating easy. John explains,

137

I'm very conscious of the kinds of questions I can ask. I even try to spin it where I

give students a chance for personalizing it in a way that makes them want to write

their own answer, but I still have to go through and make sure no phrases are showing

up again…It seems like there are probably questions you shouldn't pose in a public

space, if you want them [students] to take them [questions/assignments] seriously…

John warns against asking students to all summarize the same article and instead opts for

public writing assignments that give students choices about what they write about and how

they might connect their writing to their own personal experiences.[80]

In addition to structural/environmental challenges, the hybrid format changed the social

elements of FYW, especially in terms of community dynamic, getting students to feel

comfortable with class discussion, and sharing writing more publically than they often do in

traditional face-to-face settings.

Building a Community of Humans (online)

Like the challenge of connecting the online portion of the hybrid to the face-to-face

course, the question of how to create a community within the classroom when you only

gather once a week face-to-face was a concern and a challenge felt by all instructors.[81] For

Elaine, this issue manifested in an assumption she brought in the classroom; that students

who self-selected for hybrid courses would "goof off more" and wouldn't take the class as

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[80] For instance, he had one discussion board activity where he was trying to get students to understand the genre of Shark Tank videos and asked them to find their own two or three to then analyze different from the ones their classmates had already posted. In another public discussion board assignment, John framed assignments in ways that encouraged students to use their own experiences and to write from them, rather than "stealing" from others.

[81] There seems to be no research that suggests creating a community is linked to improved student writing. Thus, the assumed necessity of classroom community may be something instructors impose, without an awareness of how community impacts (or doesn't) student writing. This also assumes that creating a community in the classroom is always good and/or possible. As Travis Webster noted in his recent 4Cs presentation, the assumption that the classroom can function as a "safe space" is false, since "no space is neutral from material and/or ideological risks, constraints, implications, and consequences."

seriously. However, six weeks into the semester, Elaine found that she had "an incredible little community" where students seem comfortable participating and seem to have the same kind of mindset as those she had taught in the past in more traditional face-to-face settings.

While Elaine found community building to be a concern that eventually faded away, the majority of the other hybrid instructors with whom I spoke found that creating a community was a constant struggle. For Mike, attendance in one of his two hybrid sections has become a big problem. Per his syllabus, Mike says that roughly 20 students in one class could technically fail the class already because of their online and face-to-face absences. Despite these students not "showing up" for class, they still turn in their major writing assignments, making it difficult to understand their level of engagement in the course. Mike is not sure whether this lack of attendance is related to the hybrid format or if it's just the personality of the class. To his surprise, the other hybrid instructors spoke about how impressed they were with the overall attendance in their courses.[82]

The hybrid instructors attributed good attendance to the single weekly face-to-face meeting, as opposed to meeting three times a week, which often results in a major lack of attendance on Fridays. Regardless of why his students have not been showing up, Mike has intentionally worked hard go get students talking every time they do meet face-to-face. He explains, "I deliberately have students mingle for the first five minutes of every session" and encourage them to meet new people each time. For Mike, this mingling is an important way to promote the course theme of "community."

Like Mike, Nick also struggled with building a community in the hybrid course. He

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[82] According to recent survey data for 643 total hybrid students in Fall 2015, only 3.9% of students withdrew (W) from the hybrid course and 5.9% received F's. This means less than 10% of students received W's or F's. These percentages are consistent with earlier survey data collected between Fall 2013-Spring 2015, which shows that the total percentage of W's and F's in the past four semesters was between 11-12.5%.

anticipated the challenge after his students' response to the class format on the first day of class, as he went over the online, face-to-face, and studio elements and he "could tell their eyes were just glazing over." Yet now, in Week 6 of the semester, Nick says his students are finally starting to speak up in class. For him, having students work in small groups made a difference in terms of getting students to participate and also in getting them to engage in full class discussion, since having students respond via their group commentary perhaps takes some of the pressure off of individual students.

Other important ways of building community in the hybrid classroom align with what we often do face-to-face. For example, learning students' names and using them in class, referring to students' specific ideas/writing assignments, and starting class with general questions that are oftentimes only slightly related to writing instruction, but often do make for a smooth transition. For example, Lucy explained how this happens in her course:

> I'm a big believer in warming up the room…I give them a stupid question, and they always roll their eyes, but then they do it. There was a very impassioned argument last week over whether or not someone wanted to be a walrus or a cheetah. It was really bizarre, but kids got involved. Then, we started talking about visual analysis, and they wanted to keep talking, so they kept talking about our subject. It just sort of led them into that…

Lucy noted this kind of activity as especially important during the first few weeks of the semester at the beginning of class. Sometimes, as she goes through the roll, she has each student give his/her answer and often follows up with another question. While Lucy said this as an important part of her approach to building community, she also admits that this kind of activity can also be "bad" in a hybrid course because it can "easily burn 30 minutes." This is

one tendency that she's "had to reign in" when teaching in a hybrid format.

One technique that some of the hybrid instructors spoke about as a way of building community in the hybrid classroom was trying to show students their "humanness."[83] For Elaine, this happens in the moments before class when she chats with students casually. Elaine explains, "they'll ask me about a hobby or something, and I'll tell them what I think about it, you know, and they'll be like, oh a person, maybe this person is also a person." She describes this as part of her "informal" teaching style. Another way that this style influences her teaching is related to assignment design. Elaine gives an example: after students submitted their longer essay assignment, she gave them a three part online writing where they were asked to translate their essay into a 150-word letter to pitch to the editor of The Daily Cougar, look at a link to the UH student activities and pick a volunteering opportunity or a club of interest, and find an advertisement that they could bring into class the following week. In this sequence, Elaine asks students to complete two activities related to their writing assignments in class, and one activity that allows students to "hit commonalities." This way, as students are writing and talking about their writing, they are also getting to know one another and Elaine as people who have interests outside of the writing classroom.

Similarly, Mike says that it is important to him to "demonstrate that we all have these same fears about our ideas and we're [all] afraid of putting ourselves out there because we're invested in our writing and we're afraid to be rejected or told that they're not good enough. So, how do we overcome that?" Mike also connects this awareness and approach to his teaching style, which he describes as "really laid back." Although he admits to the "danger"

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[83] Although the idea of instructors showing students their "humanness" seems like an odd concept, this was how the interviewees described it. Several of them used the term "human" or "humanness" and the importance of sharing such qualities with students in limited face-to-face time. While this seemed to be an important practice for instructors, they did not indicate how it relates to the teaching of writing or the development of student writers.

in having students interpret his teaching style as too lenient, Mike emphasizes his attempt to make students feel comfortable, again mentioning the value of having students mingle at the beginning of every class. Through this activity and others like it, Mike is trying to get students to feel comfortable and to trust one another enough to share their writing. He admits to deliberately sharing enough with students so that they see that he's human too, "they can tell you my daughters' names…why I'm taking the kids out this weekend, and why the conference next week is important to me." Mike emphasizes the need to do this early in the semester, especially in a hybrid course, so that students can start to develop trust faster.

Although the hybrid instructors voiced much concern about creating a sense of community in the face-to-face classroom, much interaction among students was occurring online in weekly studio groups. The hybrid instructors do not get to see this space, yet it does add an important element to the hybrid/online studio course. To get a sense of how that space functions, I share with you one early studio in the next section.

"Unlike you, I am not an MFA candidate. I am an engineering major": Students' Meaningful Resistance to Writing Online Studios

Since previous research that focuses on analyzing online studios has been done (Miley 2013), I focused this dissertation primarily on interviewing the hybrid instructors. That being said, the online studio is an important component to how the hybrid/studio partnership works. The online studio component facilitated by the UHWC is also perhaps what makes UH's hybrid FYW course different from others. In particular, the online studio provides a space for informal conversations about writing and rhetoric that are not necessarily linked directly to the value or improvement of major writing assignments. In particular, I ask what does a less formal (non)classroom structure, in an online space rather

than a face-to-face, facilitated by a writing teacher (who is not the instructor of record or the

grader) have to offer student writers, hybrid instructors, and new TA-facilitators? To get at

this question, I consider the opening online studio conversation that one group has with their

UHWC facilitator. I chose this studio in particular because it was mentioned during

interviews with both Anne and Max as an example of the "negative interactions" that can

occur within studios. This studio scenario caused anxiety, discomfort, and UHWC

administrative intervention. Yet, I argue that this studio offers a seemingly honest and

authentic moment where students voice some of their real concerns and ideas about writing.

Despite the initial (productive) resistance, students move on to discuss their attitudes about

writing and also seem to play with the idea of attending a hypothetical picnic, using the

question as a way to get to know one another and to joke around.

The opening studio HostPost was written by the UHWC facilitator.[84] The first

respondent was Peter, whose response is also included below:

Casey's HostPost for Studio #1A
September 14, 2015 @ 1:29pm:

Let's get started, shall we? This week, in addition to taking advantage of this space to discuss your assignment, I'd like to ask a few QUESTIONS to get to know each other as writers. In your **STUDIO 1A writer post**, due Wednesday, September 16 at 11:59 PM, answer the following:
1. Think about one of the tools you, as a writer, have at your disposal. (For example, you might consider vocabulary/word choice or varied syntax.) What is your theory about the use of that tool? How does it work and why is it effective? How does it play into your larger philosophy of writing? (This may seem like an obvious question, but I don't want an obvious answer. You are not allowed to use the word communicate.) [Word Count: 150-250]
2. What two food items would you bring to a picnic with people who have read your writing, but whom you've never met, and why? [Word Count: 100-150]
3. Tell me any concerns you have about your upcoming assignment or about this studio.
I'm going to warn you here about something I'll ask you to do in **STUDIO 1B** next week so you can start thinking about it, but you don't need to address it until next week. I will bring it up again when I want your answer. For **ESSAY 1**, in which you consider how visual and verbal texts shape argument, try this exercise: look at your chosen text for five minutes, then forget about it and go do something else. After at least an hour, come

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[84] A HostPost is a prompt written by the UHWC facilitator that students are asked to respond to as a way of beginning the conversation. Typically, students are asked to write a response to the prompt (primary post), and then to respond at least once to each classmate in the group's primary post (secondary posts). This conversation took place within an online discussion board in Blackboard Learn.

back and look again for five minutes. What do you notice in each observation session? What strikes you differently, and how does this affect your thinking?

Remember to write a short **response post** on each of your peers' **writer posts** by 11:59 PM on Monday, September 21!

Peter's Response for Studio #1A

September 15, 2015 @ 8:56pm:

First off I would like to say that unlike you, I am not an MFA candidate. I am an engineering major, and I hope that you realize when you ask me to write 400 words on my writing tools and what kind of food I would bring to a hypothetical picnic, that I also have university physics, computing, calculus and other 'fun' classes that assign insane amounts of homework. I could ask you to solve a third dimensional relative force question or calculate the volume of a solid through integrals, showing you that I know how to do it wouldn't make you feel any better about having to do it. I guess you could label this as one of my concerns.

That being said...

1. I would definitely say that vocabulary and logic are my favorite writing tools, and I also enjoying taking an unexpected approach, or starting off with an approach only to instantaneously reverse and throw it all back in the readers face, so I guess you could say surprise. As far as vocabulary goes, I have no idea why, but when I start writing essays and important assignments it's almost as if my brain opens up some word bank kept under lock and key deep in the pits of my skull. I thoroughly enjoy making a good point while using some upper vocabulary, but I have learned to restrain myself, because if I don't it sometimes seems as if I'm just dumping a pile of fancy words onto my paper. It's also, in my experience, harder to disagree with someone who has great wording. As for logic, well it's hard to argue against logic, I mean it's possible, but you look silly doing it.

2. What two food items I would bring to this picnic. Well to be honest I probably wouldn't go to the picnic. Least efficient way to consume food, even with others, and still have a good time. You got ants, mosquitoes, weather conditions etc. For the sake of answering the question I will humor you. I guess I'd bring pizza and Buffalo wings, because who doesn't love pizza? And I love Buffalo wings, so if no one else likes them they won't go to waste. If I really wanted people to have a good time I would probably just bring brownies. Special brownies.

What first struck me about Peter's initial post was its familiarity. His style of writing is "listy" and exhausting, in some ways mimicking his own frustration and exhaustion from the competing demands of being an undergraduate (and most likely a first year) student. The tone he uses seems representative of how students (and instructors) respond when they feel overwhelmed by trying to balance multiple responsibilities within a finite amount of time. Despite his tone, Peter does complete all of the assignment with some degree of detail.

Peter's post caused quite some concern in the UHWC. First, after being contacted by Casey the facilitator, Max (UHWC middle-administrator) emailed the student to let him know that his tone was inappropriate. Before he apologized for being "disrespectful and/or confrontational," Casey responded to Peter's initial post, assuring him that studio would be

"fairly manageable." She pointed out that he "seemed to have finished this one without any trouble." Then, the other students began to chime in with responses that suggested they resonated with what Peter said in his post, in addition to commenting on Peter's writing style and some of his strengths. Not only that, but then all students approached the question about what one would bring to a picnic with a playful tone, using their response as an opportunity to share something about themselves, and commenting on whether or not they'd be interesting in joining one another's picnics.

Table 6: Students' Secondary Responses to Peter's "Rude" Resposne

Jia explains to Peter that his writing is good because it follows the prompt with a detailed response.	…don't fret about coming off as rude. I don't think your post is rude. The discussion post directly asked you about one of your concerns, and you gave it, simple as that. The elaboration and description in the first paragraph of your post only made me understand you, the writer, and the intensity of this concern…I'm sure if you had written "Yeah, one of my concerns is that I have a lot of work in my classes and it adds up and it makes me stressed," no one would REALLY understand how you felt. However, BECAUSE of the way you wrote the first paragraph, I can see how this concern is a legitimate problem for you. I can see how stressful it is, and I can feel the intense environment for you.
Grant encourages and sympathizes with Peter.	I as well am an engineering major and understand your stress, so don't worry, we can get through this together…Just from these few paragraphs above I can tell that your writing is very interesting to read and I look forward to reading more of it.
Andri responds	I really enjoyed this post! As an engineering major, I can relate to your

with interest and points out "an engineer's mindset."	sentiment. That logic reasoning with the picnic question sounds exactly like an engineer's mindset.

Table 6 shows how Peter's peers responded to his seemingly rude response with praise, sympathy, encouragement, and interest.

As the students in this studio continue to discuss their strengths and limitations as writers, they work through conversations about vocabulary, logic, elaboration/description, figurative language, fact-based and concrete writing, audience awareness, staying on topic, anxiety related to rambling about writing, and how image and sound can influence writing. For example, in another exchange, one student (Justin) voices anxiety over rambling in writing at the beginning of his primary post "When thinking about the tools I use as a writer I am going to be honest I have no idea what I am doing. I like to just ramble on a page and then shape it into something that is worth a read…" In response, his classmates say the following:

Table 7: Responses to Justin on "Rambling"[85]

Jia sympathizes and offers another way of understanding	Justin, your style or writing and thought process is kind of similar to mine. However for me, instead of not having an idea of what I'm doing, I do have an idea of what I want to express and write. The part that makes us similar is that, with the idea of what I want to write in mind, I

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[85] The UHWC facilitator, Casey, participated in this conversation as well. Yet, the students seemed to ignore her in favor of responding to one another, so I did not include her response here.

how rambling works	freely let myself express the idea…
Grant sympathizes and offers a strategy	I also am a bit of a rambler in my writing. I often find myself with a lot of run on sentences and getting off topic, but a few thorough proof readings helps me counter act this tendency.
Peter points out the benefits of rambling	Rambling is often a great way to start writing, Justin. You get to clear your head and get all your ideas and topic possibilities on paper, after which it is much easier to pick and choose what would work.
Andri offers a compliment	Rambling on a page sounds like the best way to jot down your ideas in opinion. I think as a writer you've got a pretty admirable approach.

Table 7 shows Justin's peers responses to what he identifies as a limitation in his own writing style. Two of his peers admit that they also ramble, yet they reframe it as a writing strategy that leads to topic development. The others two praise Justin for rambling and redefine it as an effective strategy.   According to Casey's HostPost, the purpose of this first online studio was to the students to discuss their writing strategies and to get to know one another, both of which occurred. The students did not post drafts or discuss the course assignments. However, they were able to talk about writing techniques they use and their frustrations and anxieties around writing.

This Missing Elephant in the Room: The Hybrid/Studio Partnership's (lack of) Assessment and What We (don't) Know About Hybrid Teaching/Facilitating

In this chapter, I showed how the UHWC's partnership with the Department of English via the hybrid/online studio course provides a counternarrative that involves the

training and professional development of online facilitators and hybrid instructors as they work with students as teachers and facilitators (not tutors). In particular, I stated the recent changes in the hybrid/studio first year writing partnership since the partnership's pilot five years ago, provided insight into the teaching of hybrid courses per the instructors, and analyzed an online studio conversation deemed problematic by the UHWC administrators who oversee the partnership.

While there has been great flexibility in terms of adjusting the nuts and bolts of the hybrid/studio course and valuable insight into how students perceive their work in such courses, the lack of knowledge we have about how student writing in the hybrid classroom compares with that done in traditional face-to-face courses is problematic. Not only because of what we know from the small-scale assessment data (i.e., that students who take hybrid courses start the semester at a significantly lower writing ability compared with those enrolled in traditional face-to-face courses), but also because research in the greater field of rhetoric/composition about online versus face-to-face writing instruction is divided on this issue.[86] Given the reality of the push towards online education (for instance, see Quan-Haase, Kim and Bonk, Annetta et al., and Instructional Technology Council), research that assesses student writing and writing practices, in addition to how best practices in teaching face-to-face composition transfer (or do not) to online settings, is needed.

When hybrid/online course initiatives are conducted primarily by contingent or non-tenured faculty (as Miley notes), such assessment and research may be unlikely. As one recent administrator put explained it to me, there is a sense of not wanting to assess the program (or writing) too closely because then the program/partnership will be held

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[86] For instance, see Sapp and Simon, Arbaugh, Clark, Neuhauser, and Bourelle et al.

accountable for what they find. In other words, if the partnership has the numbers that speak well to upper administrators and they are pleased, why attempt to show progress in writing?

Overall, the following conclusions can also be made about the hybrid/online first year writing partnership between the UHWC and the Department of English:[87]

(1a) In practice, hybrid/online pedagogies reflect traditional, face-to-face approaches to writing instruction. And, such practices are not necessarily innovative, and may actually limit the creative and spontaneity that can occur in face-to-face, real time courses when student responses and reactions are interspersed as the course or lesson unfolds. Although Scott Warnock notes in *Teaching Writing Online: How and Why* that "translating" practices is indeed one strategy for learning to teach online, there seems to be an over-emphasis on making face-to-face practices work online. Thus, in translation, these skewed face-to-face practices may carry with them traditional approaches to teaching writing that actually make the online space more constricted.

For example, creating video lessons are pedagogically similar to giving lectures (yet do not allow for real-time questions and often require written scripts with no room for the kinds of spontaneity that speaking to a live audience of students often allows for), online discussion boards are often structured by a specific prompt written by the instructor while also requiring that students respond in a certain number of words or a certain number of times in order to get credit (discussions are thus rarely student led and rarely include follow up questions, disagreements, and eventual clarification or resolution), the online portion of the class itself was compared to "assigning homework" (in Elaine's words, thus creating a context for inorganic discussion), and using online essay collection and grading platforms,

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[87] Some of these more so take the form of calls for further research, since the hybrid course in particular is an under-researched teaching environment, and thus, research that explores fully-online or partially-online courses may not apply.

like Turn-it-in,[88] actually encourage formulaic commenting (such as the opportunity to use drag/drop tools from vague computer-generated comments).

This same issue occurs when UHWC facilitators move online. For example, when Casey (UHWC facilitator) asked students to participate in the online studio conversation, she provides three questions, two of which had a required word count. In a sense, the informal style and the question-based approach she used seemed to be an attempt to mimic (or translate) face-to-face discussion, which is not necessarily problematic. Yet, when she included other elements to the discussion that would not occur during face-to-face discussions (like a word requirement for responses), the conversational context/frame seemed even more artificial and constricted. While the students in the online studio example provided in this chapter were able to, in a sense, break out of this limiting prompt, such activities were viewed as unproductive by the writing administrators and teachers involved. Peter, the first poster, was criticized for his tone. Yet, that discussion actually led to talk about writing and attitudes about writing, rather than a conversation seemingly aimed at meeting the word requirement, or worse—no conversation at all—both of which are common instances in the online studio.

(1b) More research is needed to determine whether or not 40 years of face-to-face best practices research applies to online writing (and how). Research in this chapter suggests that instructors rely on face-to-face best practices and research when in a new environment (i.e., using online discussions, video lectures, online peer reviews). Yet, there is little

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[88] Not only is Turn-it-in problematic for these reasons, but it also: (1) fundamentally changes how instructors read/respond to student writing in ways that we are not yet aware of in terms of how the feedback itself changes, but we do know that this adds extra work for instructors who have to both learn to use the new online platform and change their method of grading (see Elaine and Mike); (2) does not reliably detect plagiarism as it was designed to do (see Brown, Fallon, Lott, Matthews, and Mintie (2007) "Taking on Turnitin: Tutors Advocating Change."

research that determines to what extent the majority of composition research conducted over the past 40 years applies to hybrid and online environments. Instead of looking closely at how teaching translates across modes, most research about hybrid and online courses focuses on how various digital tools can be used (Moore et al., Nobles and Paganucci), how students participate in non-academic composing or multimodal literacies (Williams, Shepherd, Head), or on student perceptions of their experiences in the online course (Rendahl and Breuch; Boyd).

One recent study that does compare teaching practices across different teaching environments is "Sites of multimodal literacy: comparing student learning in online and face-to-face environments" (2016) by Andrew Bourelle, Tiffany Bourelle, Anna Knutson, and Stephanie Spong. These researchers compared student development of multimodal literacies in face-to-face and online classes and found that students seemed to do about the same in both scenarios in terms of organization of content, clear sense of purpose, addressing outcomes, fulfilling the assignment, and conventions, and slightly better in terms of multimodality in the online course. Although this study, like many others, does not consider the hybrid classroom, more research like this that attempts the same assignment type in different teaching environments and also assesses the student writing is needed to determine how hybrid instructors can best utilize the online and face-to-face spaces in the hybrid course.

(2) Hybrid instructors struggle with navigating a new sense of time. In particular, hybrid instructors are still asking: how might a 90-minute class period "translate" to the online space? While it makes sense that such a mindset would be used to understand how the hybrid class works, is it an appropriate way to think about a class portion that functions

asynchronously, and thus not in real time? Further complicating this challenge is the way that new writing instructors who teach in hybrid/online formats for the first time face an even greater learning curve, since they are trying to figure out how to teach according to best practices in composition, both face-to-face and online. For instance, learning how to effectively lead face-to-face small group work and full class discussion takes more time in hybrid classes that meet half the time face-to-face. Finally, although some hybrid/online instructors may assume that they are spending less time teaching in such environments than they would in face-to-face classes, they are most likely spending more time preparing course documents, responding to and grading assignments that would count as attendance and participation in face-to-face courses, and learning how to navigate not only a new teaching scenario, but also new technologies (like how to navigate the Learning Management System) and digital tools (like blogs, online journals, and online discussion boards) that may be new or unfamiliar (not to mention technical difficulties in general).

(3) Hybrid instructors often work from the assumption that more writing leads to better writing. Perhaps one reason why instructors emphasize building community through discussion during their face-to-face class time is because they work from this assumption. When students participate in the online portion of their course, that work is often measured by what they write, thus, they do seem to be writing more in hybrid/online courses than they do in face-to-face time.

Yet, the assumption that more writing leads to better writing was recently disproved by Paul Anderson, Chris Anson, Robert M. Gonyea, and Charles Paine in "The Contributions of Writing to Learning and Development: Results from a Large-Scale Multi-institutional Study." In particular, Anderson et al. claim that "the effective writing practices are associated

much more strongly than the amount of writing with greater student learning and development," emphasizing that "the important lesson from our study is that quality matters—that in many situations it would be better to place more emphasis on the design and use of the assignments than on the number or size of them" (229). Thus, hybrid instructors (and all instructors) should no longer rest assured that as long as their students are doing a lot of writing, they are becoming better writers. Such a belief may perpetuate a lack of careful online assignment design and structure.

(4) Hybrid/studio courses allow for greater circulation of student texts among peers, yet there may be an overemphasis on using face-to-face time to build community. The hybrid instructors' experiences further support Miley's finding that studios help students develop a stronger sense of audience awareness, since their writing is read and responded to while in process. My findings extend hers in that hybrid instructors also saw this change, and thus, it was not only occurring in the studio space, but also in the classroom space. In addition, hybrid instructors faced questions from students about how to prioritize conflicting responses.

Also during the focus group with hybrid instructors, it became clear that developing a sense of community and also getting students to perceive them as "human" was important to all. While the idea of "building a community" in the classroom, especially among new teachers, is not new, the emphasis on humanness does seem a bit more odd. When the hybrid instructors discussed "community" in the classroom, the sense of that community seemed linked to how much the students participated in large group discussion.

While writing studies research has shown that student work in small groups work well for developing critical thinking (Abercrombie, Moffett, Britton, Bruffee, Gere, Hillocks,

Zebroski), there does not seem to be much research about how full group work (especially that which is discussion based) leads to improved writing. Thus, how valuable is the loss of such time spent on "building community"? Is it the best way to spend limited face-to-face time? Or, is building community more related to what makes instructors more comfortable? Furthermore, what does it mean for students to perceive their instructors as "human," and how are changes in such perceptions influenced by face-to-face versus online time?

(5) Online writing studios facilitated through WC partnerships provide an alternative space that can be used for valuable conversations about writing. As Miley found in her research, online studios provide valuable support for idea generation, writing development, and audience awareness. Yet, Miley also warns that studios may emphasize and impose a particular kind of writing process that instead may fossilize that process. Yet, as Kevin Dvorak and Shanti Bruce note in *Creative Approaches to Writing Center Work,* the moment when practices become routine is also the moment from which creativity can occur. Although it was in the beginning of the semester, before studios became routine, I think Peter's showed a kind of creative resistance that was ultimately productive and also set an important tone for the studio that unfolded. Thus, we might ask: how can we create a spaces where student resistance is likely to be productive? Attempting to answer such questions may require a change in our expectations and purposes of creating studio-like spaces.

Analysis of the online writing studio facilitated by Casey (studio facilitator) in this chapter suggests that students can break out of formulaic or perhaps limiting prompts and move toward more authentic conversations about writing and the realities of their busy lives as students. Worth noting here though is that first, Casey's studio is not representative of most studios, and second, both Casey and the UHWC administrators perceived Peter's

resistance as problematic. Thus, such student reactions are not the imagined ideal, or the intention of those who create and facilitate the studio space. I wonder though—had Peter not responded in such a way, would the group have had such a productive conversation about writing? Or, would students have participated minimally to receive their credit?[89]

(6) Hybrid/studio facilitators and instructors would benefit from ongoing professional development and mentoring. While the UHWC and the Department of English offer valuable summer workshops and the facilitators have ongoing weekly meetings, the instructors in particular do not have many opportunities to continue learning how to balance and teach the hybrid course. At the end of the focus group with hybrid instructors, three mentioned how helpful it was to just get together and talk about what they were doing in their classes. Once the recorder was off and our group was technically over, several hybrid instructors continued to talk about how they were planning to approach the grading of their first major assignment that had just come in. One instructor stayed even longer to ask me for help with setting up the Blackboard Learn Gradebook.

Another limitation is that hybrid instructors are often cycled out after one year of teaching, returning back to the face-to-face classroom or moving to the fully online classroom. Thus, every year a new group of hybrid instructors begins. Not only this, but also their mentors, who are often Houston Teaching Fellows with ample teaching experience, cycle out every two years. Many of these teaching fellows are new to both teaching writing online and to mentoring online writing teachers. While this is valuable for TAs and teaching fellows in terms of gaining experience in hybrid/online teaching so that they are more appealing on the academic job market, teaching in the hybrid environment for only one year

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[89] Furthermore, we might ask—how can we make the hybrid/studio space a place where students respond in the way that Peter did? Is it possible? Should we even try?

may not be enough for them to really develop best practices, thus in some ways stunting the growth of the program.

In the chapter the follows, I step away from the familiar territory of the hybrid/online studio partnership between the English Department and the UHWC and instead explore how the UHWC works with students majoring in Electrical Engineering and Technology. This partnership in particular has a reputation of being difficult, yet students are also writing proposals for real projects that they will build and market to potential investors over the course of a year. This partnership in particular provides additional elements of the UHWC counternarrative because it involves "tutoring" that moves beyond a focus on "writing" to involve project management and multimodal texts, in addition to a small-group (rather than one-on-one) scenario.

Chapter 5

Teaching (and) Writing in Electrical Electronics Engineering

Early in the Fall 2015 semester before any formal interviews had taken place, Hannah

explained to me some of the frustration surrounding the Electrical Electronics Engineering

(ELET) partnership.[90] She explained that "it's like we're [the UHWC] the mom, the partners

are the dad, and the students are the kid. They need us to organize everything and don't

usually listen." While I found this to be a surprising metaphor, Hannah explained it with a

story about the first time ELET tried to work with the UHWC. Without any warning and no

scheduling, the TA in charge at the time brought a group of nearly 50 students to the writing

center to work with consultants. The department head had scheduled a time for the ELET

students to meet with consultants in the UHWC, but because of other class scheduling

conflicts, the TA decided to bring the students over a day early. When the UHWC could not

meet with any of the students, since they were "completely booked" and "no longer worked

with walk-ins," Hannah explained the TA was frustrated and they had to sit down and have

another meeting, along with the department chair, to explain why impromptu consultations

with 50 students would not work. "They can't really come in anytime they want to," Hannah

explained, and that is what they seemed to expect.

While this story stands as perhaps the largest mishap of communication between the

UHWC and the ELET partners, it is one of many miscommunications. The ELET

administrative partners, although seemingly responsible for the assignments and the large

course lectures, do not grade or read student writing. Instead, graduate teaching assistants

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[90] ELET is housed in the College of Technology and requires students to create viable technology applications
to improve current electronic practices. Per the college's website, the goal of the program is "to provide
students with a high quality applications oriented undergraduate education based on state-of-the art
technological equipment associated with electrical technology."

work on writing assignments. With ELET administrators, TAs, and students, and UHWC administrators and consultants, there are many opportunities for miscommunication. In addition to the many players in this partnership, the UHWC has nearly 1,000 student interactions with ELET each year, making it one of the largest.[91] Thus, the ELET partnership has a reputation for being frustrating and challenging among the UHWC staff, not only because of the communication difficulties, but also because students sometimes are just as frustrated and disengaged.

Nonetheless, the ELET partnership is one of the best funded.[92] As they continue to focus more on developing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines, universities recognize a particular need for increased writing support (Harrison and Parks 2015; MacPhail 2015). In this scenario, writing centers and writing programs have much potential for partnering with STEM fields in terms of curriculum development and peer-to-peer writing support. STEM faculty, and engineers in particular, have also been among the most eager to outsource writing instruction and even evaluation, according to administrators in the UHWC.

Within the STEM disciplines, students are expected to produce multimodal texts that move beyond traditional alphabetic writing to include oral and visual communication, such as oral presentations, PowerPoint presentations, and large scientific posters (Walsh and Ross 2015; Soules, Nielsen, LeDuc, Inouye, Singley, Wildy, and Seitz 2014; Terlip and Brand 2015). Writing Centers in particular may be well suited to work with students on such projects, since recent scholarship has noted an increased need to work with multiple literacies and modes of communication (Trimbur 2000; Grutsch McKinney 2009 and 2013; Sheridan

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[91] Based on the Fall 2013/Spring 2014 numbers, the UHWC had 979 interactions with ELET students.

[92] Several STEM partnerships, including ELET, receives funding from outside donors like the O'Quinn Foundation.

and Inman 2010. Balester et al. 2012). For example in *Writing Center Journal* article "New Media Matters: Tutoring in the Late Age of Print," Jackie Grutsch McKinney makes an argument for tutoring new media texts, which require writing tutors to become aware of a text's "digital-ness," materiality, multimodality, and distinctive rhetorical features. Therefore, as writing centers continue to maintain relevancy in the 21st century educational landscape, they need to offer support for a multitude of communications and texts. ELET's partnership with the UHWC is a good example of the variety of support needed for one particular STEM discipline, since students are asked to compose traditional alphabetic proposals/reports with common academic conventions like literature reviews and abstracts, as well as non-traditional texts, such as videos, oral presentations, PowerPoint presentations, and large, wall-sized posters.

In addition to its tenuous nature, multimodal elements, and classification as a STEM partnership, the ELET is a good case study for this project because its qualities are representative of the UHWC partnerships as a whole. For instance, in the WID faculty interviews discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, faculty spoke about and often shared with me their assignment prompts, many of which had multimodal elements. In addition, ELET, similar to several of the other partnerships, seems to be focused on WIP (writing in the profession), or a kind of quasi-WIP. Much in the same way of the political science professor discussed in Chapter 3, the ELET administrative partners are very aware of the kinds of writing that students will most likely be doing in the workplace and use writing and communication projects as a way of getting students to rehearse such scenarios.

For the ELET students, not only are they asked to create/produce compositions geared toward real-world situations, but they also have created a quasi-professional showcase

for these projects. One such showcase is called the Engineering Technology Undergraduate

Research Symposium, where students present their projects to an audience of peers, faculty,

and industry leaders in Houston. Because they invite several workplace professionals to be

project judges, the ELET students and their faculty understand the symposium to be an

opportunity for potential investors to see student projects and, perhaps, to invest in them.

This is especially relevant for the senior-level ELET projects, where students are either

planning to build the prototype the following semester, or are hoping to get their prototype

picked up by a business that wans to fund and sell the product. Students across all levels of

ELET understand the symposium to be a valuable networking opportunity where they may

also meet someone from a company where they might take an internship in the near future.

In this chapter, I begin by setting the context for the ELET partnership by briefly

describing its history and detailing the start of the semester project meeting between the

UHWC middle-administrators and the two ELET partners.[93] Then, I discuss the sophomore

and junior level ELET partnerships, where consultations focus on talking about new genres

and assignment prompts, consultants position themselves as disciplinary outsiders, and

students discuss their frustrations with their TAs who seem uncommitted to the teaching of

writing. The next section focuses on the senior-level ELET partnerships where students think

about a real audience outside the university as they prepare for their presentations at the

Undergraduate Research Symposium. Senior-level students also bring visual and oral

components of their project into the UHWC, but consultants tend to fall back on traditional,

alphabetic-text-based pedagogies while working with them.

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[93] The description here of the early partnership project meeting is similar to others that take place early in the semester between the UHWC and its disciplinary partners. Although I attended multiple meetings, I include this one at length here to stand as an example of what such meetings consisted of and to contextualize this particular partnership.

Setting the context: Beginning of the Semester Project Meeting

The UHWC/ELET partnership began in 2008 with support from a Quality

Enhancement Program (QEP) grant. Formal documentation of the projects in the UHWC's

annual reports began in 2011, at which time there were partnerships linked to three ELET

courses, including ELET 2103 and 4308, both of which still exist today. In 2012, the ELET

partnerships changed to include all four courses that are currently in working partnerships

today. Significant growth occurred in 2014 when the UHWC added a STEM manager to their

full-time staff. During that same year, the UHWC staff "interacted with 3,704 STEM majors

and collaborated with 23 STEM faculty 98." In particular, the report points out the Electrical-

Electronics Technology (ELET) partnership as an "example of a successful Writing

Center/STEM course interaction." The ELET program is housed in the College of

Technology and requires students majoring in Electrical Power Engineering Technology to

take a series of four courses that have WC partnerships attached to them. Per the college's

website, the goal of the program is "to provide students with a high quality applications-

oriented undergraduate education based on state-of-the-art technological equipment

associated with electrical technology." ELET students participate in hands-on group writing

and research projects that culminate in a proposal for and the eventual building of a prototype

in their senior course sequence.

Although I did not have the opportunity to interview the ELET administrative

partners[94], I attended the beginning of the semester meeting in August before the partnerships

themselves began. Jeremy mentioned the meeting to me casually and I asked both him and

Hannah, who oversees the project if I could attend. According to Hannah, the meeting would

[94] Although ELET faculty and administrators were contacted with a request for an interview, they were
unresponsive and thus never met for an interview. However, since these partners seemed to have little
involvement in the teaching of the courses themselves, which were instead led by TAs.

161

be "just about scheduling," but Jeremy added in his conversation with me before we met that he thought they would also be discussing whether or not to bring back the junior-level ELET partnership with the junior students, since it hasn't worked all that well in the past. Jeremy admitted to being a bit nervous about the meeting, since he hadn't met either of the ELET administrative partners (Mehdi and Dan) before.

While most of the project meeting did consist of "just scheduling," such scheduling was actually integral to the working of the partnership, as it required the deadlines for projects to be set and all parties to decide on when it would be most beneficial to have students meeting with consultants. The plan had always been, and still was, for students to meet in their writing/project groups with a consultant during a part of their lab time, 3-4 times over the course of the semester.

In addition to setting the schedule, the UHWC and ELET administrators spent some time discussing what would be done during these group meetings. For example, Mehdi mentioned that proposals written during the first semester of senior-level ELET were often a bit easier because these students had "more energy," but that the final report written by the second semester senior-level ELET was more challenging. He explained that it was most important for them to learn from the project itself, even if the prototype did not work as the group intended.

At one point, Hannah suggested that one of the partnership courses move to an online model using the Blackboard course shell—the sophomore-level ELET course. However, according to my fieldnotes, this idea was somewhat ignored by the ELET administrators, who quickly moved onto a conversation about how to use Blackboard to get necessary materials to the TAs and to send email reminders to students about their group meetings in

the UHWC. Then, conversation moved to the junior-level ELET group, that Jeremy thought may not make a re-appearance. Dan pointed out that the teacher of the course was a part-time faculty member and told us "I don't want to add extra work having them manage [the partnership]." Thus, Dan offered to be the "point of contact" for this ELET course and any other ones that were deemed "vulnerable." Hannah also asked what kind of writing students did in the junior-level ELET course and admitted that in the past, the UHWC had trouble communicating with the TAs in the course

Since Dan mentioned that students would be working on a report and a literature review, everyone agreed to develop a partnership plan for ELET 3405. Dan said that the department had developed new rubrics for ELET 3405 that should help with clarity and communication for students working on the written report and literature review. Instead of having students "doing just a summary," the department now required a literature review section. Hannah suggested adding the literature review to the current rubric so that students would see that they were receiving credit for that part of the writing project. That way, the consultants could use the rubric with the description and points associated with the literature review to help explain to students why it was important for them to include beyond just summarizing their sources. Again, Mehdi chimed in by saying that the literature review "doesn't need to be advanced writing or very good, but some kind of story," instead of reading like three separate papers that are not connected. Hannah suggested that, in addition to having students bring drafts of the full proposal, they incorporate a visit with a librarian into one of their meetings to talk with students about finding sources and also that they have students bring in the articles/summaries before the proposal draft so that they can focus one session on organizing the sources.

Dan explained that having students work with sources in the way that Hannah described "was always the intent" and that the literature review is a major project that should "be like a spiral, adding more each time," since the students would be writing additional literature reviews in other classes. After deciding that three to five sources would be appropriate for the literature review for ELET 3405 students, they set a time for Jeremy to visit the classes during their lab times to present the partnership and talk about the UHWC. They also decided on four meetings and set agendas for all four meetings (see Table 2 below, based on conversations that happened collaboratively during this meeting).

Conversations about the three remaining ELET course partnerships went fairly quickly, as they had been running successfully for a while. Dan and Mehdi requested the times for ELET 2103 be set later, since they were still working on setting that schedule. Despite the hesitancy of both Hannah and Jeremy who seemed to fear that not pinning down times/dates now could result in a long delay and them having to make last minute plans, they agreed to move onto discussion of the senior courses, which Dan and Mehdi requested "get started immediately." Hannah asked for Dan and Mehdi to attend the first meeting with Jeremy, her, and the consultants assigned to the project, making a case for the value of such a meeting. Both agreed they would try to attend, but neither of them ended up being there. Before leaving, Dan and Mehdi mentioned the end of the semester symposium and asked if someone from the UHWC would be interested in giving one of the two keynotes at the event. Hannah happily agreed and mentioned that Sam might be a good candidate for giving a keynote.

Hannah's description of the meeting as "just scheduling" speaks to the tendency among writing center administrators to underestimate or simplify their work (Grutsch

McKinney 2013). Not only is such scheduling important work that is integral to the successful functioning of the partnership itself, but also it often leads to other conversations, as it did in the ELET meeting, where discussions of content, previous difficulties, and material realities of the ELET instructors were all mentioned and had direct impact on working out the schedule itself. Yet, Hannah does seem to have some awareness of the work and initiative that the UHWC takes in working with these students.

After the meeting ended, Hannah, Jeremy and I continued to sit and talk about the ELET partnerships. Hannah gave us additional historical content about the project itself, explaining that the students have created lots of interesting projects in the senior design courses, including drones, robots that can disarm bombs, and electronic glucose measurers. Companies from outside the university give the department support for student projects and when one of the student projects works out, the university gets the money, while the student simply gets recognition. While this doesn't seem all that fair, according to Hannah—and Jeremy and I agreed—they did recently start the symposium, which now allows the students to report their projects themselves, giving them more of a sense of ownership and recognition. The presentation element is also part of the qualifications for meeting the QEP requirements to use the money for the partnership. Then, Jeremy and Hannah talked about the challenges they had in the past with the ELET partners, especially in terms of getting them to change their approach to writing assignments. Jeremy explained that they had tried to "make it [the project] more of a research proposal with a thesis and hypothesis, beyond a compare/contrast" and to get students to develop their research earlier on, to identify evaluation criteria to measure the quality of the sources, and to make claims based on what they found in the literature. Getting students to work on the literature review also fulfilled

part of the QEP in helping students develop research. Yet, they had not gotten students to "buy in" to writing the literature review in the past because it wasn't graded. This move to including the literature review in the rubric would also give the consultants leverage in getting students to do more advanced research for peer reviewed sources beyond "just google."

This partnership, like many others, began when the faculty came in with complaints about their students not being good at writing. Hannah explained that the WC tried to redirect by asking to look at the assignment. Then, Hannah explains, they found the problem "unclear guidelines, not enough, not specific…students didn't know what to do. It wasn't that they couldn't write." Hannah said that one technique she used to help the ELET partners make their expectations clearer (since they know what they want but often cannot communicate it to students) was getting them to share strong examples of writing with students so that they can imitate the writing. Hannah also explained that these projects are dynamic, and they need to "learn to communicate in writing and through presentations," yet the ELET instructors and TAs don't want to deal with it.

In the sections that follow, I first draw on observations, interviews, and consultant notes from the early ELET course partnerships with sophomore and junior level students and argue that students at these stages are most concerned with talking about their plans for writing and brainstorming, in addition to trying to figure out assignment guidelines and genre expectations. These students tend to postpone drafting until late in the semester and begin to learn through talking how to position their writing for outsider-readers who are non-experts in their field. Then, I move to the senior-level ELET course partnerships, where students are seemingly invested in the planning and building of their actual projects, despite confusing

assignment guidelines and disengaged TAs. These senior-level students begin their consultations with stronger audience awareness and a familiarity with the technical report-writing genre, yet they have little experience with oral and visual composition. Unfortunately, UHWC consultants also seemed to have limited experience working with project components that were not alphabetic "papers," and thus relied on traditional pedagogies to inform their discussions with students.

Practicing Technologies: The Early ELET Partnership Courses

During their sophomore and junior years, ELET students were expected to work on group projects and reports that gave them practice using the technological tools that they would eventually need when they moved into their senior year where they would be given a budget and asked to create actual designs. Consultants primarily worked with students on audience awareness, developing research, and writing in the traditional technical report genre. Students were expected to complete two major projects by the end of the semester: a final written report and an oral presentation based on that report.

In this section, I describe how consultation time was spent (primarily on talking about the writing assignment without writing present), the ways in which consultants positioned themselves (as disciplinary outsiders), and discuss how disciplinary TAs were perceived by students.

Talking About Writing Without a Text: Brainstorming and Understanding Genre

At both the sophomore and the junior level, consultations focused primarily on talk about the genre of the technical report and on understanding the assignment prompt. In the sophomore-level course, Tim (consultant) spent most of the two sessions asking the students questions about their topic, which they had just recently decided on. The students explained

167

that "he [the TA] said, 'oh, you don't need to write anything, just come up with an idea'…and they're going to teach you how to write a proposal." After the students described the kind of research they planned to do, Tim asked them to spend the next part of the consultation researching, thus turning the consultation into a kind of workshop. By the second meeting, Tim's group spent time "speculating how to write a technical report," with few guidelines from the instructor.

Tim's experience with the students was quite typical compared with the other sophomore-level ELET groups. For instance, to the first meeting, no other student team brought any kind of draft for the consultant to look at and discuss, with the exception of one group who then decided to "scrap" their proposal in favor of another topic. Instead, consultants and students focused on brainstorming, talking through the assignment in terms of content and organization, and some preliminary research. For the second meeting, just under half of the groups brought in drafts. However, all drafts were of Project Reports or Proposals, rather than of the Progress Report they were supposed to bring in, according to the meeting schedule.

Similarly, students at the junior-level seemed confused by genre expectations. For instance, Seth's (consultant) first two sessions focused on discussing brainstorming in relation to the literature review element of the formal report. The students were trying to determine what kind of experiment to do with the lab equipment they were required to use, and seemed more focused on that then starting the literature review. However, Seth explained to them that the value of the literature review was actually related to helping them decide what kind of experiment to conduct, since literature reviews help to determine "what's feasible." When students voiced that the literature review was new to them, Seth spent more

time explaining it as "a way of framing it [the experiment] as a project" through which they would "rephrase it [the group project] as new, even if it's not really" by comparing their project to other similar ones. Seth also suggested that the beginning research for the literature review would help the group narrow their project down to focus on testing only one or two components, instead of the entire machine (which in this case was a computer).

The second and third meetings with Seth's group were also focused primarily on conducting research for the literature review and tracking their method in preparation for writing the report. Conversation focused on research and source type, and the students explained that per their TA, sources "don't have to be scholarly, [but] have to be credible." Students deemed a source "credible" when it mentioned other sources, had a credible author, and was something other than an opinion-based website or blog. Since they had conducted some research and had started drafting the literature review, the group moved onto a discussion of what needed to happen next: building or writing. One student explained that the next part of the project would involve building the program for their project through creating coding for the machine:

> Yeah, we have to work on coding. The language that we're using in this course has never been used before, so it's trial and error and going through websites and figuring it out, because you have set up all inputs and outputs and you have to figure out how to convert between binary and decimal through code…

Describing their method as "trial and error" seemed important, and I spoke up to suggest that as the students go through this process manually, that they take notes that can be used to write up their report. Then, they could use these notes to draft the "Method" section of their final report, rather than writing the report at the very end, after they had built the code. The

idea of writing and building at the same time seemed new to the students, since they were used to building first and then writing the report second. Also new to students was the importance of including their trial and error process in the final report itself.

"I studied humanities": Consultant Claims Outsider

The consultants who worked with sophomores and juniors regularly established themselves as disciplinary outsiders from their first meetings with students. While this was only partially the case for junior-level consultant Seth, since he began his undergraduate work as an engineering major, sophomore-level consultant Tim regularly reminded students of his outsider position. In particular, Tim's major strategy across sessions seemed to be asking questions and offering his own reading/understanding of the situation or the writing, based on his outsider position. For instance, during a conversation about what kinds of search engines the students used to find research for their proposal, Tim admitted that for him, as someone who "studied humanities in school," he used the library database. Tim also drew on his general knowledge of technical reports to guide students through the genre, commenting on clarity of ideas and organizational structure. Yet, he also admitted in his consultant note, "I had to inform them that technical writing changes from discipline to discipline and that since I am not in their college I am not qualified to tell them specifics." Tim further explained that technical writing conventions, "depend on the TA, the discipline, it could be technical writing for engineering, which is a little different than technical writing for biology or math." Tim encouraged students to talk with their TA about specific conventions related to format for their final report.

From his disciplinary outsider position, Tim also offered his group advice about time management, group work, and writing as non-native speakers of English. For instance, Tim

170

suggested, "all four people write it [the final report], even if there's a lead writer, [and have] everyone read each section and really know, okay, what's this about, what's going on." This advice was met with a bit of laughter from two of the four group members, who explained "we're non-native speakers, the way we're writing is like, for me, him, and him, so we can't understand, so then when we read it, some of our people may not understand, so that's why we need you." Although this is a bit confusing to follow, what the student seemed to be suggesting was that since none of them are native English speakers, having them all read one another's work is going to result in the same kind of reading, and they will most likely not read the errors as errors.

Tim agreed that he was there to offer another reading, but then he reframes the argument in a larger context. After reminding the students that he was able to follow most of their ideas in the proposal, Tim tells the students "don't let the fact that English isn't your first language bog down your ideas, because I still knew what you wanted to say." He then explains:

> You will come across times when, as seniors, or when you're working for the private
>
> sector of the government or something like that, you're going to have to write
>
> proposals for people who are outside of your field. So, if they can't follow what
>
> you're writing about, they won't fund it. That's just that. Imagine that, you're writing
>
> to get money from the Bauer family or something like that. Those guys are in
>
> business. They're not technicians, so you want to write it in a way so that anyone
>
> ideally could understand.

Here, Tim sets the stakes for clarity in the students' writing higher. He links their ability to communicate their project clearly in writing to the likelihood that the project will be funded.

Tim also attempts to get the students to think about a broader audience for their work, not only adding to his own credibility as such an outsider who can offer them advice about how to improve the clarity of their writing, but also getting them to think about how to make their writing accessible to non-specialists in their field.

The value of having non-expert consultants read and respond sophomore and junior-level project ideas and writing seemed to work well. Since the consultants themselves seemed aware that STEM majors, and engineers in particular, would most likely be writing for a variety of non-expert audiences in their future jobs, they tried to help students see their position as disciplinary outsiders as valuable. In particular, business people and potential investors were most frequently mentioned as potential readers of their work, and such people do indeed become the actual audience for their work by the time they are seniors who present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

"They don't expect much": Disciplinary TAs Teach Writing

Although the lack of communication between ELET partners and the UHWC and student confusion of assignment expectations continued throughout all ELET partnerships, including those at the senior-level, this seemed to cause the most anxiety and frustration at the sophomore and junior-level students. In these earlier courses, students were first introduced to the report genre, an approach to writing that they would practice in every ELET course partnership. At different moments, both the sophomore and junior level students were literally without assignment prompts and guidelines, and only in some of these cases could the writing center step in with the materials they received from the ELET partners. Thus, TAs often forgot to give students access to assignment prompts.

When students did have assignment prompts from the TAs, they struggled with figuring out how and what to prioritize. For instance, the sophomore-level students had one assignment that was described to them as a one-to-two page proposal, the student was to include five items (title and team members, motivations, application, project task assignment, and list of references), yet there was no way to understand how to prioritize these items or how the proposal would be evaluated. For other parts of their assignments, students based their knowledge on what the TA said, rather than on formally written guidelines. One example of this was when the students discussed their "Presentation and Demonstration" that seem to be linked to the Final Report, since it was mentioned on the same assignment sheet. Students said that the TA "talked about it in class," but all they could remember was, unsurprisingly, what the assignment sheet said: that students will need to "demonstrate the project and make a presentation in front of all the class." In addition, one student remembered hearing that "the presentation should last 15 minutes, and that there needs to be a PowerPoint presentation."

Student frustration with ELET TAs was most clearly explained when I was filling in for consultant Seth with the junior-level students. Students may have been more comfortable voicing their concerns to me, since I was not their primary consultant or a member of authority for them in any way. Our conversation began when I asked if they had an idea of whether the 2-3-page requirement for the report was supposed to be single or double-spaced. All group members suggested that it was probably double spaced, since "they [the TAs] don't really ask for too much from us in writing."

As I read some of the guidelines aloud, another student mentioned that "some of it is kind of weird because at first we were told we didn't have to build a project, only do some

kind of paper, but then, we had to do it [build a project] but not something too difficult, like

just take a project and improve on it." Here and during other moments, students mentioned

things that they were "told," which suggest that they were receiving some kind of verbal

instructions that sometimes conflicted with the written assignment guidelines. I sympathized

with the frustration, at which another student explained:[95]

> Hence my frustration…they just don't know what they want…it [the assignment
>
> prompt] doesn't have many specifics, it's just the quality of what you provide, like
>
> "exceeds expectations" … it's just nothing. That's why when he [Seth] was asking
>
> me questions I was like, "Look man, we don't even have that [assignment prompt], so
>
> just think what they expect out of us when they give us nothing." They just told us,
>
> hey, write a paper, I've never done one before, but you all are going to do it. So get
>
> started. And then they left.

While the laughter surrounding this comment indicated some sarcasm here, I followed up by

asking if that was really how it was presented to them, and they said that in terms of the "the

paper itself," basically yes. Instead, there was a greater emphasis on the research elements,

which "they went over in great detail…but then everything else is given to us by a TA, sort

of, and then they don't care."

    As we continued to try and determine the assignment guidelines, I asked a question

about an acronym that was not spelled out. The students laughed as we all guessed at its

meaning. I offered to make copies for the two students who didn't have them and they said it

would not be very helpful to have the assignment guidelines, as long as someone in the group

had a copy. I apologized for not having more experience with the project and with what

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[95] In Fall 2015, Dave was also enrolled in my Intro to Fiction course and thus, I knew him when the project began. As one of the strongest participants in our class, he may have been more comfortable providing insight into the course.

students had done in previous semesters, and one student told me that this semester in particular was confusing because "the deadlines were more than what the TAs were telling us, so last time, we were already supposed to have what we had this time, but we didn't even have a topic last time, so we're getting mixed things from people and we're a little behind schedule." I assured them that they were on the right track and we agreed to look at more writing during the next meeting. Since the students really needed to start working with the equipment in the lab to begin their design, I let them go early but asked them to spend at least twenty minutes (the remaining time) getting started on the design and creating the Google doc.

Building Technologies: ELET Senior Design

The senior-level partnerships seem to be the ones surrounded by the most excitement and with the most at stake. The first-semester senior-level ELET students write individual project proposals. From the 40 or so proposals submitted to the faculty, the ELET faculty chooses the strongest five ideas. Then, the second-semester senior-level ELET students get into teams and work on creating a plan for building one of the five selected projects. This is an attempt on the part of the ELET faculty to mimic the competitiveness of the industry, according to Hannah, who shared this information with me after our beginning of the semester meeting. As students develop these project plans, they were required to attend four small group consultations to receive assistance in writing their project proposals and creating effective presentations. First-semester senior-level ELET students whose proposals progress to the second-semester senior-level ELET course continue working in their groups to actually build/create the prototype, working from a small university budget, and sometimes the support of outside investors if they have them.

Unlike the earlier ELET course partnerships, students in these groups already had proposals from the beginning. Thus, they spent far less time on brainstorming, and much more time on building the projects, writing about how those projects were built, organizing and reporting on group management, and marketing their projects via oral and visual presentations, in addition to finalizing the end of the semester report.

In this section, I discuss the creation of two student projects created by senior-level ELET students. In the first project created by Team A, students plan for the creation of a mobile classroom with a real-world audience in mind, particularly their already-committed investor. Team A is also engaged in an application for additional funds. Thus, the concerns responding the disengaged TA and the confusing assignment prompt seem unimportant, since students are engaged in the writing, research, and presentation surrounding their project. In the second project created by Team B, students began with a working project prototype: a smart-phone application called iGuide that includes visual and oral UH campus map features, originally created for visually impaired users. As graduating seniors on the job market, these students were focused on marketing their product for their end of the semester Undergraduate Research Symposium where potential buyers and employers would be present. While students did bring their oral and visual projects into the UHWC, my consultation observations and the consultants' project notes suggest that consultants most often approached these project elements as traditionally written alphabetic texts.

Investor as Audience: Writing, Building, and Teaming in Real Time

Since I had observed the sophomore and junior-level ELET groups already, by the time I met the senior-level students, I had low expectations in terms of what student would bring to the first meeting. However, I immediately sensed a change in mentality and

176

preparedness. When Team A arrived in the UHWC for their first project meeting, it was clear

that the group had a project leader (Wilson) and that they were all excited about their project.

Wilson immediately started explaining it to me, as he handed me a proposal draft that he was

already working on and planned to submit to the Cornell Cup competition.[96] Team A's

project was working on creating a shipping container with solar panels that would function as

a mobile classroom for children in Africa. Their goal was to create a classroom that would be

"as efficient as possible and safe," keeping the harsh climate of the Mahi region where they

would first pilot the classroom in mind as they built. Wilson also told me that the project was

already funded and they had met with the investor already a couple times this semester.

Without any asking or prompting, Wilson discussed the research that still needed to be done,

such as the best type of installation to use, the most efficient structure to fit the most students

comfortably, the types of computers to have, and the setup of one main "super computer"

that would hold most of the content allowing the others to work as "virtual computers,"

among other things. The students, chiming in to help explain, pointed to the images below as

they talked through their final report:

Figure 1: Images from Team A's Mobile Classroom Proposal

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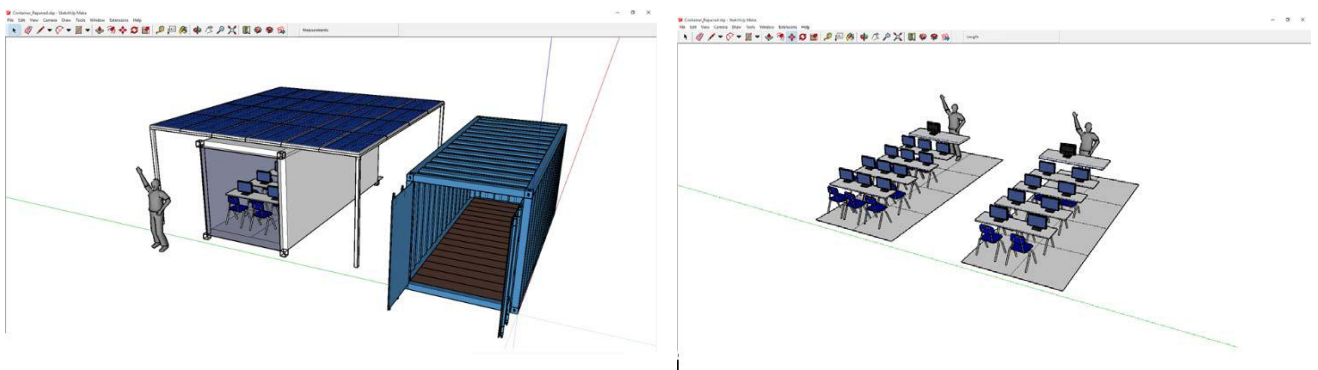
[96] The Intel-Cornell Cup is a college-level embedded design competition "created to empower student teams to become the inventors of the newest innovative applications of embedded technology." Teams have the opportunity to win up to $7,500.

In addition, Team A spoke about the global and societal impacts, and explained that while they were piloting the classroom in Mahi, they hoped that similar models could be developed for other underserved rural communities where children had little access to safe education. The idea behind the container itself was so that they could locate the classroom near the village to save students from the unsafe commute, during which young children had a reputation for being captured and forced to serve as soldiers in the military. The team was also planning carefully to create a sustainable model using deep cycle batteries that would provide lots of charges and a life of 10-15 years. The team had done substantial research and found solar panels to last 30 years and a Zuba Box Dell computer that would last 10-15 years and were in the process of looking into security options.

After explaining their project, the team said that they were working on completing their application for the Cornell Cup, which was due in two weeks and requested both verbal and written feedback. In particular, Team A wanted their consultant, Carly, and also myself to "point out the weak parts" and mention "any other possible ways to do it," in addition to "feedback on how a potential user might read it."

In addition to working on the formal elements of the report, Team A spent a great deal of time discussing their project budget from multiple options tracking the time they spent on each part of the report via a detailed timeline of what each team member did. Although this tracking was part of the ELET required assignment, Team A took it very seriously, working constantly on updating their Progress Reports. Although Carly (consultant) did lead the sessions with questions about the project updates, the students themselves seemed to take over leadership and often used the time to write/build within their team's live and shared Google Document. Team A was required to fill in and update their

progress weekly, based on the actual and expected hours of work in each area. The students said that for them, splitting up the work didn't work very well and that it ended up making things "messy," causing them to "go back and redo it all as a team." In order to work on much of the work as a team, Wilson set up a plan to work together via Skype twice a week, allotting additional meeting times to talk with their sponsor. They mentioned that the first project report seemed to be a lot of work but after that, they would just need to "fill it in" with updates. Wilson, the team leader, admitted his worry about the high word requirement, but his group members assured him that they would make it, since "we have it all, we just have to get it down in words."

Team A created a color-coded Gantt Chart to provide a visual sense of how much time was spent on particular parts of the project and how they planned to spend the next semester's time. For instance, the first three months (October through December), while students were enrolled in the first part of the senior-level ELET course were primarily spent researching (blue) and ordering materials (dark blue). Then, during the months of January and February when the team would begin the second part of senior-level ELET, the team planned to spend time designing the interior and installing solar panels (orange) and on general and battery installation (dark blue). Team A also planned for the final three months to be focused on testing and finishing the product (light gray) and on finishing the interior design with final touches and improvements (dark blue).

Figure 2: Team A's Gantt Chart

In some ways, Team A was atypical in that they had already received funding from an investor and were looking for additional funding. In a sense, the stakes of succeeding at the project itself were higher because students were spending someone else's money and were thus expected to plan for the creation of a prototype that would work and use the resources well. Writing a project report that would not "pass" was not really an option for Team A. In terms of the project's success within their ELET class, the faculty was already excited and supportive, since Team A had financial support for their project, and an investor who was also a medical doctor that served as an additional mentor. In a sense then, Team A had already "passed," since they had the funding secured and were designing a project whose future viability had weight and meaning beyond the course.

Reading Presentations: Visual and Oral Composing in the UHWC

In contrast to Team A, the majority of ELET groups in both senior-level courses were more involved with creating and marketing their prototypes in ways that would attract potential investors. Yet, like Team A, the other ELET seniors were enthusiastic about their projects and brought written proposals with them to their first UHWC sessions. Students seemed quite familiar with the ELET written report guidelines, and thus, in the second and

third senior-level meetings, the seniors spent far more time discussing the particularities of the oral presentations and the power point slides as texts in themselves.

This was perhaps because by the second-part of the senior level ELET course, most students had already created their prototype. For instance, during their first senior-level meeting, Team B had completed their project design and was in the midst of adding to the product. This team's prototype was the smartphone application iGuide that "would benefit the University of Houston's student body and staff throughout their daily schedules" by providing three key features: (1) a live, up-to-date map of campus that is meant to replace the physical map used by the university. The map uses GPS technology to help and is detailed enough to help students find specific classrooms and buildings; (2) real time routing which allows them to access detailed instructions for how to get from one place on campus to another; and (3) menu features, which give students easy access from the main screen to building information, campus shuttle tracking, and campus restaurants. Although they had originally envisioned a visually impaired user for the iGuide, Team B realized that they would only have time to build the visual elements of the product in the timeframe of the semester.

After explaining the prototype itself, Team B's consultant (Lynn) asked the group about their project guidelines and if any elements were new for them. In particular, these students were faced with a slightly new report element: a "Newsletter" portion, where students are to imagine a non-technical audience. In terms of the writing appropriate for this section, one student asked, "how do we write our opinions?" since they were not yet sure how to broadly position their work for a non-technical audience. Lynn told Team B that including opinions, even in the Newsletter section, was not appropriate for this kind of

document. Instead, she suggested that the group frame what they thought of as their opinions, but were actually that which they could not yet prove, as the "intended or potential impact." This phrase made more sense, Lynn explained, since their writing in the section "was not simply based on their opinions, but on their intentions as designers of the prototype." Lynn also found some resources for the group to use while writing up their executive summary, and told them they should focus their attention to writing the executive summary and maintaining a professional tone throughout the report itself.

Team B spent Meetings 2 and 3 focusing on their oral presentation and their poster. Lynn explained the presentation as a "snapshot of the paper," and suggested that it "should not be too technical," since it would be shared with some non-expert audience members. This was set against the more technical tone required for the formal report in all elements except the newsletter section. Lynn asked Team B to think about a variety of audiences for their presentation, ranging from the university (large-scale) to the individual and told them to think carefully about "what an outsider wants to know about the project" as the decide what to include in their 15-minute presentation. She also suggested that they focus on "the big picture and narrow in," without getting too specific. Again, Lynn noted taking the content "directly from the paper, but put it in layman's terms and only include what's most important." The group decided to divide up the slides so that they each designed the ones that they would orally present to the group.

For Team B's final meeting, I filled in for Lynn. The group said they had no guidelines but did have access to posters from previous semester. Team B noted the challenges involved in moving from the PowerPoint Presentation to the poster, since the size of each was very different, they could not simply cut and paste from one to the other but had

182

to do a lot of reformatting. Thus, we decided to discuss the poster they had already completed, but to also keep the PowerPoint in mind. Team B pulled up their poster draft and we worked on it, making changes to it in real time. In particular, I suggested that students work on the following:

- Cut back the amount of text/information on the slide by eliminating what can be implied;

- Use more concise sentences;

- Use bullet points purposefully and consistently. Do not use bullet points when a couple of short sentences would suffice;

- Make sure the correct content is in the right place and do not repeat items under multiple headings if not necessary;

- Make sure the poster is symmetrically aligned (i.e., center the image of the prototype);

- Put the most important information (such as how it works and current features)in the center directly under the prototype since that's where your viewer's attention will be drawn. Put the less important details along the sides and corners (methods, tools, etc.).

Team B's final poster that hung during the Undergraduate Research Symposium is pictured below:

Figure 3: Team B's iGuide Prototype Poster
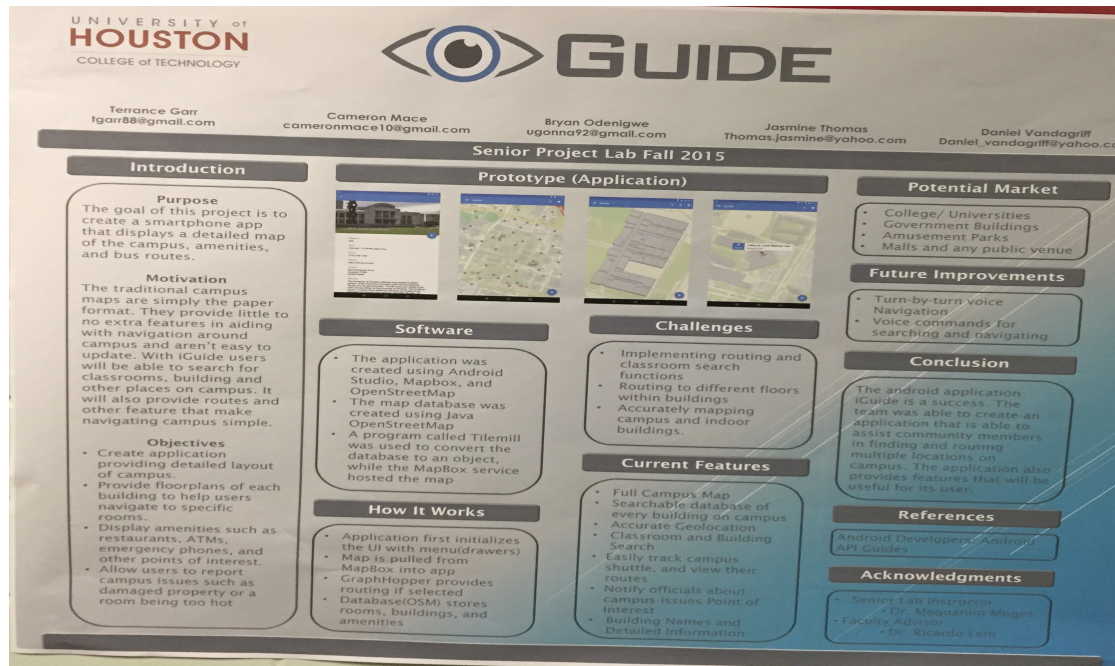
Similar to Team B, the other senior-level ELET groups seemed to be unfamiliar with the oral and visual elements of project composition, and consultants' experience with these elements seemed to vary. In particular, consultants' commentary and advice for students centered on extracting content from the written reports and reading the oral presentations as texts. For instance, one consultant noted that in her session, "the group brought in their oral presentation and their proposal. I read over their drafts and marked the necessary corrections." Another consultant resorted to talking about techniques the students could use as they prepared for their oral presentation. She explained that "I provided tips on how to 'practice' their presentation as a group if they were unable to physically meet as a group: Google doc flash cards, record self practicing to time speech, report speaking time in Google doc to make sure no one is speaking for too long and going over time."

Yet, there were two consultants (Amber and Seth) who seemed better prepared to work with students on visual design. For instance, they described their time spent during the last two senior-ELET meeting spent in the following way:

Table 8: Consultants Discussion of Visual Presentation Elements

	Meeting 2	Meeting 3
Amber	…I also enjoyed it [the PowerPoint presentation] but recommended that they either fade out the background so that the bullet points are more easily red or that they add a white box around the wording (and keep the background as a border). Lastly, I also suggested that they reduce the length of the bullet points.	…We also went over their oral presentations. Generally, it was good. We did some rearranging of the slides. We also talked about shortening their bullet points from sentences to concise phrases.
Seth	…The benefits were primarily having a non-technical eye look over things to ensure that it was (1) eye-catching and (2) easy to understand. I think the group is generally on the right track.	I helped them with their Poster, primarily. The students had significant amounts of text on the poster, so I encouraged them to represent as much information pictorially as possible. I also helped them to determine the content appropriate for the poster, such as removing a "conclusion" section, and condensing the abstract, introduction, and objectives sections. I

		also encouraged them to rename a couple of the poster sections, such as "hardware" and "software", where the sections included diagrams rather than actual images of hardware and software…

As Table 1 indicates, both Amber and Seth seemed aware of the need to shorten and condense the material included on PowerPoint slides and posters. Unsurprisingly, ELET seniors struggled with this, since they mostly cut and pasted from their final reports to create them. Seth also noted the value of having an "eye-catching" and "easy to understand" PowerPoint and poster. In particular, Seth brought to his group's attention the ways in which certain sections from the report were not appropriate for the poster.

Is Talk Enough?: Writing, Genre, and Multimodality in the UHWC

The Undergraduate Symposium was quite an exciting event. I felt underdressed in my dress pants and nice shirt and could not find a seat in the presentation room. All students and faculty were in suits and there were people lined up all around the perimeter of the room and they had gathered in a group outside the door to listen in. The projects themselves were quite exciting, ranging from computers that read/translate American Sign Language, reptile habitats with self-regulating temperatures, and the creation of Sober Wheel: a finger-operated testing apparatus that measures blood alcohol levels before unlocking the driver's wheel. Posters were displayed on the walls outside and students did have a time slot during the symposium to stand at the posters and give demonstrations. There was a seriousness to the

symposium and it felt very professional, making me realize how much of an opportunity students had to really show off their work.

Perhaps what made me most uncomfortable was the seeming lack of preparation and comfortability in giving presentations. Small things like speaking up, sharing the presentation across students, and creating consistency across an oral presentation were issues. In addition, all groups in one of the sections shared short videos that they had been asked to incorporate and these were poorly incorporated and seemed very tacked on. Finally, most groups read directly from their slides that were way too filled with text. No presentation started with a story, anecdote, or question.

(1) Writing Centers can provide much needed support to discipline-specific classes where TAs are in charge of writing instruction. Although the ELET partners who met with UHWC administrators seemed to understand the value of writing in their discipline, students suggested that their TAs did not offer writing support and sometimes did not even make assignment prompts accessible. The UHWC did provide an important service to students by communicating with the ELET partners and requesting access directly from them to course materials. Thus, when TAs forgot to give students directions, the UHWC could often step in with the materials. ELET TAs are often international graduate students with little writing or publication experience, in addition to being non-native English speakers. Thus, not only is communication complicated by disciplinary and administrative differences, but also by language differences. This became clearest to me when I conducted a brief, twenty-minute interview with one ELET TA who did not seem to understand any of the questions I asked him about writing in his discipline.

(2) The UHWC middle-administrators and consultants work from a text-centric that centers on traditional, alphabetic texts whose presence is deemed necessary in order for a consultation to be considered "successful." During my interviews with them and in their project notes, UHWC administrators and consultants seemed to strongly prefer that students have drafts in hand at the time of the meetings. A consultation's success seemed determined by whether or not students had drafts and worked on "real" writing, yet students often did not have drafts, in part because of their confusion over disciplinary genres and assignment guidelines.

Yet during the consultations I shadowed, ELET students seemed grateful for the writing advice offered by consultants, especially during their early partnerships at the sophomore and junior levels. In particular, consultants asked questions related to project guidelines and organization, requested clarification from an outsider audience perspective similar to that which they imagine could be potential investors/business people, and facilitated project management by offering suggestions of how to break up and assign large writing projects among group members.

(3) Writing in the ELET discipline is becoming more oral and visual, yet both TAs and UHWC consultants seem ill equipped to differentiate among different modes of writing. Thus, there is much potential for the UHWC, and writing centers in general, to provide writing support across modes of writing. Students are being asked to create multimodal projects for real audiences beyond the university. Yet, students seem unprepared to move from written report to oral and visual presentations. This may be in part due to the ways in which TAs seem to undervalue them.

Similarly, UHWC consultants seem conflate the written report with the oral presentation and visual texts (poster and PowerPoint slides). Thus, more differentiated training that prepares consultants to work with multimodal texts is necessary. In addition, UHWC administrators and consultants need to take the charge in terms of helping WID faculty to think of these elements as equally if not more important than the written reports and those they are indeed different genres/forms of writing, rather than solely simple translations (in the UHWC, this kind of move could happen, since the WID partners have often been receptive to making changes to course documents).

(4) Consultants who are disciplinary outsiders may better serve as readers of student writing in ELET and other STEM disciplines that require students to write for non-expert audiences. Despite recent conversations in writing center studies about the value of discipline-specific rather than generalist tutors in the writing center (Dinitiz and Harrington), ELET students seemed to benefit from having non-expert readers. For example, the senior-level consultations were geared toward preparing students to present their projects to potential businessmen and investors who would be present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. In one instance, the value of making their projects understandable for non-expert audiences manifested in the addition of a "Newsletter" version of their project, an element of the senior-ELET final project report.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

"Stories provide a vehicle through which personal and shared orientations may be passed on, instilled, or indeed critically evaluated and reconsidered. Likewise, stories--especially those that appeal to the authority of tradition--provide powerful rhetorical tools in the construction, maintenance, and revision for individual and group identities."

Ray Cashman (2008)

Storytelling on the Northern Irish Border

"…the writing center grand narrative has outlived its usefulness. Now is the time for peripheral visions."

Jack Grutsch McKinney (2013)

Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers

In this dissertation, I argued that the UHWC provides a counterstory to the writing center grand narrative in that it the UHWC is a space for students to work on their writing and research projects in one-on-one and small group settings, both face-to-face and online. The UHWC's support for student writing is primarily linked primarily to university administrator and disciplinary faculty driven partnerships rooted in a particular program, discipline, or course UHWC. As a university-wide service housed outside of English, the UHWC works with university administrators and disciplinary faculty on curriculum, assignment, and assessment design, as well as on mentoring and providing staff development.

I established a new collaborative model—the partnership approach—for writing center and university administrative/disciplinary faculty, while also acknowledging the benefits and drawbacks of such a business-minded approach. I also presented two case studies that show how two very different partnerships—one with the Department of English

that meets online and the other with the Electrical Power Engineering that meets face-to-face—function in practice.

In this chapter, I end with several conclusions about the teaching of writing, collaborative partnerships between writing programs (or centers) and faculty across the university, and pedagogies deemed innovative.

- **Local stories provide peripheral visions to global (national) stories about writing centers.** The UHWC provides a counterstory to what Grutsch McKinney has identified as the writing center grand narrative[97] by extending the idea of writing center work as "tutoring students" to include working with writers on meta-cognitive growth, professional development, and confidence building; aiding faculty in curriculum/programmatic design, and expanding its reach as a university service center. Thus, the most immediate way to challenge grand narratives about writing is via the telling of local ones. Yet, we cannot stop there. As Grutsch McKinney urges, the sharing of local stories may lead to eventual accrual, which can allow us to take note of patterns and omissions across multiple stories.

- **Partnership—rather than tutorial—approaches to writing instruction offer advantages.** Writing Centers can expand their work with other disciplines by working from a partnership approach in collaboration with university administrators and disciplinary faculty, rather than relying solely on one-on-one tutoring models; stand alone and our of context workshops, and writing fellows programs. The partnership approach to writing center and WAC/WID involves: (1) a sense of shared ownership and decision-making; (2) an awareness of the transactional (and often

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[97] In *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers,* Jackie Grutsch McKinney (2013) defines the writing center grand narrative as "writing centers are comfortable, iconoclastic places where all students go to get one-on-one tutoring on their writing" (3).

191

monetary) exchange that occurs from the pooling of skills and resources from all

parties involved; (3) the negotiation of relational terms, including each partner's

responsibilities, expectations, risks, and rewards. Also key to the partnership-

approach is creating discipline and context-specific writing scenarios for students that

require multiple visits. These tend to help student writers develop over time, rather

than having them visit the UHWC in short, individual consultations that often only

occur in a single, 30-minute session. Yet, writing centers should be careful of how

partnerships sometimes enforce a more corporate-model that privileges the Center's

commitment to university administrators and disciplinary faculty over student writers.

- **University administrators and disciplinary faculty outside of English say that**

  they value such partnerships. Administrators and disciplinary faculty value

  WAC/WID partnerships with writing centers/programs that are relational,

  collaborative, measureable, honest, and flexible/adaptive. The partnership approach

  also promotes longevity in terms of working with the UHWC, since the projects begin

  and end with administrative meetings that set goals/expectations that are followed up

  with and reflected on at the end of the semester.

- **Writing Center assessment at UH is based on student satisfaction not evaluation**

  of student writing. Writing Center assessment is primarily based on student

  satisfaction and perceived gain of confidence, but that is not enough to tell us whether

  or not student writing improves. Much UHWC assessment is based on evaluative

  surveys that student take after one-on-one sessions, but more is needed to determine

  how we impact student writing, if at all. This was the case in both the English

  Department and the ELET partnerships in particular. Although assessment based on

student writing is necessary and important for composition scholars, this may not be so important to administrators, both within English departments and writing programs (especially when run by non-rhetoric and composition faculty). Unfortunately, university administrators (especially upper administrators) may be more interested in things like student satisfaction, since students are the customers of the university

- **Writing has no content for university administrators and disciplinary faculty.** Despite composition's emphasis on the interconnectedness between writing and content, those outside of the field seem to work from the assumption that writing instruction can be outsourced and taught separately from content. In addition, writing programs may be vulnerable to promoting this separation, as in the case of the UHWC. Reasons for reinforcing the writing vs. content divide include the UHWC's desire to: (a) maintain a position of service so as not to overstep the faculty person; and (b) offer a more clearly defined expertise in writing. One key example of how this is done was in the UHWC administration's overall discomfort in using the word "teach" to describe how they work with student writers and their consistent argument that "we do not focus on content, that's the instructor's job."

- **Mechanical and clinical language dominates stories told about writing (centers) by disciplinary faculty.** Administrators and disciplinary faculty primarily used metaphors that suggest writing and the teaching of writing is mechanistic (skill-based) and that writing centers are clinical (where students go for counseling). This belief reinforces the idea that writing has no content, thus reducing the perception of writing instruction and writing center work to teaching a skill-set. Despite many attempts to escape their clinical reputation (North, Grutsch McKinney, Carino),

disciplinary faculty still do not see writing instructors as engaged in a complex intellectual activity that must be adapted depending on particular students and disciplines.

- **Disciplinary faculty emphasize writing to learn in the discipline over discipline-specific writing instruction.** Administrators and disciplinary faculty are focused on preparing students to write about their disciplines and to use their disciplinary knowledge to communicate with a variety of professional/workplace audiences, not within strict disciplinary conventions for expert-academic. Thus, writing centers and writing programs may be working from outdated models when they think of WAC/WID as concerned with preparing students for discipline-specific academic discourses. Instead, disciplinary faculty seem focused on asking students to write for non-university audiences, even in their own courses.

- **According to university administrators and disciplinary faculty, writing for English seems disconnected from other kinds of university writing.** In particular, disciplinary faculty believe that English teachers overemphasize expressive, formulaic, open-ended writing in ways that do not prepare students to write for other university contexts or for their future workplaces. Chris (the biology professor) was most persistent about his frustration with writing teachers. His perspective suggests that English teachers may be unaware of the kinds of writing students will be expected to do in their disciplinary majors.

- **Hybrid and online courses in the UHWC tend to reproduce traditional face-to-face pedagogies.** Hybrid/online pedagogies in practice are closer to traditional translations of face-to-face approaches to writing instruction that are not necessarily

innovative and are sometimes limiting and may limit creativity and spontaneity. For example, creating video lesson are pedagogically similar to giving lectures, online discussion boards are often structured by a specific prompt with a word requirement that students must meet in order to get credit (and often require a certain number of posts in response to peers), the online portion of the class itself is the same as "assigning homework," creating a context for inorganic discussion, and using online essay collection and grading platforms like Turn-it-in[98] actually encourage formulaic commenting using drag/drop tools from pre-written comments that the instructor can write or that the program has already written.

- **Hybrid/online courses disrupt traditional timing and pacing.** Hybrid/online instructors struggle with navigating a new sense of time in the online space and how a 90-minute class period is supposed to "translate" to the online space. Thus, as in the point above, hybrid/online course structures are still attempting to operate according to traditional face-to-face classes, where time is set up in a certain way. Another example of this is the way the UH online courses often function according to a twice weekly due date, similar to twice weekly due dates in courses that meet face-to-face.; Although some hybrid/online instructors may assume that they are spending less time teaching in such environments than they would in face-to-face classes (and this is one major reason why such a class format appeals to graduate teaching assistants), they are most likely spending more time preparing course documents, responding to and

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[98] Not only is Turn-it-in problematic for these reasons, but it also: (1) fundamentally changes how instructors read/respond to student writing in ways that we are not yet aware of in terms of how the feedback itself changes, but we do know that this adds extra work for instructors who have to both learn to use the new online platform and change their method of grading (see Erika and Maurice); (2) does not reliably detect plagiarism as it was designed to do (see Brown, Fallon, Lott, Matthews, and Mintie (2007) "Taking on Tirnitin: Tutors Advocating Change."

grading assignments that would count as attendance and participation in face-to-face courses, and learning how to navigate not only a new teaching scenario, but also to use technology and tools that may be new or unfamiliar (not to mention technical difficulties in general).

- **Hybrid/online courses make additional challenging demands on new instructors.** New writing instructors who teach in hybrid/online formats for the first time face a challenging learning curve in terms of figuring out how to teach according to best practices in composition. For instance, learning how to effectively facilitate small group work and full class discussion take more time in hybrid classes that meet half the time face-to-face. In addition, these new instructors may be over-emphasizing building class communities and showing students their personality (humanness), since they feel that they are given "less time" with students. This means that face-to-face class time may be even less focused on writing instruction, since there is little evidence that suggests these qualities of a composition classroom actually lead to better student writing.

- **Writing centers can offer important resources to discipline-specific TAs tasked with teaching writing.** Graduate student teaching assistants in the disciplines may be challenging for writing centers/programs to work with, not only because they may not have a strong interest in improving student writing, but also because they may be undertrained and underpaid for the work that they are doing. Thus, creating a collaborative partnership is very challenging (perhaps impossible), since some (like those from ELET) see student time spent in the writing center as time off from teaching. At the same time, these are teachers who are in need of the most support

and can most significantly benefit from working with writing teachers/consultants trained in composition pedagogy.

- **Writing centers may not recognize their work across modes of writing, even when students bring oral and visually-focused projects into the Center.** Disciplinary faculty, especially in STEM disciplines, often assign writing assignments that include multimodal components that are primary visual (in the form of PowerPoint slides or a poster) or oral (in the form of a presentation in front of class). Faculty, students and under-prepared writing consultants seem to operate from the assumption that writing projects that include multimodal elements will be successful once the writing is completed, since they seem to assume that working across modes involves a simple translation. This supports research by Geller et al. and Grutsch McKinney who found that those who work in writing centers often underemphasize the variety of work they do.

More research into how writing centers can collaborate with disciplinary departments is needed. In particular, determining to what extent student writers find such partnerships helpful, and whether or not they prefer working with the writing center would be of great value. As universities continue to develop WAC/WID programs and to hire WAC/WID administrators, we need to be aware of how those outside English Departments, writing centers, and composition programs understand our work and our value.

In particular, all parties may benefit from expanding their ideas of writing so that they realize that writing does indeed have content and that writers are engaged in a lifelong process of development, rather than a skill-based endeavor that can, once learned, function in a mechanistic way. Adler-Kassner and Wardle have given us a valuable resource in

developing the threshold concepts for writing, yet we might further benefit from attempting to understand how university administrators and disciplinary understand such concepts. Furthermore, more research is needed about the kind of writing disciplinary faculty are requiring of students, especially if their focus is changing to more writing in the profession-based writing, rather than writing for academic disciplines within the university.

In addition, we need more research that seeks to understand how writing instruction in different environments (face-to-face, hybrid, fully online) impacts the quality of student writing and the quality and/or experiences of instructors, and especially new TAs. The research in this dissertations suggests that hybrid, online, and even multimodal pedagogies most often draw on traditional face-to-face best practices from the field of rhetoric and composition that have been developed over the past 40 years. Are such practices transferrable to the hybrid/online environment? We need research to determine whether they are, and if they are, how are they best transferred, translated, or transformed?

Writing centers would also benefit from training consultants to work with various modes of writing so that they can name what they are doing. Since some disciplinary faculty and students may not be aware of the dynamic differences across modes of composition (traditional alphabetic texts and those composed orally and/or visually), the writing center has great potential to teach composition in these forms. Yet, until writing centers begin to recognize multimodal texts that are brought into the WC as such, they will continue to narrow their pedagogies to those used for traditional, alphabetic texts.

Appendix A

University of Houston Writing Center
Administrator/Consultant Interview Questions

Experience with/approaches to writing center work

1. How long have you been working at the UHWC?
2. What is your role at the UHWC?
3. What other roles have you had/do you have at UofH?
4. Why did you decide to begin working in a writing center?
5. In your own words, what is a writing center?
6. How do you describe the role of your writing center to those at your own school?
7. In what ways do you think your writing center is different from other writing centers?
8. In what ways do you think your writing center is similar to other writing centers?
9. Describe your writing center and how you perceive the culture there.
10. Describe yourself as a writing center professional.
11. How do you approach the teaching of writing?
12. What projects and duties do you have at the UHWC?

WID partnerships: how do they work and how did they come to be?

13. How did the partnership model get started?
14. How do the partnerships work?
15. What partnerships have you been involved with and are you involved in now?
16. Describe how the partnership(s) began.
17. Describe how the partnership(s) occur(s) now.
18. What partnerships work well? Why?
19. What partnerships do not work as well? Why?
20. How do you think the UHWC partnerships impact students?
21. How do the UHWC partnerships impact faculty/instructors?
22. How do the partnerships impact you as a writing center professional and the WC in general?
23. How have the partnerships changed over the past three years, if at all?

Appendix B

University Administrator and
Disciplinary Faculty Interview Questions

Background
1. How long have you been teaching and in what capacities? (grade level, classes, etc.)
2. How long have you been teaching at UofH and in what capacities?
3. Describe yourself as a teacher. What would you say are your pedagogical core values?
4. What role does writing play in your teaching?
5. How do you approach the teaching of writing?
6. What tools do you use to teach writing (computer, ipads, discussions, learning management systems, research papers, collaborative projects, etc.)?
7. What are your goals as a writing teacher?
8. What successes and challenges have you had with teaching writing?
9. Describe some of your writing assignments.
10. How would you define good student writing?
11. What concerns do you have about student writing? How have you addressed these concerns?
12. What concerns do your students have about writing, if any?

On the WC and p-ships
13. Describe how the partnership began.
14. Describe how the partnership occurs now.
15. Describe the role of the writing center administrator or staff member that you work with.
16. How did the partnership impact student writing?
17. How did the partnership impact your approach to teaching writing, if at all?
18. What is your current perception of the UHWC?
19. What do you believe your colleague's perception of the UHWC is? Your own department? The university at large?

UHWC Impact
20. How do you think the your partnership with the UHWC impacts students?
21. How does the partnership with the UHWC impact you (and/or your department)?
22. How does the partnership with the UHWC impact the WC?
23. What do you think would improve your partnership with the UHWC?
24. How might the UHWC enter into partnerships with other faculty/instructors across campus?

Appendix C

University of Houston Writing Center 2014 Annual Report

University of Houston Writing Center
2014 Annual Report

Writing Is Thinking

University of Houston Writing Center
2014 Annual Report

Table of Contents

FY2014 Executive Summary
Writing is Thinking

In December 1975, *Newsweek* published *Why Johnny Can't Write*, an article lamenting the widespread abysmal writing skills of American students, including those attending elite Ivy League universities. Forty years later, in 2015, the latest version of *Why Johnny Can't Write* is the NBC News report, *Johnny Can't Write and Employers Are Mad*. Employers are complaining about poor communication skills among recently hired college graduates. Digital technology, high school teachers, university faculty, indulgent parents, and indifferent students are among those cited as causing the problem; however, the cause of poor student writing is a complicated issue.

Writing currently assigned in college is far more complex than the five paragraph, thesis controlled paper that serves as the writing staple in high schools. College writing is academic, rhetorical, and requires inventive development. Students must draw from a diverse writing tool box in order to navigate the variety of subject matter and writing formats they encounter in their college courses. On one level, the purpose of academic writing is to persuade the writer's audience (the reader) that the ideas offered are legitimate, even valuable. As an engineer, for example, it is not enough to know how to assemble a robot. Engineers must be able to communicate clearly and convincingly why the robot is needed and how it will contribute positively to their field and to the broader community in which they live. They must "sell" their idea, using coherent prose and an appropriate tone, all the while anticipating their readers' doubts.

For fourteen years, we at the University of Houston Writing Center have been committed to improving student writing. We have kept abreast of current writing practices and methodologies, fine-tuning those that best suit UH students' writing. We have created and implemented custom designed writing programs for UH colleges, departments, faculty and their students--all of which involve diagnostic assessment and an appropriate approach of addressing each department's specific writing requirements. Our trained Writing Consultants help students develop and structure the ideas they want to convey and explain why writing and thinking are inseparable.

FY14 was a productive year for the University of Houston Writing Center. We accommodated **22,928** student visits. Students from the colleges of Architecture, Business, Education, Engineering, Honors, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Pharmacy, Social Work, and Technology availed themselves of Writing Center services. Student visits were generated from 57 Writing in the Disciplines (WID) partnerships, general writing consultations, and developmental courses taught by Writing Center staff: English 1300, English 1100, and Integrated Reading and Writing 1300. In FY14, the Writing Center and Department of English worked together to teach 24 sections of Hybrid Core freshman composition. Online consultations increased markedly so that an online service-specific website was established.

FY15 is shaping up to be as fruitful as FY14, maybe even more so. The beat goes on.

Marjorie M. Chadwick, Ph.D.
Executive Director, University of Houston Writing Center

University of Houston Writing Center
Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Houston Writing Center is to provide writing support across the curriculum--in all subject areas--that contributes to the academic, professional, and personal writing proficiency of UH's diverse community of students, so that when they graduate they take with them the writing and communication acumen necessary to participate and compete in today's marketplace.

In designing and implementing writing programs for UH's colleges and departments, the Writing Center helps students connect the dots from abstract writing theory to concrete application. Our mission is not only to ensure that our students learn to master writing basics, but that they learn to think critically about writing, and in the process, develop analytical skills so that they are able to create engaging, coherent policy memos, lab reports, grant proposals, conference papers, web sites, briefs—whatever kind of writing is relevant in their chosen field of work. The Writing Center also assists faculty in designing assignments, creating grading rubrics, and assessing writing in a consistent, meaningful fashion.

The Mission of the University of Houston Writing Center includes the following:

- Research in the Teaching of Writing: fostering the creation and dissemination of knowledge about writing pedagogy in a large public institution serving an urban, multi-ethnic, multilingual community.

- Writing Instruction: providing instruction in writing that meets the diverse needs of our undergraduate and graduate student population.

- Curricular Innovation: promoting the creation of writing practices and curricula to meet student disciplinary writing needs.

- Assessment: developing effective means of evaluating student and institutional writing in order to provide informative assistance for both students and instructors.

- Community Outreach: establishing programs and partnerships that make available the Center's research and practices in the teaching of writing in collaboration with the region's educational and professional communities.

FY14 Writing Center Goals

General Goals

- To provide environments for students to develop as critical thinkers, critical readers, and critical writers
- To partner with faculty to develop effective writing instruction models for their particular courses and disciplines

Specific Goals

- Expand the Writing Center's services to include new Writing in the Disciplines college/department partnerships, multi-discipline studio groups, hybrid, and online courses
- Develop and institute undergraduate online synchronous writing tutorial consultations led by a team of Writing Consultants, supervised by staff members, using the Writing Center scheduler, WCONLINE
- Expand partnerships with UH colleges in developing an alternative platform for online collaboration designed specifically to support studios and groups

Undergraduate Program Goals

- Address the need for student improvement in critical thinking
- Support student success in understanding the importance of information literacy, defined by the American Library Association as "recognizing when information is needed and having the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the required information"

Graduate and Professional Program Goals

- Provide online consultations conducted synchronously and asynchronously that allow graduate students who work full time to get assistance after 5:00 p.m.

- Organize Theses and Dissertation writing groups that offer a social support network as well as methods to improve writing (Many universities, including UT and A&M, offer graduate students the opportunity to join mediated writing groups.)

FY14 Writing Center Methodology and Pedagogy

- One-on-one student writing conferences—online and face-to-face
- Interactive small group tutoring
- Multi-tiered writing programs that include writing assessments of all kinds, on all levels
- Curriculum mapping embedded in Writing in the Disciplines (WID) Core writing intensive courses
- Design and teaching assistance with online and hybrid writing courses
- Teaching assistant preparation in classroom instruction
- Faculty assignment design consultations
- Faculty rubric development consultations
- Writing workshops, seminars, conferences, and presentations for students, staff, and faculty
- College, departmental, and course dedicated writing assistance

FY14 Assessment at the UH Writing Center

In order to identify needs and priorities for tutorial support and to measure the impact of our programs, the Writing Center conducts writing assessment at all academic levels, in a wide variety of contexts, using diversified methodology appropriate to the objectives of the assessment.

The following table summarizes the *formal* assessments that the Writing Center conducted during FY14.

Assessment 2014	Description	Number of Students Assessed 2014 (1,181 total)
Bauer MBA	Orientation Writing Assessment	251 students
Bauer MBA	Second Year Writing and Critical Thinking	50
Graduate College of Social Work	Foundations Semester Writing Support Program (multiple assessments)	130
English 1300	Rubric Scoring of Student Work (multiple assessments)	54
College of Education Teacher Education Program	Entry-to-Major Writing Assessment	322
UH Law Center	Orientation Diagnostic Writing Assessment (two parts)	220
UH Law Center Foreign Scholars LLM Program	Academic Writing Self-Test	31
College of Technology	DIGM 2350 Course-Embedded Writing Assessment	123

FY14 Non-Course Options

ENGLISH 1100: Basic Writing

As mandated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in FY14, The Writing Center implemented ENGL 1100: Basic Writing, a "non-course" competency-based option (NCBO) for students seeking to complete the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements for English.   English 1100 is a condensed writing course that allows students to clear the requirements of English 1300 in an abbreviated period of time, 4 to 6 weeks. Students who concurrently enroll and successfully complete ENGL 1100 and ENGL 1303 can satisfy both developmental and Core course requirements in the same semester.

ENGLISH 1300: Fundamentals of English

ENGL 1300 remains the standard Basic Writing option offered at UH and is the forerunner of ENGL 1100 and Integrated Reading and Writing 1300. Students enrolled in English 1300 improve their individual writing skills in one-on-one meetings with Writing Consultants and in small group sessions to prepare them for the academic demands of writing and critical thinking at the university level. In FY14, there were 870 interactions between students and consultants.

Integrated Reading and Writing 1300 (IRW 1300)

In FY14, IRW 1300 was launched as an option for students who were identified via the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment as needing intervention to improve both their reading and writing skills. There were 1,140 IRW interactions between students and consultants in FY14.

FY14 STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

The addition of a STEM Program Manager in FY14 has allowed the Writing Center to increase the breadth and depth of services offered to STEM students who constitute one third of the Center's clientele. In FY14, Writing Center staff interacted with 3,704 STEM majors and collaborated with 23 STEM faculty in providing writing services designed according to each instructor's course requirements as well as the particular needs of each student writer. Improvement of STEM student writing was achieved through a series of individual tutorial sessions, workshop presentations on academic writing pertinent to STEM disciplines, and facilitated group discussions.

Electrical-Electronics Technology (ELET) is a specific example of successful Writing Center/ STEM course interaction. Housed in the College of Technology, ELET students create viable technology applications to improve current ELET practices. In FY14, students learned how to design and implement systems to support emerging infrastructures in today's complex digital world. Their hands-on course work included the creation of mobile applications, software systems, hardware systems, and web-based management structures that improve current practices by adding enhanced technology components.

The following is a brief description of two ELET students groups and their Writing Center projects.

Team Synergetech: Improving Athletic Prowess
Team Synergetech worked to produce a computer program that analyzed techniques of basketball players. Using visual tracking and electromyography, muscle behavior was logged and sent via a wireless network to athletes suggesting customized ways to improve shooting percentage. Writing Center senior Consultant, Ivania Rivas, assisted not only in the writing of the group's final report, but also in building strategies, brainstorming concepts for the design of the project, and allocating duties that group members undertook. Team Synergetech was selected to compete nationally with their project at the Walt Disney World Resort in Spring of 2014 and was awarded the Cornell University Media Cup.

Team Cyber Physical Symptoms (CPS)
Team Cyber Physical Symptoms devised a program that made it easier to monitor building needs using Raspberry Pi microcontroller technology. The goal of the program was to create a system that "learns" how its inhabitants behave. In turn, the system adapts to the inhabitants' needs autonomously without the intervention of a building manager. Team CPS Writing Center Consultant, Jinal Patel, assisted in concept design, marketability, and ensuring that the project was easily understood by the target audience. Team CPS later presented their work to a large group of NASA scientists and engineers at the Johnson Space Center.

FY14 Hybrid Classes: English 1303 and 1304

Writing Center hybrid courses are those that employ two types of methodology, off campus instruction that includes an eclectic variety of digital technology, paired with on campus traditional face-to-face instruction. In FY14, the Writing Center and Department of English continued to work together in the implementation of hybrid Core composition courses 1303 and 1304. Twenty-four sections of Core English composition hybrid sections were taught in Spring 2014. A greater number of sections are scheduled for FY15.

The Writing Center's thorough preparation of TA's who are assigned to teach hybrid classes enables them to work with current instructors before teaching classes of their own, so that they avoid the pitfalls that many inexperienced beginning teachers encounter.

The Writing Center's mandatory hybrid TA training program, offered in partnership with the Department of English, imparts practical, effective teaching methodology during a one year apprenticeship that is as extensive as that which only the most committed, farsighted universities offer. As the graph below illustrates, students enrolled in the hybrid courses have a positive perception of their experience.

The hybrid course format is as effective as a traditional face-to-face format

% of Student responses

Strongly Agree or Agree	66.7
Neutral	21.4
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	11.9
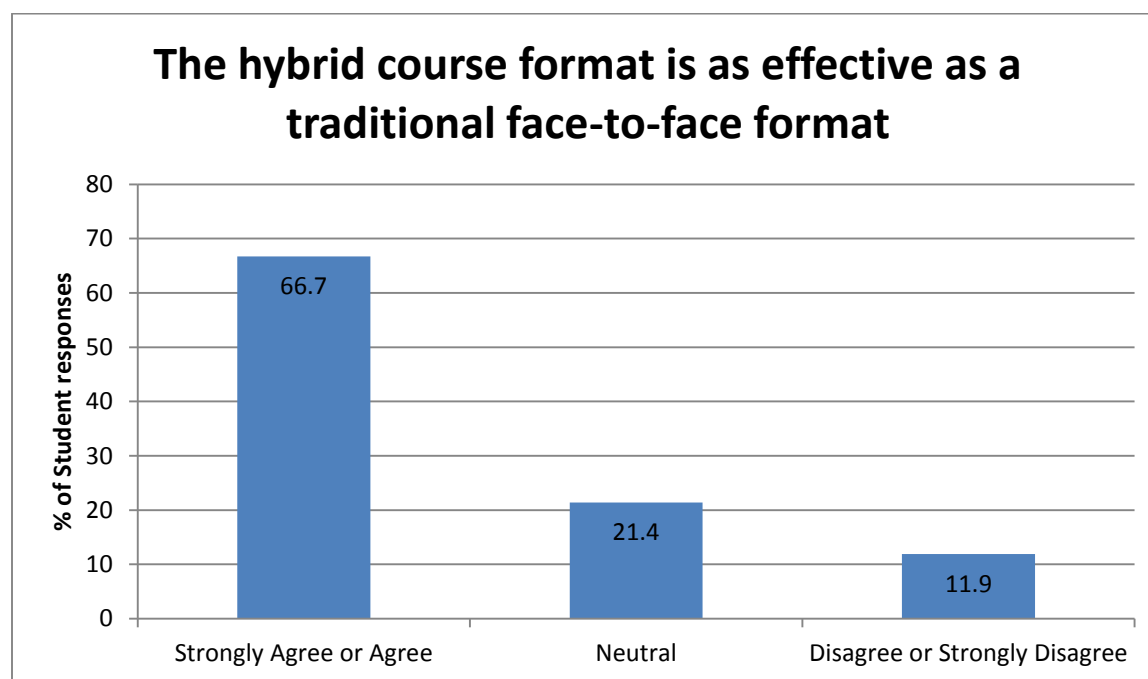
FY14 Online Teaching

In FY14, the Writing Center initiated a plan in collaboration with the UH Department of English to provide students with entirely online versions of the university's Core freshman composition classes, English 1303 and 1304. As the university seeks to offer students more options for online degrees, the Writing Center's existing partnership with the English Department has provided additional opportunities for innovation in online learning.

To prepare UH instructors for online teaching, leading scholars in the field were contracted to conduct comprehensive training to facilitate implementation. On April 4 and 5, 2014, Dr. Beth Hewett, past chair of Conference on College Composition and Communication Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Initiatives (OWI), led a workshop dedicated to online composition. Writing Center Executive Director Dr. Marjorie Chadwick and English Department Chairman Dr. Wyman Herendeen welcomed faculty, staff, teaching fellows, and teaching supervisors to learn more about the benefits and advantages of OWI. With this framework in place, the stage was set for comprehensive online training for instructors in the summer of FY14.

From July 8 through July 17, 2014, Dr. Beth Hewett returned to the UH Writing Center, joined by Dr. Scott Warnock, also a recognized specialist in online writing. Together they provided invaluable hands-on experience in how to put the fundamentals and principles of online writing into practice. Participants were taught how to design online classes and restructure assignments tailored to the online format. Using webcams, headsets, recorders, and laptops, attendees were also introduced to online resources such as the virtual learning management system *Blackboard Learn* and video software such as *Camtasia*.

FY14 Online Writing Consultations

In keeping with the Writing Center's commitment to contribute to student success, in FY14, the Center expanded its general writing support offerings to include Online General Writing Consultations, which are web-based, real-time appointments whereby students directly interact with Writing Consultants to improve and advance their writing. Interaction between Consultant and student is facilitated by *Whiteboard*, an online, real-time collaboration software, as well as an interactive *Text Chat Area*. To simplify student access, the Center established an on-line website: http://www.uh.edu/writecen.

In Online General Writing Consultations, as in onsite, face-to-face General Writing Consultations, Consultants work with students to develop, organize, and articulate their thoughts and ideas. In so doing, students gain confidence in their proficiency to communicate clearly in their writing and how to think about the most effective way of doing so. To ensure Consultants are prepared to deliver writing assistance in an online context, Writing Center staff has developed an *Online Writing Consultation Handbook*, a comprehensive manual outlining best practices for writing tutors to follow when working with students online. (See the Appendix for the *Handbook's* Table of Contents)

WCONLINE Management System

The Writing Center utilizes WCONLINE, a real-time online scheduling and data management system that places students' scheduling requirements in the hands of students themselves. Students create user accounts on WCONLINE and login to make appointments with Writing Consultants.

The Center's multi-tiered use of this system has proven to be of great value to multiple stakeholders within the UH community. Most notably, WCONLINE makes possible the following:

- Enables students to access most of the Center's writing services

- Facilitates students' self-scheduling of writing consultation times that best suit their needs

- Offers both general and WID partnership writing support to UH undergraduates

- Serves UH graduate students seeking general and Theses and Dissertation writing help

- Promotes timely attendance of student consultations through automated reminder emails

- Provides customizable reporting to staff of:
  - Students' attendance
  - System utilization by students
  - Demographics data of users

- Affords customized schedule construction to meet partners' needs and project parameters

- Allows for precise cost-calculation and budgeting of resources for the Writing Center

- Supports ethical and accurate time-keeping practices for hourly employees

- Provides a unified platform for online/virtual consultations

Writing Center Website Videos

In the summer of 2014, Writing Center staff determined that frequently asked student questions regarding our services could be handled in a more engaging manner than email correspondence or posting routine answers to FAQs on our website. As an alternative, Writing Center staff created instructional videos in the form of short cartoon videos.
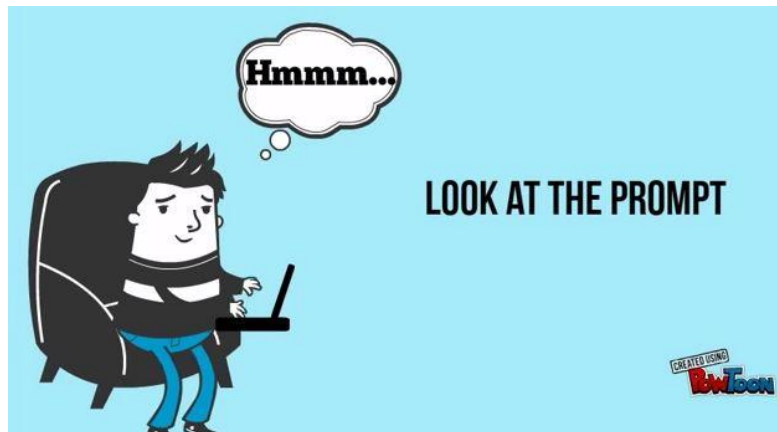
With help from the animated software program PowToon, Writing Center staffers collaborated in creating entertaining instructional cartoon videos aimed at University of Houston's diverse student population. Johnathan Richards, writer and narrator of the scripts, and Long Nguyen creator of the animation, have produced several videos: "What is the Writing Center," "How to Schedule an Appointment," and "How to Deal with Writer's Block." More PowToon videos are currently in production: "Understanding What the Professor Wants," "Proofreading Your Paper" and "Writing Tips." Stay tuned and visit ahttp://www.uPh.edu/writecen for the latest additions.

FY14 Outreach Partnerships and Collaborations

Wheatley High School: Partnership to help students improve their writing

Bauer College of Business Staff Professional Development: Writing workshop to introduce Bauer staff to best practices for professional writing

Kashmere High School: Support for Kashmere High School administrators in training Teachers to prepare students for college

Rice University Religious Studies: Intensive summer graduate writing workshop and follow-up consultations throughout the Fall and Spring semesters

Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) Research Division: Support for TIMES administrators in understanding how to strengthen and improve written communication

Weeks of Welcome (WOW): Writing Center staff participation in first year initiative to improve the University of Houston freshman experience

FY14 Students Served

In 2014, the UH Writing Center had a total of **22,928 student interactions** that included a variety of tutorials: Writing in the Disciplines consultations, on-line consultations, studio (group) meetings and training sessions, workshops, and various courses related services. Virtually all interactions were scheduled via the WCONLINE scheduling system.

FY 14 Total Students Interactions			FA13	SP14	SU14
Partnering Course or Project Name	*WC Coordinator*	*Mode of Delivery*			
ARCH 1359-- Architecture	LR	Individual/Group Consultations	n/a	303	n/a
ARCH 6359-- Architecture	LR	Individual Consultations	79	n/a	79
ARTH 1300-- Art History	MS/EB	Online Writing Support Space	180	2	n/a
ARTH 3312--Art History	MS/EB	3 F2F Studios	118	n/a	n/a
ARTH 3314--Art History	MS/EB	4 F2F Studios	n/a	112	n/a
ARTH 4379--Art History	MS/EB	1 F2F Studios	88	31	n/a
ARTH 7394--Art History	MM/EB	5 F2F Studios	30	n/a	n/a
BIOL 3324 --Biology	LR	Individual Consultations	44	49	n/a
BTEC 3301-- Biotechnology	HP	Individual Consultations	17	n/a	n/a
Business Writing Tutorial (BWT)	BL	Individual Consultations	414	682	161
College of Education-- Professional Leadership (Ed.D.)	LR/SL	Individual Consultations	11	n/a	64
COMD 2439-- Communication Disorders	LR	Individual/Group Consultations	34	n/a	34
CUIN 3310, 3311, 4361--Curriculum and Instructional Design	LR	Individual/Group Consultations	117	n/a	n/a
DIGM 2350--Digital Media	DS	Individual Consultations	250	n/a	40
ECON 4365-Economics	EG/Ben	Individual Consultations	40	n/a	n/a
ELET 2103--Electrical-Electronics Tech	HP	Group Consultations	172	173	n/a

ELET 3405--Electrical-Electronics Tech	HP	Group Consultations	100	115	n/a
ELET 4208--Electrical-Electronics Tech	HP	Group Consultations	52	92	n/a
ELET 4308-Electrical-Electronics Tech	HP	Group Consultations	116	34	n/a
ELET 2300--Electrical-Electronics Tech	HP	Group Consultations	52	73	n/a
ENGI 2304--Engineering	LR	Individual Consultations	209	286	126
ENGL 1303--Hybrid English I	MS/EB	Online Studios	1737	932	n/a
ENGL 1304--Hybrid English II	MS/EB	Online Studios	1108	2000	n/a
EPSY 8334--Educational Psychology	LR	Individual Consultations	n/a	8	n/a
Fulbright/Gilman Scholars	HP	Individual Consultations	8	n/a	n/a
GENB 4350--General Business	BL	Individual Consultations	683	618	133
GEOL 4322—GeoSciences	HP	Individual Consultations	n/a	20	n/a
GERM 3396—WW1 in Visual Culture	HP	Individual Consultations	n/a	61	n/a
HDFS 1300—Devel. Of Contemporary Families	DS	Individual Consultations	n/a	50	n/a
HIST 3351--HISTORY (Work and Family Life in Modern Europe 1750-1950)	EB	Group Consultations, Online Studios	36	n/a	n/a
HIST 3394—History of Mental illness	HP	Individual Consultations	n/a	43	n/a
HLT 4392,4393,6392,6393	SL/LR	2 Workshops	n/a	n/a	n/a
Honors Thesis	MS/EB	5 F2F Studios	172	154	n/a
HRMA 4353--Hotel & Restaurant Mgt	BL	6 F2F Studios	258	294	n/a
INDS 3501--Industrial Design	HP	Individual/Group Consultations	n/a	21	n/a
INDS 4360--Industrial Design	HP	Individual/Group Consultations	13	n/a	n/a
INTB 3352--International Business	HP	Individual Consultations	n/a	n/a	n/a
INTB 4397--International Business	HP	Group Consultations	18	20	n/a
Law Writing Program	EG	Individual Consultations	70	n/a	n/a

			FA13	SP14	SU14
MARK 8397--Marketing	MM/RH	14 email consultations & 14 F2F meetings	n/a	n/a	147
MATH 3311--Mathematics	LR	Individual/Group Consultations	116	n/a	n/a
MATH 3379--Mathematics	LR	Individual/Group Consultations	n/a	155	n/a
NUTR 4334--Human Nutrition and Foods	LR	Group Consultations	n/a	176	n/a
PHYS 3313--Physics	HP	Individual Consultations	24	n/a	n/a
QUEST Writing Program	DS	Individual Consultations	70	62	n/a
SOC 1301 H--Sociology	EG/BL	Individual/Group Consultations	56	48	n/a
TELS 4342- Quality Improvement Methods	WB/MS	Online Studios	276	432	n/a
Graduate Project Management: TEPM 6303	MS/EB	Writing Studio	n/a	3	n/a
Graduate Project Management: TEPM 6391	MS/EB	Online Writing Support Space	9	8	n/a
Graduate Project Management: TEPM 6395	MS/EB	Online Writing Support Space	1	3	n/a
WOST 2350--Women's Studies / GLBT 2360--Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Studies	LR	Individual Consultations	65	44	16

Training, Workshops, and Assessment			FA13	SP14	SU14
Bauer MBA Staff Training	HP	Workshop	n/a	n/a	20
Bauer Undergraduate Critical Thinking Assessment	SL	Staff Rating	n/a	50	n/a
Bauer/Phillips 66 Case Study	BL	workshop/ presentation, Group Meetings	64	150	n/a
BIOL 1144/3124 Teaching Assistants Training	SL/LR	Presentation	n/a	n/a	n/a
CLASS Mates (HIST 1376)	HP	Presentation	221	n/a	n/a

College of Pharmacy Business Office (for staff)	WB/ LR	Workshop/ Presentation	n/a	n/a	n/a
Consultant In-Service Sessions	Staff	10 Per Year	n/a	n/a	n/a
CORE 1101	HP/Ben	Presentation	36	n/a	n/a
Cougar Resource Fair	HP	Participant	185	n/a	n/a
DIGM 2350 Assessment	DS	Consultant Rating	83	n/a	n/a
First Year Residential Experience (FYRE)	HP	Presentation	6	n/a	n/a
GCSW Assessment	DS	Consultant Rating	137	n/a	n/a
General Writing Consultations	LR	Presentation	85	48	n/a
HLT 4392/4393--Health Education	LR/SL	F2F, Workshop/Presentation	53	n/a	n/a
Hybrid Instructor Orientation	MG	F2F Workshop	n/a	n/a	10
International Students Fair	HP	Participant	154	85	n/a
MBA Orientation Writing Assessment	SL	Staff Rating	151	n/a	83
Online Instructor Training	MS	F2F 2 day Workshop	n/a	14	n/a
Online Instructor Training	MS	F2F 2 week Institute	n/a	n/a	56
PHYS 1121 Lab Report Workshop	HP	Workshop/Presentation	44	n/a	n/a
POLS 1336 Writing Workshop	HP	Workshop/Presentation	26	52	n/a
Project Meetings	Staff	Min 2 Per Project	n/a	n/a	n/a
Quest Assessment	DS	Staff Rating	80	n/a	n/a
Reading Group- Writing Consultant Training	WB/JR/EG	Consultant Training	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rice Religious Studies	SL/LR	Workshop/ Individual consultation	n/a	n/a	n/a
Studio Facilitator Training- TA Meeting	MM/MS	13 Weekly F2F Meeting	208	144	n/a
TIMES Staff Workshop	HP/LR	Face-to-face; 1-hour workshop	n/a	5	n/a
UH Law Center Foreign	SL, EG	Staff Rating	43	n/a	n/a

Scholars LLM					
UH Law Center Writing Diagnostic Assessment	SL, EG	Staff analysis and Referrals	221	n/a	n/a
Weeks of Welcome (WOW)	HP	Host	14	n/a	n/a
Wheatley High School- Service Project	WB	4 F2F Studios	n/a	225	n/a

General Writing Center Services			FA13	SP14	SU14
ENGL 1100--English	DS/SL	group consultations/ individual consultations/online discussion	180	n/a	n/a
ENGL 1300--English	DS/SL	Group Consultations/ Individual Consultations/ Online Discussion	495	255	n/a
General Writing Consultations	LR	Individual Consultations	1,755	1,302	183
Graduate Dissertation Help	AW/RH	Individual Consultations	156	145	30
GROUP General Meetings	LR	Group Consultations	19	n/a	n/a
Health Professions Advisory Committee or HPAC	LR	Individual Consultations	n/a	102	79
IRW 1300-- Integrated Reading and Writing	DS/NB	group consultations/ individual consultations/online discussion	76	50	n/a
Online General Consultation	WB	Online Consultations	n/a	109	n/a
Total FY14 Writing Center Student Interactions			22,928		

Total number of student interactions for FY14 = 22,928

FY14 WID Partnership Descriptions

College of Architecture: Architecture (ARCH)
ARCH 1359: *Design Since 1945*

> To encourage students to consider writing as a process, Consultants 1) facilitated students' group discussions of instructions for their primary-and-secondary-source writing assignment; and 2) conducted face-to-face, individual meetings to support students' revisions of a descriptive paper of an on-site visit to a local sculpture garden and a paper requiring summary writing and exploration of primary and secondary sources. All individual meetings were scheduled by students via the center's scheduling system.

ARCH 6359: *Modern Architecture & Urbanism*

> Graduate Consultants met assigned students three times during the semester for face-to-face, one-on-one meetings to help students revise 1) the précis of their term research paper; 2) a 2,000-word draft of their term research paper; and 3) a summary-and-argument paper about urban sprawl. Students used the center's scheduling system to create their own appointments.

College of Architecture: Industrial Design (INDS)
INDS 3501: *Industrial Design Studio VI*

> In Spring 2014, INDS 3501 students attended individual meetings to revise a design project summary and also attend two group meetings to summarize research conducted on a sustainable mobility design project. Students gathered data from a local business, and under the tutelage of Writing Center staff, developed research that supported the effective delivery of medical information to patients with multi-cultural backgrounds.

INDS 4360: *Senior Design Studio*

> INDS 4360 students attended individual consultations to revise a research proposal. Writing Consultants helped students report on important design issues, trends and criticism they encountered in their research.

Bauer College of Business
BWT: *Business Writing Tutorial*

> The BWT is designed to help C.T Bauer College of Business students develop the basic communication skills and writing competence necessary to earn a business degree. Students are referred from the Business Writing Evaluation (BWE) in GENB 3302. If identified by the holistic assessment rating, students work one-on-one with a Writing Consultant to complete a portfolio containing two assignments: a proposal; and a résumé with a cover letter.

BWT: Business Writing Tutorial Case Study Training

> Bauer undergraduate case study participants attended two business writing skills workshops per semester. Content areas included expectations and processes for business communication with a particular focus on executive summaries and how to prioritize information for decision makers. Writing Consultants assisted as participants worked through audience analyses, draft planning, and revision techniques. One participant noted in a post-workshop reflection that

"Executive summaries, like all of your writing, should be free of grammatical errors; if you want people to take your writing seriously then you should take your proofreading seriously."

MBA: Professional Writing Program

UH Writing Center staff worked with C. T. Bauer College of Business administrators to create this assessment and tutorial program to ensure that each MBA graduate writes effectively in a business context. MBA students enrolled in the Professional Writing Program were required to take a timed assessment and attend one-on-one tutorial sessions based their assessment results in order to improve the clarity, conciseness, organization, and tone in written business communication.

College of Business: General Business (GENB)

GENB 4350: *Business Law and Ethics*

Each student attended a writing consultation once during the semester as part of a course requirement. The purpose of the meeting was to give students an opportunity to discuss their business writing strategies and processes. Writing Consultants assisted students with understanding feedback from past assignments and preparing drafting plans for future assignments.

College of Business: International Business (INTB)

INTB 3355: *The Politics of Globalization*

Students in this course attended several group meetings to develop a visual display component for their class writing assignments. The best country-case studies were selected and transferred to an online format to preserve the best projects from the course. Writing Consultants collaborated with small groups to gather and organize information for this project.

INTB 4397: Selected Topics in International Business

This seminar course was created for students in the Honors College as an opportunity to develop cross-disciplinary expertise and learn from the experiences of other seminar participants. To help students expand the level of their undergraduate research, they attended two small-group meetings to discuss their research topics related to globalization. In the second part of the semester, students attended two individual consultations to develop and revise their individual research paper on globalization.

College of Business: Marketing (MARK)

MARK 8397: *Ph.D. Program-Summer 2013*

In Marketing 8397, doctoral students from the Bauer College of Business participate in a seminar designed to prepare them for publishing journal articles and making conference presentations from their research. The seminar meets for a full day on each Friday during the first summer semester. Students spend mornings with a senior faculty member from the Department of Marketing and afternoons with Writing Center instructors. Curriculum is developed and taught collaboratively by Bauer's Marketing professors and writing pedagogy specialists from the Writing Center.

College of Education

College of Education Professional Leadership *(Executive Ed.D. in professional educational leadership)*

The Writing Center supported or educational practitioners from local school districts and other organizations, as they composed and revised the chapters of their doctoral theses. Consultants worked one-on-one in extended meetings with students through both scheduled appointments

via our WCONLINE scheduling system and during a two-week summer writing- and research-intensive workshop. In all, 64 interactions between graduate students and Consultants took place.

QUEST *(Teacher Education)*

QUEST evolved through several years of close collaboration between College of Education faculty and administrators and Writing Center senior staff. During the initial stage of their degree program, COE students take a writing assessment designed by Writing Center staff in conjunction with COE faculty that measures basic competence in professional writing. Writing Center staff evaluates the student work and either clears or requires students to attend tutorials. In 2013, the College of Education appointed a Task Force to assess the effectiveness of the writing program, with recommendations to be approved and implemented in FY15.

College of Education: Curriculum Instruction (CUIN)

CUIN 3310: *Bilingual Education*
CUIN 3311: *Methods & Techniques in Bilingual Education*
CUIN 4361: *Second Language Methodology*

The center provided support to students through group meetings and individual, face-to-face writing consultations scheduled through WCONLINE as they wrote research papers.

College of Education: Educational Psychology (EPSY)

HLT 4392/6392: *Field Work in Community Health/Field Work in Health Education*

This newly-formed partnership supported internship students' writing of literature reviews through the delivery of a two-hour workshop. The workshop covered topics relevant to research writing such as ethical representation of sources and the importance of the subject-verb relationships in literature reviews.

EPSY 8334: *Research in Counseling Psychology*

Graduate students were required by their instructor to meet twice with graduate Consultants as they wrote and revised 1) a PowerPoint presentation that introduced a governing research question; and 2) a literature review. Students booked their own reservations on the Center's scheduling system.

College of Engineering (ENGI)

ENGI 2304: *Technical Communications*

To help address instructors' concerns with students' specific writing problems in the creation and revision of recommendation reports, Writing Center Consultants met at least once with students in course-required, face-to-face meetings to help them improve their writing.

Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW)

Foundation Semester Writing-Support Program

The writing program for the Graduate College of Social Work was designed to improve the effectiveness of student writing through an assess-and-address process. The process began when students scheduled their writing consultations via the Center's online scheduler and submitted their writing for assessment. Their work was examined and rated via a custom designed rubric. Revision strategies were then produced for the forthcoming writing consultation. When students arrived for their consultations, the tutors with whom they met were prepared to address issues within the writing samples.   In FY14, the GCSW partnership included three writing assessments and three follow-up writing consultations, using the Blackboard Learn platform and Turnitin.com GradeMark tools.

HPAC: Health Professions Advisory Committee

This ongoing spring and summer Health Professions partnership supported students whose goal is acceptance to medical or dental schools. Writing Consultants supported students' efforts in writing their personal statements, an integral part of their medical or dental school application packets. Students were required by the program to attend at least two documented, face-to-face writing consultations at the center.

Honors College
Honors Thesis Studios

Students enrolled in the undergraduate thesis program participated in face-to-face or online writing studios. These studios were organized by discipline and facilitated by Writing Center graduate students. Students met in face-to-face or online studio groups five times throughout the semester to discuss their research methods, as well as review each other's writing in a peer environment. The anticipated outcome and goal of this particular partnership was to assist students in the completion of their Undergraduate Honors Thesis. The project, which began in Fall 2008, grew to include 35 students in 2014, and remained a vital component of the Honors Thesis program. Furthermore, numerous students who chose to participate in Honors Thesis Studios were nominated for the Outstanding Honors Thesis Award.

SOCH 1301: *Honors Introduction to Sociology*

Students in SOCI 1301H worked with Consultants in small groups to develop a proposed intervention approach for a neglected tropical disease. As students were introduced to the writing process and discussed each section of their research proposal, they learned how to incorporate research literature and present well-developed and practical methods in a multimedia demonstration.

College of Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRMA)
HRMA 4353: *Leadership in the Hospitality Industry*

Students attended six writing studio meetings covering two assignments. The first assignment paired classmates in an attempt to reflect team writing in the hospitality industry. In the second assignment students considered their personal management philosophies while discussing their writing processes in Writing Center facilitated studio groups.

University of Houston Law Center
Law Center Writing Support Partnership

This writing program is designed to help first-year law students improve their academic writing skills. All first-year law students complete two writing assessments (one take-home, one timed) during orientation. Through an assessment process, students in need of writing support are identified and referred to the Writing Center, where they work one-on-one with a writing Consultant through a series of tutorial sessions during their first semester of law school. Additionally, all first-year law students are given the option to meet with Writing Center staff to discuss the results of their writing assessments.

Foreign Scholars LL.M.

This writing program is designed to help FLLM students become familiar with the conventions of English academic writing. Modes of support included consultations with Writing Center staff and online resources available through Blackboard Learn.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: Art History (ARTH)

ARTH 1300: *Ways of Seeing: Art and Our Visual World*

> *Ways of Seeing* was the largest general education course employing online writing studios. Approximately 140 students were enrolled in the course in FY14. Students met in their online studio groups four times over the course of the semester to discuss visual themes.

ARTH 3312: *Pre-Columbian Art and Civilization*

> Students attended three face-to-face writing studios to participate in the giving and receiving of feedback concerning their essay drafts. The following topics were addressed: Studio 1 Description and Formal Analysis, Studio 2 Literature Review, and Studio 3 Historical Context. Students exchanged drafts through GoogleDocs in order to read and comment upon the writing. Comments were then discussed in the face-to-face writing studios.

ARTH 3314: *Latin American Art*

> Students attended four face-to-face writing studios to participate in the giving and receiving of feedback concerning their essay drafts. Each studio addressed a different portion of the class research assignment. Students exchanged drafts through GoogleDocs in order to read and comment upon the writing. Comments were then discussed in the face-to-face writing studios.

ARTH 4379: *Art Since 1945*

> Students attended face-to-face writing studios to participate in the giving and receiving of feedback concerning their essay drafts. These writing studios were facilitated by graduate facilitators and undergraduate Consultants.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: Economics (ECON)

ECON 4365: *Econometrics*

> Individual consultations and class presentations were developed to help students complete an econometrics research analysis through five building block writing assignments.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: Communication Disorders (COMD)

COMD 2439: *Speech & Language Development*

> To support students as they developed and revised their parent education flyers, Writing Consultants met with instructor-assigned student groups and facilitated students' discussions about possibilities for improving their flyers. Students used the Writing Center's scheduling system to create their own group appointments.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: German (GERM)

GERM 3369: *World War I in Visual Culture*

> For a first assignment, in which students analyzed a work of art or piece of literature, students attended individual consultations to help them organize and finalize their assignment. During a second group assignment, students attended Writing Center facilitated consultations where they developed their research question/topic, learned how to synthesize and organize their data and findings (visually or in written form), as well as received feedback on their presentations.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: History (HIST)

HIST 3351: *Work and Family Life in Modern Europe 1750-1950*

> In Fall 2013, an open writing support forum was established by the Writing Center within an instructor's Blackboard course listing. Through this open forum, the class of thirty-three students was able to contact a Writing Consultant asynchronously to receive feedback concerning their essay drafts and writing process for the course. Students were also given the opportunity to participate in a writing consultation at the Writing Center. A Consultant was familiarized with the course's specific assignments and class content in order to better support students in pre-writing, revision of a draft, and revision of a completed essay for extra credit.

HIST 3394: *History of Madness*

> Students attended a UH library and Writing Center presentation to help them develop research questions, find articles for their research, and compile an annotated bibliography for their proposed research. Following the presentation, students attended small group meetings to discuss their research assignment. In addition to small group consultations, students had the opportunity to attend at least one individual face-to-face consultation to develop, organize and revise their research assignment.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: Nutrition (NUTR)

NUTR 4334: *Community Nutrition*

> To address the instructor's concerns with student-groups' writing of a community nutrition research paper, the Writing Center's Consultants facilitated course-required group meetings with students as they talked about ways to merge their individual contributions into one coherent document. Students used the center's scheduling system to create their own group appointments.

NUTR 4349: *Public Policy in Nutrition*

> Each student attended two individual writing consultations to receive help developing, organizing, and finalizing a final research report about the *Food Stamp Challenge* they participated in during the semester. The *Food Stamp Challenge* required each student to eat for a week with a $20.00 spending limit. Students documented their experience and developed a research proposal based on their findings.

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: Women's' Studies (WOST)

WOST 2350: *Introduction to Women's Studies*

> The Writing Center worked with three instructor-partners in this course to identify concerns with students' writing of several short essay assignments. These concerns were addressed by Writing Consultants as students in each instructor's section attended one-on-one consultations for help with creating or revising their essays.

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics: Biology (BIOL)

BIOL 3324: *Human Physiology*

> After a first-submission assessment of all students' literature review papers, students whose writing was deemed less than acceptable were required to attend at least one face-to-face consultation to help them revise their literature reviews.

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics: Geology (GEOL)
GEOL 4332: *Applications of GPS & LIDAR*
> Students attended individual writing consultations to receive feedback as they completed a research project. The research project required students to use GPS and LIDAR data to address geophysical/engineering questions.

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics: Math (MATH)
MATH 3311: *Functions and Modeling*
> The Writing Center supported this *teach*HOUSTON-funded partnership by addressing the instructor's concerns with students' ability to convey in writing clear meaning and purpose to different audiences. (Almost all students in this course were on an academic track to become math teachers in local area high schools.) The Center's Consultants met four times during the semester with assigned students.

MATH 3379: *Introduction to Higher Geometry*
Spring semesters only
> The Writing Center supported this *teach*HOUSTON-funded partnership by addressing instructors' concerns with students' ability to convey clear meaning and purpose through writing. (Almost all students in this course were on an academic track to become math teachers in local area high schools.) Writing Consultants met four times during the semester with assigned students (at least one consultation via our scheduling system for each of three 700-word essays, and one pre-set group meeting with students to analyze the instructions of their 1,500-word term paper).

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics: Physics (PHYS)
PHYS 1121: *Introduction to Physics Lab*
> A "clarity and conciseness" presentation was given to freshman physics students to help them develop well-written lab reports.

PHYS 3313: *Advanced Physics*
> Students were given lab report presentations and attended individual consultations to help develop their reports.

College of Technology: Biotechnologies (BTEC)
BTEC 3301: *Genomics/Proteomics and Bio Information Technology*
> Tasked with examining gene mutation diseases, groups attended individual writing sessions to learn how to structure research questions, incorporate literature, analyze data and communicate their results in a written research report.

College of Technology: Digital Media (DIGM)
DIGM 2350: *Graphics for Digital Media*
> Students' research and writing was assessed by Consultants before students were required to attend face to face meetings to receive additional feedback from their tutor.

College of Technology: Electrical Power Engineering Technology (ELET)

ELET 2300: *Introduction to C++ Programming*

In this assignment, students were asked to construct a database using C++ to determine various outcomes of situations, such as the likelihood of a meteor hitting the University of Houston campus. Students met for one group consultation to organize a written report outlining the specifications of their database. Group consultations focused primarily on developing an abstract, narrowing the scope of the assignment, and improving clarity and conciseness to meet necessary page requirements.

ELET 2103: *Digital Systems*

Two sections enrolled in ELET 2103 met for a total of four group consultations. In their assignment, students were asked to write a proposal and a final project report, as well as submit a PowerPoint presentation outlining their final project. Each final project consisted of a device or computer program created or modified by the team. Consultants worked with students to emphasize the importance of clearly addressing audience, developing research techniques, and ensuring correctness and conciseness in their writing.

ELET 3405: *Microprocessor Architecture*

In this class, students were asked to examine the strengths and weaknesses of several microprocessors. From their research, students developed a report proposing modifications to current microprocessors or designed a program to display their proficiency in micro-processing. Each report was followed by a presentation outlining their findings. Over the course of the semester, students were asked to attend a total of four group consultations to receive guidance from Consultants with their research proposal, research report, and their final presentation.

ELET 4308: *Senior Project*

In this first installment of electrical-electronics technology and design, seniors in the ELET program developed research project proposals. Approved project proposals were implemented in the following semester in ELET 4208, Senior Design, a mandatory capstone course. Students were required to attend four small group consultations to receive assistance in writing their project proposals and creating effective presentations. Students who succeed in their proposals progressed to ELET 4208, Senior Project Laboratory.

ELET 4208: *Senior Project Laboratory*

After each team submitted a successful project proposal in ELET 4308, teams implement their proposal and worked on the design of their final project. Throughout the course of the semester teams attended four small group sessions in preparation for their final report and presentation, while learning how to work in management teams and complete the research process.

College of Technology: (TELS)

TELS 4342: *Quality Improvement Methods Course*

The Writing Center has partnered with Dr. Jamison Kovach in developing and implementing online writing studios for her TELS 4342 class (hybrid and online) for the past twelve semesters. The assignments have shifted from several individual homework assignments to a full-semester research project. Over the course of our partnership, the course enrollment has grown from twelve to 115 students.

TELS 4371: *Leading Change in the Workplace*

This partnership supported students' efforts as they each wrote and revised a portion of a group paper about leadership. Students scheduled and attended at least one required individual writing consultation with program-dedicated Consultants.

College of Technology: Online Writing Support Space (OWSS)

The Writing Center piloted an "Online Writing Support Space" in FY14 for students in three graduate courses within the Project Management program in the College of Technology. Much like the studio model, OWSS is an open writing support forum for peer interaction hosted digitally through Blackboard Learn. The OWSS is open to the entire class and remains open throughout the semester, so students can utilize the support as needed. A graduate Writing Center facilitator monitors the space and replies to any questions and/or drafts within 48 hours of student posting.

College of Technology: (TEPM)

TEPM 6303: *Risk Assessment in Project Management*

In this hybrid course, graduate students in the College of Technology received optional Writing Center support in the OWSS. Among other report components, the OWSS enabled discussion of a section of their technical report, which addressed the overall components of risk.

TEPM 6391: *Project Management Seminar*

In this hybrid course, graduate students in the College of Technology received optional Writing Center support in the OWSS. Students in the Project Management Seminar develop a written plan for their graduate thesis project.

TEPM 6395: *Integration Project*

In this hybrid course, graduate students in the College of Technology received optional Writing Center support in the OWSS. A continuation of TEPM 6391, students implement the plan developed for their graduate thesis projects. The research results in their final thesis paper, which should be equivalent to a publishable article in a peer-reviewed journal.

FY14 Writing Center Administrative Staff

Dr. Marjorie Chadwick Executive Director	**Adrienne Deleon** Program Coordinator, Hybrid and Online Courses, Studios	**Dr. Steve Liparulo** Associate Director, Writing Programs
Ben Lummis Assistant Director, Writing in the Disciplines	**Long Nguyen** LAN Administrator and Technology	**Holly Prevost** Assistant Director, Writing in the Disciplines, Consultant Management
David Sylvia Program Manager, Engl 1100, 1300, IRW 1300, COE Teacher Education	**Lorinda Robb** Assistant Director, Student Services Coordination	**Mark Sursavage** Assistant Director, Writing in the Disciplines, Hybrid and Online Courses, Studios

Writing Consultants: 2014

Writing Consultants, peer tutors, are a valuable human resource at the University of Houston Writing Center. They come from all major fields of study, speak a variety of languages, and work with students from all disciplines on a wide range of writing projects and assignments. Writing Consultants do not edit papers, proofread, dictate content, or predict what grade an assignment might earn; rather, they assume the role of an interested reader and help inspire critical thinking and engagement so that the writing is clear, concise, on-task, well organized, and logical.

As preparation for their work with students, Consultants attend a series of eight training sessions each semester and participate in professional development activities throughout their Writing Center tenure, such as "Reading Seminars," gatherings where they discuss literature on composition theory, writing pedagogy, and current best practices in Writing Center operations.

Alexander II, Danny	**Allen, Savannah**	**Bottoms, Jared**
DeLeon, Adrienne	**Dyer, Sarah**	**Gentry, Isiah**
Green, Corinne	**Haney, Charles**	**Khan, Haya**
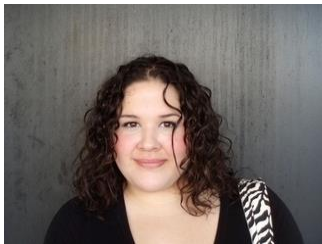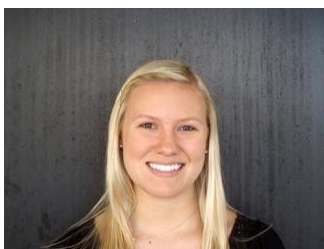
Lachner, Anna

Le, Helen

Lim, April

Locke, Thomas

Love, Shelby

Murfin, Kelley

Norris, Isaac

Patel, Jinal

Pena, Marylou

Qamar, Fatima
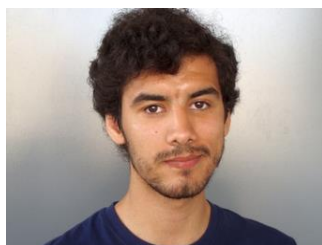
Rice, Derrick

Richards, Johnathan

Rivas, Ivania

Robb, Katherine

Roberts, Joe

Rodgers, Kristen

Siler, Lauren

Smith, Philip

Smith, Alex

Smith, Bradley

Syed, Hira

Tabakman, Bat-Sheva

Topaum, Cyanne

Tran, Kathy

Tuazon, Arnet

Whelen, Megan

Wilmot, Cari-Sue

APPENDIX

- ▪ **Writing Center Best Practices**
- ▪ **Online Writing Consultant Handbook: Table of Contents**
- ▪ **Organizational Chart**
- ▪ **Board of Directors**
- ▪ **Contributors to the FY14 Report**

WRITING CENTER BEST PRACTICES

- Writing Center Consultants do not edit or correct student papers.
- Consultants engage in dialogic, collaborative tutoring that encourages students to think critically.
- Learning is student-centered within the context of their own writing.
- Tutoring is tailored to individual student strengths, weaknesses, and language proficiency.
- Consultants first discuss higher order issues such as thesis and organization and then discuss lower order issues such as grammar and usage.
- Consultant training is based on composition and rhetoric pedagogy.

The Writing Center provides writing assistance for students across all disciplines.

Online Writing Consultation Handbook

Table of Contents

University of Houston Writing Center
FY14

Dr. Teri Longacre
Vice Provost and Dean,
Undergraduate Student Success

Executive Director
Dr. Marjorie Chadwick

Associate Director
Writing Programs
Dr. Steve Liparulo

Assistant Director
Writing in the Disciplines
Ben Lummis

Program Manager
ENGL 1100, 1300, IRW
1300 & QUEST
David Sylvia

Assistant Director
Writing in the
Disciplines
Lorinda Robb, MA

Assistant Director
Holly Prevost

Assistant Director
Writing in the
Disciplines
Mark Sursavage, ABD

Coordinator for
Writing Programs
Vacant

Program Coordinator
Hybrid & Online
Emily Bennett

Web Developer
Raj Billapati
(Hourly)

LAN Administrator
Long Nguyen

Technical
Support
Sean Leo
(Hourly)

Student Hourly Writing Consultants (37)

Yara Abdin, Danny Alexander, Wesley Buhler, Madelyn Canas, Adrienne Deleon, Sarah Dyer, Caleb Estes, Edward Garza, Isiah Gentry, Nicole Hindmon, Stephen Johnson, Haya Khan, Sarah Khan, Anna Lachner, William McKinney, Penny Montalvan, Kelley Murfin, Jinal Patel, Marylou Pena, Neil Penny, Mindy Pham, Fatima Qamar, Johnathan Richards, Ivania Rivas, Katherine Robb, Kristen Rodgers, Lauren Siler, Alex Smith, Philip Smith, Taisia, Sturza, Anthony Sutton, Hira Syed, Bat-Sheva Tabakman, Cyanne Topaum, Arnet Tuazon, Madison West,

Cari-Sue Wilmot

Board of Directors

- **Paige Fertitta, Chairman**

- **Jan Duncan**

- **Suzy Rutherford**

- **Peggy Weaver**

Contributors to the FY14 Annual Report

- Dr. Marjorie Chadwick, Executive Director
- Ben Lummis, Assistant Director
- Holly Prevost, Assistant Director
- Long Nguyen, LAN Administrator
- Lorinda Robb, Assistant Director, WID
- Mark Sursavage, Assistant Director, WID
- David Sylvia, Program Manager, Developmental English

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