PLACING ONE PROGRAM'S ASSESSMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON A NOVICE TEACHER

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ABSTRACT

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For over one-hundred years, and since the work of Thorndike and Hillegas, writing assessment practices have rested on the value of interrater agreement to show reliability – agreement achieved through norming practices. Recent conversations have emphasized a greater use of localized practices and the importance of stakeholders against a background of standardized assessments such as No Child Left Behind and a society that values accountability. Due to very real circumstances, such as student enrollment and a need to ensure a consistent student experience across sections, some writing programs, especially those making use of graduate student teaching assistants, may have a desire to use norming techniques and standardized writing assessment designed around local contexts and requirements.

Several studies have been conducted on the effects of standardized assessment on primary and secondary education, but none have done so in the post-secondary composition classroom. Thus, via qualitative methods, this ethnographic study investigates the effects of standardized writing assessment practices on a single, novice instructor, even though those practices are locally designed and governed. Using feminist research principles and activity theory, interviews with a novice instructor and program mentors, several classroom observations, and an analysis of the novice instructor’s commenting practices, a deep map is created. This map provides a richer understanding of the relationship between the program rubric, end-of-term portfolio exchange, and the classroom decisions of this instructor. This contextualized study contributes to conversations regarding the effects of standardized writing assessment practices on instructors, teaching and learning to the test, and localized writing assessment practices.
To Elizabeth Farrington Schnieder for all her encouragement, endurance, and love
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“Good writing facilitates the making of connections in a way that inspires openheartedness, thinking, talking, and action. All totalitarian governments achieve their ends by frightening and isolating people, and by preventing honest public discussion of important matters. The way to promote social and economic justice is by doing just the opposite: by telling the truth, and by encouraging civil, public discussion” (Pipher, 2006, p. 7)

“The autoethnographer’s understandings, both as a member and a researcher, emerge not from detached discovery but from engaged dialog” (Anderson, 2006, p. 382)

“And just when you decide you’re finished, just when you’re feeling pleased with yourself because you managed to come back for the magical third time to that line about friends [. . .]” (Pelias, 2003, p. 373)

“If a traveler can get past the barriers of ignorance and forgetfulness, a journey into the land is a way into some things and a way out of others” (Heat-Moon, 1999, p. 269)

“Maps are a way of organizing wonder” (Steinhart as cited in Heat-Moon, 1999, p. 4)

“Our choice of which theories and research agendas to pursue is itself a moral problem, in that we have responsibility for the kind of tools for social reflection that we are building. Maps of cooperative work, useful intellectual labor, cognitive development through disciplinary participation, and the precise use of locally relevant communicative tools—maps that help exhibit useful orders in the world that will support our desired activities—are at this moment in history perhaps needed as much as maps that lay out routes to power and dominance and maps that lay out escape routes for those who have felt the weight of powerful institutions” (Bazerman, 1997, p. 306)

Activity theory exists as a “multivoicedness coexisting with monism. . . . Such a multivoiced theory should not regard internal contradictions and debates as a sign of weakness; rather, they are an essential feature of the theory” (Engeström, 2006a, p. 20)
“For the life of me I can not remember what made us think that we were wise and would never compromise. For the life of me, I cannot believe we’d ever die for these sins. We were merely freshmen.” “The Freshmen” (Ark, 1996) Performed by The Verve Pipe

“The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular” (Haraway, 1988, p. 590)

“A genuine road book should open unknown realms in its words as it does in its miles. If you leave a journey exactly who you were before you departed, the trip has been much wasted, even if it’s just down to the quiky mart” (Heat-Moon, 2008, p. 10)

“My own preference is to argue that the designation ‘feminist’ can apply to men who satisfy whatever standards women must satisfy to earn the label” (Harding, 1987, p. 12)

“To succumb to the bureaucracy of the academy, to shortchange our hopes of changing the world around us, and to forget the brutal realities and histories of subaltern peoples is to become the colonizers we’ve been so adamant to critique. When we write for, rather than about, the people we study, we begin to redefine the relationship between our work in the academy and the world we live in, reorienting the knowledge we produce to attend to ‘the needs and interests...of people’ rather than ‘the needs and interests of ruling’” (Smith, 1999, p. 16)” (DeVault & Gross, 2007, p. 193)

“Emotions, intuition, and relationships themselves serve as legitimate sources of knowledge” (Brisolara & Seigart, 2007, p. 284)

“Mapping is fundamental to any project seeking to explicate relationships among groups, histories, and contexts. As a methodological tool, it brings the social (i.e., historicity, activity, and agency) back to the knowledge we produce” (DeVault & Gross, 2007, p. 191)
“The purpose of research is not to validate Truth, but to enable different forms of knowledge to challenge power. Multiple truths and diverse knowledges become the actual product of research when the subjectivity, location, and humanness of the knower are included” (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007, p. 498)

“If we consider at the outset where our speech is going and what it will do there, and if we enlist the voices of others to guide us along the way, trusting the other to teach us what we need to know, we will be less likely to fall prey to the temptation ever before us as academics to view research as an end in itself and the knowledge we produce as its own justification” (Sullivan, 1996, p. 112)

“Make a little journey of conjunctions, concurrences; spend time crossing—or at least brush past—others’ latitudes and longitudes; since you can’t occupy the same space at the same time they do, try occupying the same time at the same time” (Heat~Moon, 1999, p. 593)

“Although I recognize that assessment must be a multi-disciplinary enterprise, something that should never be driven completely by the beliefs and assumptions of any single group, I don’t believe that all stakeholders should have equal claim, since those closest to teaching and learning, like students and teachers, need to have the most input about writing assessment and all important teaching decisions. If assessment is to be used as a positive force in the teaching of writing, then it makes sense that those with the most knowledge and training be those who make the most important decisions about student assessment” (Huot, 2002, p. 2)

“Terms such as ‘evidence,’ ‘results,’ and ‘validity’ are loaded concepts to a reader entering the discourse. They contribute to the misunderstanding in part because their meaning must be grasped in the context of specific research methods” (Flower, 1989, p. 301).
INTRODUCTION.
ONE MAP UNFOLDING AMONG MANY

When asked about the motivation for being a mentor to graduate student teaching assistants (G.S.T.A.s) that are teaching for the first time as well as those that are new to the program, Sam, a Midwest Writing Program\(^1\) (M.W.P.) mentor, responded:

I think that you are very impacted by the place where you receive your first teacher training. I think that stays with you for a long time [. . .] [new teachers] go from being absolutely terrified and frightened of their students on day one to by the end of the semester, you know, they've gotten really good feedback from their students, all their students have passed, they're excited about [College Composition 102][. . .] Who knows, I mean, that person may go on and decide that they want to teach, you know, when they hadn't expected it—when they thought this was just an assistantship. (personal communication, December 23, 2008)

There is going to be a learning curve when teaching for the first time in a new program. A new instructor, just like all instructors, will be making many different adjustments amidst many different and very real situations, beliefs, constraints and motivations. The new instructor, though, is often consciously creating a teaching identity. As a G.S.T.A., these adjustments must happen while balancing a full course load and life outside of school and teaching which can possibly make the position “just an assistantship.”

Basically, with all the demands on G.S.T.A.s’ time, they may be conflicted about what to

\(^{1}\) All names of provided are pseudonyms chosen by or agreed upon by the participants. Similarly, the program name and all course titles have been changed for greater anonymity of the participants.
do and when to do it. To help, program or department administrators may take some of the decisions out of their hands.

One of many instances in which the factors come together is the first day, when everything is truly new. There are twenty pairs of eyes that now look to you, “the expert,” waiting for some bit of knowledge. Are you the authoritarian or the friend? Are you in it together or is it you against them? There are no “last terms” to fall back on. The persona and approach are experiments often modeled after teachers and experiences from the novice instructor’s past. Past instructors are not the only factor that plays a role in that moment. There are also the possible days of orientation that led up to that day, conversations with fellow and former instructors, stories of first-day successes and failures, and even program and institutional policies. Still, though, at that point the singular instructor makes the decisions, sorts through the influences, and reacts to student needs.

After that first day, the instructor will continue to grow as each day brings with it a new set of challenges, experiences, and decisions. While the decisions will always be great, depending upon the program, the amount and types of decisions will vary. Some programs will provide little guidance to new instructors. They may be shown a shelf full of books and asked to pick one for the following weeks before being sent along with wishes for success. Other programs will make as many decisions for the instructors as possible, including which book to use and what daily activities to conduct. Each of these choices, whether made by the instructor or not, comes with an implicit, and sometimes explicit, set of desires and values. If made by the program the values may or may not align with those of the instructor which can lead to acts of resistance.
An important set of decisions that is extremely value laden lies in the decisions connected to assessment practices. Brian Huot (2002) notes just how laden decisions of assessment are when he writes,

Assessments are powerful cultural markers, whose influence ranges far past the limited purposes for which they might be originally intended. The systems we create to assess ourselves and our students can have much power over the ways we do our jobs, the kinds of learning our students will attain and how we and others will come to judge us. (p. 176)

The decisions that are connected to assessment practices do not just happen, especially when teaching a writing class, because there are often many appropriate rhetorical approaches for a single text. The values, practices, and aspects of writing that instructors look for and work with often come from past experiences. Edward White (2007) notes writing assessment methods are “absorbed patterns of behaviors without conscious awareness. Unless we make a conscious effort we simply adopt [. . .] the responding styles of our early experience” (p. 49). The past figures in classroom decisions. JL, the novice instructor and main participant in this study, has a strong past as a writer and student along with many experiences in the professional world and working with teenagers, all of which affect his approach to teaching.

It is for this reason that some programs use standardized assessment practices in order to curb the possible repercussions of these decisions, especially for new instructors that lack the teaching experience with which to balance their student experience. M.W.P. did just that via its writing assessment practices that now influence JL’s class as is evident in the M.W.P.’s Guide to Portfolio Assessment (2007), which states:
One of the major benefits of Portfolio Assessment is that it helps to standardize evaluative criteria and grading among all sections of a course. This is especially important in composition, where well over one hundred sections of the same course can be offered during one semester at [Midwest University (M.U.)]. Without some regulation by [M.W.P.], students could be receiving positive or negative—as well as vastly different—writing experiences. By sharing the responsibility of Portfolio Assessment among all instructors, each instructor becomes sensitized to the types and levels of proficiency that [M.W.P.] would like all students to meet in each composition course. (p. 43)

Charles Bazerman (2003) acknowledges that “some suggest only explicit standards and direct accountability will provide guidance to teachers who are not uniformly well versed in disciplinary knowledge and therefore cannot provide students the flexible, insightful entry into disciplinary required of successful student-based, project oriented teaching” (p. 437). With this guidance, though, as both Bazerman (2003) and Huot (2002) note, can come a sense of mistrust on both sides of the instructor/program relationship. As is seen in later chapters, JL sometimes felt he was being monitored. Similarly, other studies have shown that teachers worry about the ways in which data will be used in administrative decisions. This sense of mistrust can be found on the part of the program as well and is exemplified in a quote from an associate director of a first-year writing program found in Bob Broad’s (1997) “Reciprocal Authorities in Communal Writing Assessment”:

I don’t think that first-year people are in the position to make those kind of decisions (articulating and negotiating evaluations of students’ writing) in an informed way . . . I think that beginning TA’s need more direction. I think it’s
important for a beginning TA to try to make those decisions but then to have a more experienced voice giving a more experienced reading of the papers . . . (p. 141)

Broad (1997) also notes that the “‘more experienced voice’ might be that of a seasoned instructor or a professor, but more often it would be the voice of an administrator” (p. 141). Whether or not providing that voice and taking that decision out of the hands of inexperienced instructors is good for the students and the program is an important discussion that has been taken up by many regarding assessment practices, but this leaves the question of how standardized or communal assessment practices affects new instructors. That is the issue that this dissertation seeks to investigate. Primarily, this project seeks to uncover the effects that standardized programmatic assessment practices have on the writing assessment decisions and classroom practices of JL as a first-time instructor. More specifically, JL teaches in a program which has a single rubric that is used by all its instructors to assess all formal student writing in conjunction with an end-of-term portfolio exchange.

A multitude of methods could be used to conduct a project of this sort; however, I use classroom observation, interviews with JL and program mentors, and textual analysis of paper comments in order to investigate the ways in which JL uses the writing assessment practices and the ways that those practices affect his classroom decisions. Through the analysis of this data, several questions are addressed. In particular, I gained an understanding of the effects of standardized assessment practices and the norming practices used to support those practices on a new instructor.
For the purposes of this study I draw from educational specialist Craig Mertler’s (2007) definition of standardized testing which states, “any test that is administered, scored, and interpreted in a standard consistent manner” (p. 3) particularly via its “constructed-response test items” (p. 5). The program standards and criteria for its means of testing are defined via the rubric and reinforced via the portfolio exchange along with specific norming and calibration practices. I also bring to the forefront some of the traditions associated with objective writing assessment and embedded within the assessment practices in order to see whether those value sets are accepted or rejected by JL. However, just as Donna Haraway (1988) writes, “feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges” (p. 581; Haraway’s emphasis). It is important to acknowledge that “we” is not always universal. I create a deep map that looks at many layers. To resist possibly destructive generalizations, this project draws upon a single experience not to represent but to begin to illustrate the complexities of the program/instructor relationship as mediated by standardized assessment practices. Just as with writing assessment itself, though, representing this situation is not simple. For this reason I make use of William Least Heat-Moon’s deep map as a guiding principle.

When William Least Heat-Moon (1999) began to look at Chase County, Kansas, for his book *PrairyErth*, he wondered just how he could enter and represent that seemingly simple yet complex area, stating:

Early I aimed to write about a most spare landscape, seemingly poor for a reporter to poke into, one appearing thin and minimal in history and texture, a stark region recent American life had mostly gone past, a still point, a fastness as ascetic seeking a penitential corner might discover. [. . .] Wasn’t I a digger of shards?
Maybe the grid was the answer: arbitrary quadrangles that have nothing inherently to do with the land, little to do with the history, and not much to do with the details. [...] Would coordinates lead to connections? Were they themselves the only links we can truly understand? Could they lead into the dark loomings that draw me here? (p. 15)

The seemingly simple yet complex nature of writing assessment is similar to Heat–Moon’s deep map of Chase County. Grids of stakeholders, locations, desires, and needs are filled with coordinates, connections, and connotations. The questions that could be asked about assessment are virtually endless and would have very different answers depending upon the site and lens. For this dissertation, I stand before this landscape. To start this process I must first place this map in its greater context and provide a bit of my history to show my positioning.

**A Map Among Maps: The Greater Context**

It is true that assessment plays a very important role in virtually any educational program. In this society where accountability is greatly valued, what is taught in a formal setting will in some way be assessed. However, formal assessment for any academic course or activity is rarely easy. Writing assessment in particular can often be very complicated and even politically charged. Unlike some disciplines in which a given answer can be right or wrong, writing has as many rhetorical options as there are combinations of writers, situations, and functions. Thus, successful writing is highly dependent on the context in which it is written as well as the conditions under which it is intended to be read. There is a deeper set of effects at stake, though, where writing assessment is concerned:
If writing is indeed . . . a crucial site at which we construct ourselves and societies, the assessment of writing is the site at which we examine, reflect upon and evaluate who we are becoming as individuals and societies. As writing then serves as an account of who we are, it becomes the place individuals, groups and institutions become accountable to evaluation. This evaluation in turn constrains, directs, rewards and punishes particular lines of development affecting our planning for who we become in our writing and who our students become within our curriculum. (Bazerman, 2003, p. 430)

The seemingly simple yet complex nature of writing assessment is evident at every level of participation. Students, for instance, are sometimes asked to take on split roles or motives in the writing they do/perform for class. They may be asked to write for a particular audience separate from the immediate audience connected to the classroom, even though the actual audience is that of the instructor. They may be asked to write for a given purpose, such as arguing for policy change, even though the greater goals may vary, such as achieving a satisfactory grade and/or impressing the teacher. In 1971 Janet Emig found that students will often consider the audience and revise in a manner desired by teachers when the writing is done by choice but not when the writing is assigned. Likewise, in 1975 the Schools Council and James Britton found writing in the school setting to be dominated by a student-to-evaluator relationship. The findings of both are doubtlessly still true today.

The situation is just as complicated for many writing programs. They, too, are situated within greater systems that influence their actions and decisions. It is hoped that administrators will progress with the desire to do what is best for the students and
instructors; however, the program must do so within the constructs and constraints of institutional and professional guidelines. To further complicate assessment, first-year writing programs traditionally make use of a more inexperienced, temporary set of instructors that may or may not have overtly studied the act of writing or the type of writing they are teaching. Thus administrators may have concerns regarding the amount of trust that can be placed in its instructors’ classroom decisions.

Caught in the middle of the complicated situation are the writing instructors. Linda Flower (1989) reminds her readers that “Educators do not work with abstractions; they work with students” (p. 284). Instructors represent the intersection between several different systems and must find ways to work with the needs of the students often within the guidelines of their programs. Writing instructors must meld the varied perspectives of other stakeholders while coping with personal needs connected to their lives, classes, and professional advancement. Novice instructors, like JL, may have even more issues as they try to create a teaching identity among the different situations and stakeholder needs. That is why this dissertation seeks to investigate the effects of standardized assessment practices on a novice composition instructor at M.U.

The effects of the seemingly simple yet complex nature of assessment on teachers have been documented in scholarship coming from educational measurement in connection to primary and secondary education, especially regarding standardized assessment and the effects of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB). However, the effects of standardized assessment practices on new composition instructors in post-secondary education is a topic that receives little attention. There has been a push in some circles, though, to create a standardized assessment structure similar to N.C.L.B. on the collegiate
level. Even when localized, there will be effects on instructors of college composition
courses. I investigated these effects in order to see if there are correlations to what has
been seen at the primary and secondary educational levels. If there are similarities,
scholars should address issues from standardized assessment practices on the collegiate
level rather than waiting.

By no means is it uncommon to see discussions of assessment among composition
scholars questioning acts of standardized assessment on a grand scale. Huot (2002), for
instance, has called for localized assessment practices that “emphasize the context of the
texts being read, the positioning of readers and the local, practical standards that teachers
and other stakeholders hold for written communication” (p. 105). The practices detailed
in the site description of M.U. found in Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map:
The People and Place,” are truly localized and still standardized across the first-year
writing program. Brian Huot also draws upon Samuel Messick (1989) to add to
conversations calling for a revised view of validity in assessment in order to argue that
assessment practices must not only measure what they say, but they must also lead to
ethical decisions and practices to be valid (p. 50). If this truly is the direction in which
discussions of validity are moving, then the field should account for the effects of these
practices on instructors as they have a direct connection to the students and thus the
effects upon the instructors have immediate effects on the students as well. This becomes
even more important with novice instructors as they are forming the approaches and
attitudes that will influence their future students as well.

Finally, the conditions creating the situation I investigated are not rare. Writing
requirements are very common at the collegiate level. A study conducted in 1998 and
published in *College Composition and Communication* reports that, of the programs surveyed, every public school as well as every school with an enrollment of 14,000 or more students has a writing requirement (Moghtader, Cotch, and Hague, 2001, p. 457). This study also found that 60% of the public schools made use of at least some G.S.T.A.s to teach courses counting toward the writing requirement, while 90% of all programs at schools with an enrollment of 14,000 or more students, such as M.U., made use of G.S.T.A.s (p. 459). These findings begin to show a situation in which a significant academic requirement is being taught by a more transitional, inexperienced population of instructors. With so many programs using G.S.T.A.s, it is not a far stretch to assume that for some, if not many, of the G.S.T.A.s this is the experience in which they learn to teach. It is no wonder that a program administrator may want to make use of more standardized practices in order to ensure that the students are receiving the education they want and need. Thus, there is a need to investigate the effects that standardized assessment and training practices can have on novice instructors and their classrooms.

Because of its structure and history, M.W.P. provides a very strong site to begin investigating the effects of standardized assessment practices on a novice instructor. Not only does the program make use of standardized practices and curriculum but it also makes use of an intensive training system to provide support for its novice instructors. Thus, it can provide a glimpse into the effects that standardized assessment practices have across a program with their many layers and levels and on the development of classroom behaviors and decisions of a novice instructor. It provides the setting for this deep map.

JL is also an excellent participant. Not only is his positioning relatively common, as seen in the Moghtader, Cotch, and Hague (2001), but he cares deeply for his students.
and wishes them to succeed. He is also a very busy person. His commitments in and out of school and the classroom created difficult decisions. His sense of agency evident in the ways his perspectives and practices evolved over the course of the term provides a meaningful example of the negotiation that a novice instructor may have to undertake.

A deep map involves multiple ways of seeing. Thus, multiple perspectives are included throughout this dissertation. Detailed discussions of these perspectives are found in Chapters One and Two. As this is an inquiry-based project, I used grounded analysis, as discussed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in Basics of Qualitative Research. Thus, the coding system for data analysis came from the data itself. The open, axial, and selective coding processes I used to analyze the transcripts of the interviews and classroom observations are discussed in Chapter One. Activity theory is also used as a method of analysis. By viewing the actions through the different levels of systems and through the breakdown used in traditional cultural-historical activity theory, I had an inroad into the function of the M.W.P. rubric and JL’s acts of resistance. The use of activity theory and grounded theory also helps to reinforce a balance between objective and subjective along with social and individual.

Feminist research methodologies also played a large role in the design of the project, particularly through the triangulation and multiple perspectives that are important to this study. Feminist research principles emphasize the various realities and identities of participants that deserve respect. They also acknowledge the need for ethical decisions surrounding the study and for a greater representation of the researcher’s positioning throughout the stages of the project. Thus I allow and value the representation of the different groups of stakeholders themselves through their own words, much in the
manner discussed by Gisa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie (2003/1995) in “Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research.” The involvement of the participants, though labor intensive, plays an important role as JL read and commented on the manner in which he is represented. The use of several voices helps ensure that my perspectives are not imposed upon others, which heeds the warnings of Leon Anderson (2006). Multiple voices, ways of seeing, and maps are part of my data analysis. Each serves an important role regarding how this project has been formulated, how I obtained the data, and how I analyzed the data. Simply stated, the methods in place for this project are driven by activity theory, grounded theory, and feminist methodologies with the help of insider/outsider perspectives from autoethnographic approaches. Still, Patricia Sullivan (1992) writes, “feminist inquiry wears its heart on its sleeve; it originates in an ideological agenda that, instead of masking, it declares up front” (p. 57). Thus, before moving on, and in the tradition of the feminist and autoethnographic research methodologies, I need to illuminate my personal connections to this study.

**The Traveler: A Self-Description**

That first day, I did what others had done before and what I had observed. I was not asked what I would do or why. That day I handed out my syllabus, with the rules that I had seen on other people’s syllabi and that I was told were good to include. There were things like a late work policy, a plagiarism policy, and an attendance policy. That day, with that syllabus, I set forth a persona that I didn’t understand. That syllabus, sadly, was filled with misspellings and mistakes that should not have been made.

For those first papers, I did what others had done before and what I had observed. I was not asked what I would do or why. I commented as a “teacher,” not a reader,
because I knew nothing else. I spoke not of grammar because I did not know the rules, but I made quick and “important” judgments that I believed to be true. I used the tool that others had used—a pencil. I spoke weakly but directly, demanding change, not inspiring change, because I feared the silence, I feared the questions, I feared the possibility of challenge—I feared the students.

For that first term, I did what others had done before and what I had observed. I was not asked what I would do or why. I talked about thesis statements that I had read about in handbook because, as a tutor, the director of the writing center told me they were important. I talked about Writing because I had not thought about the fact that writing was different in different situations. I alluded to audience because I felt it was important; however, never did the word “audience” escape my lips. After that term, I hoped that others would fix the mistakes I had made.

For those first classes, I did what others had done before and what I had observed. I was not asked what I would do or why. In those first classes it was hoped I would do what was best. In those first classes it was hoped I would do what was right. In those first classes it was hoped I would teach what should be taught. In those terms, I learned to teach through trial and error. I feared what those students left with, but I learned to make decisions, I learned to listen to the students, I learned that I was not the only important one in the classroom, and I learned what I felt was important in writing.

That first day, I did what I was told to do and said what the sample syllabus said to say. Though I was asked what I would do and why, it was “suggested” that I follow along. That day I handed out a syllabus with rules that others had written and that I had to
include. There were things like a late work policy, a plagiarism policy, and an attendance policy. That day, with that syllabus, I set a persona that I did understand but wasn’t me. That syllabus was pristine and represented the rules that others had made.

For those first papers, I did what I was told to do and said what the sample said to say. Though I was asked what I would do and why, it was “suggested” that I follow along. I commented as a reader because I knew it was important and because I was told to comment as a reader. I spoke not of grammar because I knew there were more important “rules,” but I made quick and “important” judgments that I was told to be true. I used the tool I was told to use—the rubric. I spoke strongly and directly, demanding change, not inspiring change, because I feared the questions of administration, I feared the possibility of challenge—I feared the program.

For that first term, I did what I was told to do and said what the sample said to say. Though I was asked what I would do and why, it was “suggested” that I follow along. I talked about thesis statements because I felt they were important, but also because, in pre-term training, the director of the writing program told me they were important. I wanted to talk about writing because I had thought about the fact that it was different in different situations, but I talked about Writing because that was what was to be evaluated by others. I spoke of audience because I felt it was important; however, when the word “audience” passed through my lips, I alluded to the program. After that term, I hoped that others would fix the mistakes I had made. And I too became the program.

For those classes, I did what I was told to do and said what the sample said to say. Though I was asked what I would do and why, it was “suggested” that I follow along. In
those first classes it was hoped I would do what was best. In those first classes it was hoped I would do what was right. In those first classes it was hoped I would teach what should be taught. In those terms, I learned to teach through direction, trial, and error. I feared what those students left with, but I learned to make decisions, I learned to listen to the program and to the students, I learned that I was not the only important one in the program, I relearned what I felt was important in writing, and I learned to teach what I felt was important in writing.

Though extremely oversimplified, these were my experiences as a G.S.T.A. in two very different programs. Each program had its strengths and each had its weaknesses. Both of these programs were doing what was felt to be important for the students and the program itself. Both of these programs wanted their instructors to grow.

I taught my first class as a G.S.T.A at a small university with approximately 6,000 undergraduate students. That program was vastly different from the M.W.P. as, comparatively, it was unstructured. The eight new and returning G.S.T.A.s in that program were all seeking master’s degrees in either literature or creative writing. While there was a weekly course that discussed pedagogical issues, it was focused primarily on theory, not practice. This course was taught by the Composition Coordinator, which was a revolving position at that university. What the students learned was up to the instructor and often limited to that single view of writing. Rubrics were discussed once during that term, and the five members of the pedagogy course were required to construct a rubric; however, we were also told not to use them to assess writing.
In a later position I gained a much deeper perspective regarding the amount of
diversity among activities and structures within the English 101 (introductory writing)
and 102 (research-oriented writing) courses being taught. At that time, I also began to
play a role in programmatic and program-level assessment. I worked closely with the
Director of Assessment, an educational measurement specialist, who convinced me that
rubrics do in fact play an important role in programmatic and university-level assessment
practices.

During my time at M.U., I saw the opposite end of this spectrum. One general
difference is that M.U. had approximately 14,000 undergraduate students. There were
several specific differences in regard to the training of G.S.T.A.s teaching first-year
composition courses. The course in teaching composition for new G.S.T.A.s met twice
each week during the first term and early in the second term. The program used a
standardized syllabus, book, and assessment practices. As a program mentor, I once again
had the opportunity to gain a deeper perspective regarding what was happening in classes
across the program, but the issues were different. Whereas the classes in the first program
had few commonalities, the classes in the second had very few differences. What students
learned about writing was up to the program and limited to a single view of writing.

Both of the types of programs with which I have been involved have their benefits
and drawbacks. This project is a way for me to begin to reconcile the very different
experiences that have been influential to my professional identity as well as a pathway to
further develop my professional identity. These experiences have led me to a point of
standing, looking, wondering.
A Map for Others: The Organization

The significance of the discussions in this introduction will unfold throughout the chapters that follow. The general organization of this dissertation is based on gradually narrowing circles of values and influence as illustrated in Adele E. Clarke’s (2007) social worlds/arenas map discussed in Chapter One, “The Tools of Cartography: A Discussion of Epistemology, Methodologies, and Methods.” In the following chapters I discuss the general values of writing assessment that influence M.W.P. and JL. Then I discuss the local situations and values before analyzing the data. There is also a somewhat non-traditional component. At the beginning and end are commonplace books. These commonplace books are not meant to be linear; rather, they are compilations of quotes and ideas that connect to the main discussion either directly or from a slight angle.

These commonplace books are by no means a whimsical addition. Rather, they serve an important and serious role that connects to the feminist and autoethographic methodological perspectives by providing an overt use of multiple voices, positioning, the acknowledgment of bias through my positioning, and the acknowledgment of my humanity. The different pieces in the commonplace book provide many voices, far beyond mine, that come together in a manner not generally allowed through traditionally synthesized sources. Likewise, the different quotes and ideas present a picture of me that would not otherwise be available by providing bits and pieces that help locate me, the researcher. Finally, these pieces provide a more human connection to the ideas found in the more traditional discussions.

The chapters themselves address different traditional needs associated with an empirical study and the genre of dissertations, such as the methods and methodologies, a
literature review, a discussion of a discussion of the data, and a discussion of the findings and implications. Each of the chapters adds another important level. As noted, I start by positioning my research decisions before moving through increasingly focused layers of acts and values.

Chapter One, “The Tools of Cartography: A Discussion of Methods and Methodology,” details the means in which I obtained the data and, equally important, the influences for my analysis. This chapter details my epistemology, research questions, methods, and methodologies. Also discussed are the ways in which activity theory and grounded theory connect and apply to my decisions regarding the design and implementation of the study through activity theorists such as Yrjö Engeström (2006a), Reijo Miettinen (2001), Bonnie Nardi (2005), and scholars associated with grounded theory such as Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1998). Similarly feminist research principles that influenced this study are discussed via theorists such as Gesa Kirsch and Joy S. Ritchie (2003/1995), Donna Haraway (1988), and Renate Duelli Klein (1983).

Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain Unfold: A Literature Review,” provides a scholarly context for the situations found in this text. While there is little discussion regarding the effects of standardized assessment in connection with first year composition, much has been written regarding the influence of standardized assessment on primary and secondary education due to its connection with large-scale standardized testing through such scholars as Mary Lee Smith (1991) and Sarah J. McCarthey (2008). This chapter takes a cursory look at these effects in order draw connections with those seen with JL, the novice instructor involved in this study. The literature review also addresses writing assessment theory, in particular, conversations regarding the positive
and negative effects and uses of scoring guides and rubrics from important assessment theorists like Bob Broad (2003), Edward White (2007), and Linda Mabry (1999). Finally, the chapter makes connections to revised discussions of validity and portfolios among scholars such as Brian Huot (2002), Samuel Messick (1989), Kathleen Yancey (1999), and Laurence Habib and Line Wittek (2007).

Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The People and Place,” provides a detailed site description that explains the M.W.P. writing assessment practices and discusses its long history. I then provide a more formal introduction to JL, the main participant and novice instructor. Drawing from the call of Kirsch and Ritchie (2003/1995), I provide long excerpts from JL’s interviews in order to let him speak. This chapter places the emphasis on the local contexts and shows the values and efforts each makes on behalf of the students while working within greater systems.

Chapter Four, “Under the Soil: The Data and Its Analysis,” provides a more detailed description and discussion of the events and effects observed in the actions and interviews of the novice instructor and administration in connection to the assessment tools and practices. The discussion moves beyond a mere retelling of the events by grounding observations in the theories of others and detailing the holes in those theories by drawing from scholars like Charles Bazerman (2004) and Cindy Moore, Peggy O’Neill, and Brian Huot (2009) as well as the aforementioned assessment theorists. This chapter specifically discusses the student papers JL evaluated, his interviews, and class observations in order to show the patterns that emerged. It also briefly illustrates connections to the values that have been built into and passed through the M.W.P.
assessment practices as noted in the historical discussions of Arthur Applebee (1974) and Norbert Elliot (2005).

Chapter Five, “Drawing the Map: An Activity Theory Analysis” pulls together the patterns that emerge in the data analysis and places them within an activity theory frame. Through this process I map the goals and desires of M.W.P. This map is then compared to a map of JL’s values and desires at the beginning and end of the term. In this way the evolutions in JL’s perspectives and agency are evident. I also provide alternative hypotheses and the voices of other G.S.T.A.s through program mentors. Finally, Chapter Six, “Reading the Map: Discussion of Findings and Implications” provides this study’s limitations along with its implications for writing assessment scholarship, M.W.P., and the researcher.

While this study is being written with a sense of inquiry and with the hope to gain a deeper understanding of how assessment practices used across a program affect the enculturation and development of a new instructor, it is also conducted in the hope that it will indeed have a positive effect on those involved, and the program in which it is situated as well as add to conversations of writing assessment.

This study cannot and does not seek to answer every question regarding standardized assessment practices on the collegiate level. This would be impossible as different instructors, students, and programs have different needs and virtually any assessment practices will work for some stakeholders and not others. However, this study does seek to begin to ask questions that need to be asked, adding a voice that will perhaps lead others to ask similar questions for their localized instructor/student populations—to create deep, meaningful maps of their own. This desire has been within the study from
the beginning and is even a part of the questions that guide this study. Finally, this study allows my personal map to unfold among many. Through this deep map, I can re-see what I believe I have glimpsed.

Whenever entering a place to create a map, there is always a good chance that you will not find what you expected. I didn’t know what I would find. I didn’t know if this map would lead anywhere. Like every map or unlike any map, the landscape that is sketched will cease to exist even as it is being drawn. So why a map? “I’d come to the prairie out of some dim urge to encounter the alien—it’s easier to comprehend where someplace else is than where you are [. . .] I was coming to see that facts carry a traveler only so far: at last he must penetrate the land by a different means” (Heat-Moon, 1999, p. 105). Why should you join me here? “[T]o go out not quite knowing why is the very reason for going out at all, and to discover why is the most promising and potentially fulfilling of outcomes” (Heat-Moon, 2008, p. 13).
CHAPTER I.
THE TOOLS OF CARTOGRAPHY: AN EPISTEMOLOGY, METHODOLOGIES
AND METHODS

How do we choose what we see? This, after all, is an important choice. Vision is a
tricky thing. Kenneth Burke (1954) once wrote “every way of seeing is also a way of not
seeing” (p. 49). Meanwhile, Donna Haraway (1988) points out that “Vision is always a
question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing
practices” (p. 585). The way of seeing and the power of seeing will not always be a
forceful act; rather, it may be subtle like a scholarly tradition built on terministic screens,
diverting the attention (Burke, 2001/1966, p. 1340). The act of seeing can become even
more complicated when years of tradition hide the original values and reasoning as can
be argued is the case for both traditional research and writing assessment. The way we
frame our perceptions and the boundaries we impose all reflect a set of decisions that
help create what exists, whether we mean it to or not.

A map is just as value laden and can hide many choices. A map, perhaps more
than any other representation, diverts and focuses the gaze of the viewer as it draws
attention to chosen the area and features. This choice has great implications. *PrairyErth*
was not Heat–Moon’s (1999) first book. He had previously published *Blue Highways
*(1982), which told of his trip around the United States. He took that journey “with the
hope that following new, physical maps could change the dream cartography a mind
wanders in; that tour went on for thirteen thousand miles through thirty-eight states”
(Heat–Moon, 1999, p. 223). Those stories are very different even though from the same
author. They span distance connected by winding roads that Heat–Moon followed and
topographies that sped past. *PrairyErth*, though, is not like *Blue Highways*. It is a different kind of seeing. Heat–Moon (1999) explains that while circumnational journeys are fine, I might have reached a similar destination by staying within a single American county, even one of seeming sparseness like this one. The new challenge [. . .] was, to reword Thoreau a bit, to travel a good deal in Chase County, and the requisite to that was to go slowly, almost inch by inch, on foot. (p. 223)

This time it was the deep map that he was seeking—the understanding of a place.

Part of my choice was similar. Should I take a circumnational journey, covering many programs, or cover this ground “slowly, almost inch by inch, on foot”? The choices behind methods and methodologies are by no means value free. These choices reinforce, betray, and sometimes aid in the development of perspectives and findings. They are a way of seeing and not seeing.

For this reason, this chapter starts with the bigger pictures and underlying definitions. Specifically, after connecting writing assessment as a scholarly conversation to the perspectives of this study, I discuss my epistemology as it contains the basic beliefs that are part of my methods and methodology followed by the methods. The discussion of the methods employed in this study is then connected to the methodologies that inform my methods.

I don’t see the research process as clean as some others experience it. The alignment between epistemology, methods, and methodology shows as much about a researcher as it does about the topic or conclusions. This dissertation is no exception. Just as Heat–Moon (1999) did, I come to
a place of long and circling horizons, because of a vague and undefined sense that I lived in shortsidedness; I saw how the land, like a good library, lets a [person] extend himself [or herself], stretch time, rupture the constrictions of egocentrism [. . . .] If a traveler can get past the barriers of ignorance and forgetfulness, a journey into the land can be a way into some things and a way out of others.

(p. 269)

**Seeing Writing Assessment**

It is possible to try to understand writing assessment, particularly standardized assessment, by searching a wide map. Surveys can be conducted, connections can be drawn, and comparisons can be made. Scholars such as Andrea Lunsford and Karen Lunsford (2008) have successfully used these types of methods. This type of circumnational journey through assessment is strong, but not the means I have chosen. This was not a choice I made lightly.

A broad study of assessment can illuminate trends that are very important, but it can also detract from the history. Quantitative and large-scale discussions of assessment such as those of Connors and Lunsford (1993), Lunsford and Lunsford (2008), and Jeffery (2009) add an important voice. A more localized study, though, can focus on the narratives, choices, and lives of the people involved. Localized approaches also enable discussions of the unique interaction of people and settings. Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The People and the Place,” contains a discussion of M.W.P.’s specific history and an introduction to the novice teacher, JL.

Writing and writing assessment are both very human actions. Assessment in general and writing assessment specifically is something that affects people in real and
emotional ways. Recent discussions by activity theorists, such as those of Wolff-Michael Roth (2007), have begun to acknowledge the connection between emotions, assessments, and performance. While writing assessment can be discussed on a wide, circumnational level, it is on the personal level that the effects are felt. This need is what guides this study toward the use of qualitative methods.

The use of qualitative methods to study writing assessment is not new. Educational measurement specialist Mary Lee Smith (1991) uses qualitative methods to study large-scale assessment in primary and secondary education arguing:

To understand fully the consequences of high-stakes external testing on teachers, one must look beyond the verbal statements to underlying meanings within the institution. One must sit with them in faculty meetings when school expectations are laid out, follow them as they collect formidable piles of textbooks, teaching manuals, and the other manuals they are required to cover, observe their everyday classroom throughout the year, watch their sometimes frenzied preparation for the tests themselves, examine what topics and subject matter gets slighted or left by the wayside for the sake of the tests, and finally learn what reactions to these experiences are incorporated into teachers and subsequent definitions of teaching. (p. 8)

Writing assessment scholar Brian Huot (2002) also praises the use of qualitative studies of assessment in the study and development of writing assessment techniques as they “can provide thick descriptions of the kinds of writing instruction and performances that occur in our classrooms and programs” (p. 152).
Qualitative methods lend themselves to discussions of assessment through detailed discussions of the people involved. Moreover, qualitative methods account for the site, thus overtly acknowledging the differences that make localized forms of assessment truly local. This is particularly true for this study as I define localized assessment using the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s (2006) position statement on writing assessments discussion of localized writing assessment which grounds localized assessment in the program or institution. It states, “As a community of interpreters whose knowledge of context and purpose is integral to the assessment [. . . .] the best assessment for any group of students must be locally determined and may well be locally designed.”

**My Epistemology**

Sociologist Sandra Harding (1987) identifies the differences between methods, methodologies, and epistemologies, which are all crucial to creating the boundaries and identifying the lenses used throughout the research process (p. 2). Specifically, Harding (1987) argues that while methods are a way of collecting data and methodologies are a guide for a study’s design and analysis, it is the epistemology that creates the base for the methods and methodologies. She writes:

An epistemology is a theory of knowledge. It answers questions about who can be a “knower” (can women?); what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge (only tests against men’s experiences and observations?); what kinds of things can be known (can “subjective truths” count as knowledge), and so forth. (p. 3)
Positivistic research calls for a separation of researcher and subject in the drive for objective and true knowledge; however, part of an open research process involves the discussion of definitions and contextualization of beliefs.

As a researcher, a participant in the M.W.P., and member of other systems, I believe that individuals live in worlds that are neither completely separate from social and cultural influence nor completely socially constructed. Just as Stephen Toulmin (2006) writes, “We acquire (and handle) knowledge of people and things in everyday life in ways that are in part culturally universal and spontaneous, in part the result of the individual’s internalizing of his or her own native culture” (p. 60; Toulmin’s emphasis). Knowledge, what we see, and how we see are “colored by the social and personal experiences of the individual” (Brisolara & Seigart, 2007, p. 285).

The interaction between the individual and social is something that should not be overlooked as the mix of social and individual exists in many things thought to be purely individual. For instance, scholars such as psychologist David Manier (2004) and the influential education and activity theorist James Wertsch (2001) have argued that memory is actually a blend of internal and external, a point not lost for standpoint theorists. Similar to memory, rhetorician Dale Sullivan (1994) argues that emotion is learned and situated, stating, “emotion [. . .] is also socially constructed, and learning to feel about things the way the larger culture does is part of becoming enculturated, of coming to dwell within the ethos of the culture” (p. 75).

Who Knows

The balance of individual and social coupled with a value for experiential knowledge does affect whom I position as “knowers.” Because experience creates
knowledge and is a mix of individual and social, some sense of context is needed to understand what is being researched, especially with writing assessment. Philosopher Catherine Hundleby (2007) reminds readers that science and its call for rationality and objectivity are actually values which are community based (p. 37). In a detailed discussion, social and computer scientist Bonnie Nardi (2005) makes clear that even a supposedly objective scientific study is actually hides a complex web of motivations, goals, and beliefs of those involved. This complex web creates and influences the actions and outcomes of a study by shaping the way of seeing.

A community’s values, though, can easily be locked into the blackbox of tradition. This happens when the steps that are part of a decision are no longer discussed after that act is done. Blackboxing can also cause a program to be seen as a whole rather than its parts (Spinuzzi, 2008, p. 51). An example lies with M.W.P. itself, which is often seen as an entity rather than a mix of teachers, students, administrators, and staff. Blackboxing is also seen in the use of its rubric to assess writing without knowledge of the values, history, or decisions that went into its creation. Because of the blackbox effect, members of the community may not realize the reasoning behind tool design and use or the values that tool carries.

The mix of the individual and the social also enters into how I see writing and education. Writing is very contextual, for what works in one rhetorical situation won’t work in all others. Learning to write is a process of negotiating a mix of needs for the situation, writer, and audience. This is a point that has been taken up extensively in research of compositionists and rhetorical scholars alike. Learning to write is a very communal yet individual act. The mix of individual and social and its impact on writing
assessment means that even those not versed in writing assessment theory become important actors with a knowledge that is important to recognize. As no prior studies have directly investigated the effects of localized yet standardized writing assessment practices on first-year composition instructors, it makes sense to ask those involved in order to gain access to the internal affects and effects of program policies.

**Whom I Ask**

While I greatly value and wish to add to writing assessment theory, I believe that scholars can still learn a lot from those not traditionally qualified as knowers. Students and instructors in first-year writing classrooms bring an understanding of writing assessment based on their experiences. Their understanding can provide valuable insights. The value I hold for the experiences of graduate student teaching assistants (G.S.T.A.s) and students and what they can tell/teach the writing assessment community has influenced my choice of participants. Because I value their experiences and understand their context, I sought volunteers in a situated community with which I was familiar, specifically incoming M.W.P. G.S.T.A.s and their program mentors.

The norming processes often associated with traditional, communal writing assessment tacitly, if not overtly, argues that those carrying out the assessment do not “know” about writing and writing assessment, at least for that context. Assessment scholars Durst, Roemer, and Schultz (1994), for example, argue that since G.S.T.A.s do not know how to assess writing, discussions of assessment should be held off until later in their initial term. It could be argued, however, that holding off discussions of assessment merely creates a situation in which G.S.T.A.s are disempowered and
uninformed. In the end, those involved in the norming process and teaching connected to that norming process have a crucial voice.

What I Ask

The experiences I have had, and the epistemology I hold, not only affect who I see as “knowers” but also what I ask about their experiences. I see writing assessment as more than evaluation. Writing assessment is a powerful motivator of students, teachers, and administrators. It is also a valuable means of inquiry. It is where participants enact and react to the values held by students, teachers, and administrators, professionals in and beyond the institutional system, and disciplines as well as scholars in the fields of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies.

Sadly, writing assessment is sometimes used for political agendas rather than what is in the best interests of the students and teachers that come together in the classrooms, though it is possible to balance the needs of multiple stakeholders. This fact, along with a mix of needs and desires of many stakeholders, means that sites of writing assessment can be contested.

This power, the political nature of writing assessment, and my belief in the importance of experience influence the research questions for this study. Those questions, as seen in Table 4, focus on the interaction of a novice instructor’s relationship with programmatic practices. I do this in the hope that this instructor, this program, and other writing programs can benefit from a deeper understanding of this and their situated experiences.
<table>
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<th>Research Question</th>
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| 1) How do M.W.P. assessment practices, in particular the use of a program wide rubric for the assessment of all final drafts, enable and constrain novice instructors?  
2) How are new instructors enculturated/normed?  
3) What are the effects of this norming on their teaching and professional development?                                                                                                                                             | • Observation of various levels of stakeholders—classroom, teaching course and mentor meetings  
• Observation of program teaching course  
• Interviews with various stakeholders—the instructor, mentors, and director  
• Theoretical grounding of the effects of assessment in the literature of the field |
| 4) What are some of the varying motives and goals represented by various stakeholders, primarily the students and the instructor, within this system?  
5) How do these varying motives work together or conflict?  
6) In what ways do these motives create or suppress acts of both positive and negative resistance to the standardized assessment practices?  
7) In what ways do the motives, particularly of the instructor, change the function of the standardized rubric; for instance, does the rubric serve a caretaker and/or gatekeeping function? | • Interviews primarily with the instructor and mentors  
• Observation of classroom  
• Observation of program teaching course  
• The analysis of commented papers and rubrics |
| 8) What are the embedded value sets carried through the M.W.P. assessment practices?  
9) What are the layers of values that create the M.W.P. assessment practices?  
10) How do those values seen and unseen affect current assessment practices and the stakeholders?                                                                                                                       | • Historical research into assessment overtime  
• Historical research into the history of M.W.P. assessment practices in connection to general assessment theory  
• Analysis of M.W.P. assessment tools and materials for traces  
• The analysis of commented papers and rubrics |
| 11) How do the embedded value sets affect the success of the various groups of stakeholders—particularly the instructor?  
12) How does the program form its own entity and how is this entity used?                                                                                                                                               | • Interviews with instructor  
• Observation of classes |
| 13) How are the assessment processes governed, as a process of production, within the M.W.P.?                                                                                                                                                                         | • Analysis of relevant M.W.P. tools and materials  
• Interviews and observations with instructor about assessment practices |
| 14) How can the writing studies community benefit from discussions of assessment that use activity theory and actor network theory as guiding principles? How can writing programs other than M.W.P. benefit from a cultural-historical analysis of their means of assessment similar to this project? | • Historical research of trends in assessment theory  
• Comparison to those trends and to current writing assessment scholarship |

Table 4. Research Questions and Corresponding Methods
How I Ask & Interpret

My belief that experience and perception are a mix of individual and social perception also affects me as the researcher and interpreter. Within this project I play multiple roles. I am a researcher; however, throughout the data collection and observations, I was also an M.W.P. mentor. Thus I was a participant-observer during the required pedagogy course. I was an insider. This perspective can, and did, complicate the data collection as I was an observer but I was still required to fulfill my duties as a mentor. This is not the only complication that resulted from my position.

Sociologist Nancy Naples (2003) discusses the point that people cannot completely remove themselves from their community/systems—but standpoint theory helps people to break away from the “normal” and to see things more critically (p. 56). She also reminds readers that “insider status is always conditional and must be negotiated” (p. 48). This complicates the research process, for, as sociologists Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Deborah Piatelli (2007) point out, insiders can miss things and outsiders can put up walls. They also remind readers that “researchers are never fully insiders or outsiders” (p. 499).

Because of my complicated position, I drew upon autoethnography to help balance my positioning as mentor with my positioning as researcher. Autoethnographer Leon Anderson (2006) writes that there will be tensions and conflicts created by the spilt roles of researcher and participant. Though I wasn’t a participant in the study, I was a participant in the system and had to come to terms with the fact that M.W.P. was part of my identity (p. 383). I addressed this layer of complexity by reflecting on my study and the data. I consciously accounted for this reciprocal relationship. I had to be a part of and
separate from the landscape. Similar to feminist research principles, Anderson (2006) continues to state that the researcher must “be visible, active, and reflectively engaged in the text” (p. 383). According to Anderson (2006), this means that as my experiences affect the study I need to make clear those relationships (p. 384) and be sure that my perspectives are not read into the actions of others (p. 389).

The insider/outsider negotiation and balance of the social and individual affects how I view the research process. A research process is neither sterile nor objective. Sociologist Joey Sprague (2005) has taken issue with the false expectations involved in traditional, positivistic research. Sprague explains that while positivistic research traditions did allow for a separation from the reliance on the supernatural for answers, they separate the “knower” from the “known” (p. 33). She specifically acknowledges problems from “logical dichotomies,” writing, “the point is not that dichotomies do not exist, but rather that they are ways of constructing social relationships that facilitate social domination” (p. 15). Sprague (2005) also points to issues with “abstract individualization,” which see individuals “in isolation from and unconnected with its interpersonal, historical, or physical context” (p. 16). Logical dichotomies and abstract individualism enable “objectification” which “is the tendency to talk of and treat people as though they were objects, devoid of subjectivity, the opposite of agents who are developing analyses of their situations and working to cope with them” (p. 18). She continues to write that objectification can bring “a search for how to change the individual, rather than a consideration of how we might change the situation” (p. 20).

In a similar process, Hugh Mehan (2003) details processes that strip identity through institutional processes. Specifically, he provides a case study in which a child
behaving in a similar manner to other children in a class was labeled as having special needs. Through the various levels of paperwork, the official representation became the child in official processes. The decision makers knew only the product representing the child and not the child himself, even though the representation was not completely accurate. Writing assessment can have a similar effect in which decontextualized products and at times statistical analyses become the students in official processes and the reality of the students and situations is lost. As part of this project, I have drawn on the histories and situations to try and maintain the reality and identities of M.W.P. and JL when discussing JL’s relationship with M.W.P. policies.

**Epistemological Effects**

The epistemology, methodologies, and methods share a reciprocal influence on each other and on my research questions. While the topic for this project is concerned with writing assessment practices, the manner in which this topic is explored and the data is analyzed is tied to my beliefs. Recent conversations, such as the positions held by Sprague (2005), have challenged the positivistic approaches to research and assessment. As a scholar and researcher, I align myself with these conversations, particularly in the call for more open approaches that allow more voices.

As this discussion implies, I bring certain perspectives to this study. I am partially a product of a patriarchal society, though, like Sprague, I try to resist dichotomies, I must also acknowledge their reality and effects. Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) write that “reflexive researchers grapple with one’s social biography and its role in the research process, they find that ideological and personal beliefs muddy the waters of knowledge production. Separation of science and ideology becomes impossible” (p. 497). Feminist
sociologist Sandra Harding (2007) likewise acknowledges that the “theoretical and conceptual” should not be kept out of the research process. She argues that this “has the effect of discarding some of the most valuable political and scientific resources of the researcher” (p. 54). My beliefs regarding writing assessment, the importance of personal identities and histories, and belief that the researcher is not separate from the study are why I rely on qualitative methods and draw upon autoethnography, feminist principles, activity theory, and grounded theory to maintain a balance. This balance is discussed following the methods to which they connect.

My Methods

The choice of qualitative methods was merely the beginning. Harding (1987) explains that there are three types of methods: “listening to informants, observing behavior, or examining historical traces and records” (p. 2). Moreover, as the educational measurement scholar Craig Mertler (2009) notes, methods need to be drawn from the guiding questions themselves (p. 139). It is only in this manner that the appropriate data can be gathered. The feminist principles and activity theory influences led me to use all three as is seen in Table Four outlining the interaction between the guiding questions and the methods employed.

Chosen for their ability to provide a strong description and their situated nature, I use ethnographic methods. Ethnography, as Beverly Moss (1992) notes, “allows a researcher to gain a comprehensive view of the social interactions, behaviors, and beliefs of a community or social group” (p. 155). Ethnography also supports various theoretical positions and submethods (Moss, 1992, p. 156).
Participant Selection

Volunteers for this study came from M.W.P. mentors and incoming graduate student teaching assistants (G.S.T.A.s). The epistemology I hold made this a clear and easy decision. I value the experience of those entering the classroom and actively negotiating their first classroom experiences as instructors with the programmatic writing assessment practices for the first time.

The program mentors agreed to participate during the summer prior to the semester of study. I requested volunteers from the G.S.T.A.s following the initial orientation and first day of classes. This allowed the G.S.T.A.s to be introduced to the program, structure of the classes, materials, and writing assessment practices, and to meet their students before volunteering. I hoped this time also allowed the G.S.T.A.s to understand what I was asking and to make sure that their students would be comfortable with my presence. The only stipulation I made in compliance with HSRB was that none of the people I mentored could participate in the study. Although asking G.S.T.A.s I had mentored to participate would provide great access to the classroom, it could easily place G.S.T.A. in a situation in which she or he felt coerced.

Two G.S.T.A.s volunteered. Neither studied composition at Midwest University (M.U.), and neither took traditional first-year composition courses. This may seem to challenge the volunteers as “knowers”; however, both instructors had experience with writing assessment as students and both were teaching a first-year writing course. Thus the instructor I chose was actively interacting with the local standardized writing assessments practices used by M.W.P. For a detailed introduction, please see Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The People and Place.”
The reality of a writing program like M.W.P. is that first-year writing classes are taught by many people—some just coming out of their undergraduate programs and few of the G.S.T.A.s teaching the required writing courses are formally studying composition or writing assessment. The Moghtader, Cotch, and Hague (2001) study shows the use of G.S.T.A.s to teach these classes is not uncommon. Thus, even though JL, the novice instructor, may not traditionally be thought to know about teaching and assessing writing, his inexperience provides valuable perspectives and experiences. While no two experiences are exactly the same, this instructor’s experiences may not be as uncommon as initially thought. In addition, I interviewed the other M.W.P. mentors about the experiences of the other G.S.T.A.s. After volunteering, the participants were provided an informed consent form (please see the appendices).

**Data Collection**

The data collection took place in a single sixteen-week term from the end of August until the end of December. Additional observation would have been ideal; however, the time constraints of the dissertation process made this unfeasible. Future studies of similar situations would benefit from an even more longitudinal approach, perhaps working with a single instructor over several years and possibly continuing beyond the completion of the academic program.

**Interviews**

Interviews are an important tool in ethnography. Mary Sue MacNealy (1999) argues that they provide the ability to “gather facts, opinions, goals, plans, and insights that may not be available from any other source” (p. 203). This was particularly true in this study. JL participated in three semistructured interviews. Thus, while I did have a list
of questions to guide the interview, the actual interviews were allowed to flow wherever necessary. The questions can be found in Appendices H through L. The interviews were conducted shortly after the beginning of the term, after JL used the program rubric to assess student papers for the first time, and approximately two weeks after the end-of-term portfolio exchange. All of the interviews were digitally recorded to allow for review and transcripts were provided to JL.

I used interviews to gain insight into JL’s history. His is a history involving, among many things, time spent working closely with teenagers prior to entering the classroom and is an important in understanding the particular perspective he holds as a novice instructor in this system. Interviews with other participants helped me see the commonality of JL’s experiences. However, beyond JL’s history, interviews provided insight into the way he perceived his classroom, M.W.P. policies, and the changes to those perceptions during the term. Interviews allowed me to ascertain JL’s motives and inner conflicts regarding his relationship with the policies. JL openly stated early on that he hoped the students would leave knowing “even if they haven’t passed the class... college is not going to be impossible and that if they want it bad enough they succeed at it.” He continued saying, “There is no reason why they can’t finish up college, get a degree, and become a respected person in life” (personal communication, September 4, 2008). Throughout his interviews it was clear that JL paid attention to the students’ lives outside of class, which caused tensions with the provided syllabus, specific set of skills taught, and the writing assessment during the term. Some of the values embedded in the program’s writing assessment practices and tools that conflicted with JL’s values. Conducting interviews helped me access those conflicts through JL’s eyes and words.
Classroom Observations

Though interviews do play a crucial role in qualitative research, I needed to use other methods as well. MacNealy (1999) notes that interviews require a considerable amount of time, allow interviewer bias via the interview notes, and can result in possible “inaccurate or biased” answers provided by the interviewee (p. 204). To help account for interviewer bias in the note-taking process, MacNealy suggests recording interviews (p. 204), which was part of the interview protocol for this study. Classroom observations also helped me account for possible bias. The classroom observations were conducted at six points over the course of the term. Each of the observations was scheduled prior to the date, and I recorded each in an audio format for later review and took extensive field notes. I provided copies if the audio recordings to JL with the interview transcriptions.

Classroom observations provided a key bit of information that was missing from JL’s reflective interview answers. They allowed me to see JL’s use of the writing assessment tools first hand and to see their effects on his decisions. I observed changes in his demeanor and approach to the classroom in regard to the assessment processes in class. For instance, JL relied heavily on the M.W.P. designated handbook early in the term, but over the course of the term, program-specific examples and materials became increasingly important. This occurred to the extent that an outline provided by his mentor, Sam, was used to guide class discussion and peer review.

The classroom observations also allowed greater insight into the acts of positive and negative resistance that resulted from contradictions and negotiation by JL between his motives and desires and the programmatic writing assessment practices. Furthermore, the program emerged as an entity connected to JL’s “us against them” approach. In one
interview, when responding to the question of whether his assessment style does or doesn’t fit with M.W.P. goals, JL replied,

I kind of tell the students that it’s you and me against the system and they like the feeling of solidarity that we have. I am not trying to paint [M.W.P.] as this big, evil Death Star kind of thing, but there’s this sort of element of “How can we convince these people that you are worthy to go to [College Composition 102]?”. (personal communication, November 4, 2008)

Similarly, as suggested by his academic program of enrollment and M.W.P. administration, JL noted that he placed his academic program first stating, “It’s a job. I am here to earn money, and while I do care about the welfare of my students and I want to do my work well, it’s a job, you know, and [my program] is my vocation” (personal communication, November 4, 2008). The time constraints of a G.S.T.A are real. This cannot help but have an effect in the classroom, which is part of the reasoning behind having standardized assessment practices. Through observations I witnessed changes in JL’s use of the rubric and the end-of-term portfolio process over the course of the term.

**The Role of Student Writing**

The overarching purpose behind this study was to investigate the effects of standardized writing assessment practices on JL’s classroom decisions; however, any study regarding writing assessment needs to look at the site of assessment itself—the students’ papers. Five students provided complete electronic sets of evaluated papers. Two of those students also provided their physical portfolios.

M.W.P. is very proud of its programmatic assessment practices. The program is also proud of the support provided to new G.S.T.A.s. One means of support is a weekly
individual meeting with an assigned program mentor. G.S.T.A.s are required to submit evaluated papers for review as part of these meetings. Mentors ensure M.W.P. standards and provide suggestions about the type and subject of the comments. JL commented on one of these meetings, saying,

I had an hour session with [Sam] where we went over some of the final drafts together and that helped me understand a bit better what the university or the department is wanting from us in terms of our evaluations. I mean, [Sam] kind of helped me set the standard of what is or isn’t a passing paper. (personal communication, November 4, 2008)

JL also stated that at times he would “cut and paste what [Sam] said about people’s papers right into [students’] papers” (personal communication, December 26, 2008). With this type of interaction I hoped to see how JL’s commenting practices changed over the course of the term and triangulate those changes with those I found in the observations and interviews.

**Other Participants**

JL was not the only person in the M.W.P. system connected to the impact of the programmatic standardized assessment practices. As noted already, there were three program mentors, myself included, and twenty other new M.W.P. G.S.T.A.s, a majority of whom were also novice instructors. Thus I sought to account for the experiences of the other G.S.T.A.s by interviewing their mentors.

G.S.T.A. interaction with mentors is an important part of M.W.P. enculturation. I did not observe JL’s interaction with his mentor; however, because of time constraints and the sensitive nature of some mentor/G.S.T.A. meetings. Program mentor interviews
took place at the beginning and end of the term. Thus changes in their perceptions were
evident and the general interaction with G.S.T.A.s could be discussed. These interviews
provided insights regarding the mentors’ feelings toward M.W.P. assessment practices,
their interactions with all of the G.S.T.A.s, and the reactions of the other G.S.T.A.s. Thus
I addressed more general perceptions of G.S.T.A. interaction with the assessment
practices.

A clear example of the commonality of JL’s reactions with other incoming
G.S.T.A.s came via an interview with Jim, an M.W.P. program mentor. Though not JL’s
mentor, Jim acknowledged that M.W.P. assessment practices do have an effect on all of
the G.S.T.A.s. He noticed early on that “there’s a friction between [program/mentor
instruction] and their own instincts about what they feel they need to be commenting on”
(personal communication, December 18, 2008) Jim also noted a general change in
perception regarding the program rubric. Many of the G.S.T.A.s find the rubric less
useful as the term progresses.

**Coding and Analysis**

My interpretation of the data relies heavily on grounded theory as outlined by
Strauss and Corbin (1998) in *Basics of Qualitative Research*. Throughout the
observations and transcription process I noted possible patterns as part of open coding.
Also, based on the advice of Karen Rowan (2009), I created sets of summaries for each
interview and observation that allowed axial and selective coding with the help of the
Center for Disease Control’s program AnSWR.² I used AnSWR’s memo function to link
an analysis log directly to the data to aid in reflection.

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² AnSWR can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/software/answr/index.htm
The natural divisions in the data sets allowed for important means for incident-to-incident and categorical comparisons. The novice instructor interviews provided the first means of incident-to-incident comparisons, as did the classroom observations and the evaluated paper sets. Incident-to-incident comparisons were also conducted between the separate mentor interviews. With all of these comparisons in place, more general patterns from the separate data sets emerged. The general findings were also grounded in writing assessment theory, such as the work of Bob Broad (2003), Durst, Schultz, and Roemer (1994), and Moore, O’Neill, and Huot (2009) as seen in the discussions and implications. I shared the data analyses with JL to ensure accuracy and his comfort his portrayal.

Research is an important part of academic and scholarly engagement, but it is complex, particularly when dealing with issues of literacy and the teaching and assessment of writing. This is a field where the experimentation and research reflects and affects the lives of people with goals and dreams of their own. As with writing assessment practices, my research methods and methodologies were chosen with concern for the people involved. The questions I ask and the manner in which I sought the answers were not innocent nor did they only affect the researcher. In Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The Place and People,” you will come to meet these participants. Their willingness to give of their time and experience was by no means insignificant.

**My Methodologies**

Writing assessment often involves a complicated mix of people, situations, beliefs, and goals, both in and beyond the assessment. White (1996) discusses the many different positions of stakeholders from testing organizations, political organizations,
administrators, teachers, and students, writing that “each group sees itself not as one among a variety of interested parties but as sole guardian of truth” (p. 10). He later writes that stakeholders see writing assessment only from their positions as “they cannot shift their position without sacrificing what they are and do” (p. 23).

Writing assessment can fulfill many different needs for many different people. For teachers it can be part of career advancement or risk to job security. For administrators it can show a program is successful, provide data for budgetary discussions, or show need for change. Students may see writing assessment as helping communication, a means of maintaining a G.P.A., or proof of a necessary ability for future employment. Even businesses have been known to make requests connected to writing assessment and what students know when they graduate.

Writing assessment scholarship comes from many different perspectives as is evident in Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain Unfold: A Literature Review.” Many of the conversations regarding standardized assessment practices connect to reliability, validity, and continuity. Some scholars argue that standardized methods of assessment don’t account for individual beliefs and agency and there are different ways of addressing rhetorical situations and exigencies that are involved in the writing process. Individual agency can easily go beyond a standardized list of criteria and may even resist standards in order to relay an important, effective, and identity-based message. Empowered choices are what many writing teachers seek. Furthermore, standardized writing assessment practices have been criticized for their summative nature. Because of their generalized nature, they do not fit with the specific traits of a specific paper and do not provide the formative advice and guidance that students need.
Critics of standardized assessment often point to the idea that standardized writing assessment practices do not account for the complexity of the classroom and institution. The methods and methodologies that I used show the biases and perspectives I bring to these discussions. As a researcher, I feel I cannot use methods and methodologies that share the same positivist principles I, at times, resist. The methodologies I chose emphasize and value the complex situations and agency of the people involved, primarily for JL, the novice instructor.

Writing assessment enters the educational situation at a somewhat vulnerable point, where the values, decisions, and identity of the writer are on display for critique by an outside party. The assessment of writing affects and effects people and systems of belief. My methods and methodologies reflect the complexity of the situation as a project connected to the ethics of assessment, and new understandings of its effects cannot separate itself from discussions of values and context.

Traditional reliability standards and empirical research methodologies require a separation from context in order to sanitize the process enabling objective results. However, writing assessment scholars such as Bob Broad (2003) have challenged decontextualization as showing only part of the situation. This perspective is similar to positions held by feminist scholars for as women’s studies scholar Renate Duelli Klein (1983) articulates, “methods which are ‘context-stripping’, unconscious of inherent masculinist biases, and which rely on sexist ‘feminine/masculine’ gender stereotypes are not suited for research on how women (and men!) in today’s society come into being, come in to holding the views they hold” (p. 93). Using feminist principles and a cultural-historic activity theory allows discussion of context, values, communities, and situations.
This way of seeing brings to the forefront histories and realities rather than hiding them within the research process. JL’s history played a role in his approach to writing assessment and also in how he worked with M.W.P. policies. Similarly, the M.W.P. writing assessment practices have a forty-year evolution that connects to an even greater history of writing assessment. The value of history influenced my research questions as they work with the values and enculturation encouraged through M.W.P. assessment procedures.

These methodologies come together in the qualitative methods that rely on the situated experiences and perspectives of the participants. This mix creates a deep map with its important metaphorical meanings. Sociologists Marjorie L. DeVault and Glenda Gross (2007) write, “Mapping is fundamental to any project seeking to explicate relationships among groups, histories, and contexts. As a methodological tool, it brings the social (i.e., historicity, activity, and agency) back to the knowledge we produce” (p. 191). Maps can create discussions or, as Charles Bazerman (1997) writes, provide “escape routes” (p. 306) that show “a way into some things and a way out of others” (Heat–Moon, 1999, p. 269).

The deep map metaphor is important to this study as it values the people, experiences, histories, rules, and roles of the people involved. This deep map, though, merely represents the events, knowledges, and lives of those involved. This interaction is complex and reflects my perspectives as a researcher. Still, the mix of feminist principles and activity theory, as is seen in Table 5, addresses some of the issues and problems observed by Sprague (2005) in positivistic research.
Problems | Mediating Methodological Principles
--- | ---
Positivism | Feminism | Activity Theory
Logical Dichotomies | Both feminism and activity theory seek to overtly address the socially constructed rules and complicated situations adding layers and complicating what may appear to be a singular event or dichotomy
Abstract Individualism | Both feminism and activity theory acknowledge and emphasize that people act within communities and are affected by the rules, roles, and perspectives of that community
Objectification | Both feminism and activity theory value empower people in context resisting in positive ways; however, feminism also adds specific attention to the ethics of researcher/participant relationships
Male Perspectives As Default | Both feminism and activity theory acknowledge that perspectives are varied, not just male; however, feminism builds this into the epistemology whereas activity theory does not overtly address this issue

Table 5. Problems and Solutions

**Feminist Principles**

Though I didn’t know it, my upbringing was, to say the least, compatible with feminist beliefs. Likewise, my formal education, interactions with my partner and her feminist perspectives, interactions with the people in my educational programs, and my continued exploration into feminist beliefs, practices, and methodologies, furthered my feminist beliefs. This is an influence that I do not and cannot keep separate from my research. However, I cannot claim in the strictest sense that this is a feminist project as gender is not a central concern for this study.

Gesa Kirsch (2007) and other important feminist scholars note that feminist projects start with gender and the experiences of women. However Roxanne Mountford (1996) argues that gender is a part of every research project and cannot help but play a role in the research process. This dissertation does not overtly focus on gender and the experiences women in part because of the volunteers and in part because, as a researcher
and scholar, I am still coming to terms with my white, middle-class, heterosexual male way of seeing. I could draw on feminist principles without overtly claiming a connection, but just as evaluation specialist Sharon Brisolara and health sciences scholar Denise Seigart (2007) write,

"calling an evaluation a ‘feminist evaluation’ is a political act, one hopefully taken with intentionality and knowledge. However, the primary elements of feminist evaluation can be manifest in a design without attaching the feminist label.” What is important to consider, [Patton] suggests, is what may be gained and what may be lost in the naming or not naming. (p. 290)

I claim this tie as a “political act [. . .] taken with intentionality and knowledge” in order to clarify this piece of my identity, to make overt and acceptable the compassion I have for the participants and topic, and to add another voice showing the value of feminist methodologies to the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Likewise, I have designed a study built on feminist principles regarding positionality, reflexivity, the belief that the participants are people and should be treated as such, the foregrounding of ethical decisions and practices, and reciprocity.

Feminist perspectives and research methodologies are not new to the field of Composition and Rhetoric, as seen in the important work of scholars such as Ellen Cushman (1996), Cheryl Glenn (1997), and Patricia Bizzell (2000). They fit well with this project in many ways, but one key area of alignment is in their acknowledgment of the situated nature and discussion of the effects of social practice on the identities of individuals. Similar to Toulmin’s (2006) discussion of the interaction of the social and self in common knowledge, Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) write, “A feminist
epistemology questions the proposition that the social world is one fixed reality that is external to individual consciousness and suggests that it is socially constructed, consisting of multiple perspectives and realities” (p. 497). This is particularly relevant to discussions of writing assessment as the “rules” and contexts for writing assessment must balance the individual and social. Furthermore, an investigation such as this, which looks at the effects of assessment practices, cannot claim that the effects illuminated will be the same for all composition classrooms or programs.

The use of feminist methodologies in conjunction with grounded theory is also well established. Sociologist and health scientist Adele E. Clarke (2007) argues that grounded theory is “implicitly feminist,” but feminist practices add an important layer to traditional grounded theory (p. 349). Clarke (2007) expands upon grounded theory through what she terms “situational analysis,” which makes use of three particular kinds of maps—situational maps, social world/arenas map, and positional maps (p. 353). The situational analysis map is very similar to the activity theory diagram discussed later and seen in Figure 7. The social worlds/arenas map provides a visual representation of some of the chronotopic and historical layers that come together in a particular study as seen in Figure 9. The feminist principles regarding positionality, reflexivity, and respect for the participants also add to this study’s design in other important ways as seen in Table 6.

**Representation of Researcher**

Feminist standpoint theorists, such as Harding (1987) and Haraway (1988), and activity theorists, such as Nardi (2005), have argued that positivistic, empirical studies are not as objective as they appear. Research questions and methodologies are value laden and come with engrained points of view that limit what is asked and who can ask it.
In the intent of creating an objective position, the values and processes are hidden. This process can lead to hidden biases, such as an androcentric research and an invisible presentation of a singular Truth that Haraway (1998) calls the “god-trick” (p. 581). The same pursuit of a value-free appearance plays a role in traditional and standardized assessment practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Some Feminist Influences on Study Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>This has primarily an epistemological effect that influences the participant selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating “Knower”</td>
<td>The commonplace books help place me as a researcher I have worked to maintain an open discussion of my experiences and perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Researcher and Standpoint</td>
<td>The participants are people with whom I live, work, and play Multiple interviews were conducted to allow the revision of beliefs over time The transcripts have been shared with the participants to allow for revised perspectives and thoughts The representations of the data have also been shared with the participants for feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Encouraged via the memo process during data collection and interpretation Done through a reflexivity sampling journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans Not Subjects and Ethics</td>
<td>A double journal of interpretation practices has been created with the primary participant, the novice instructor, to support his interest in ethnography The findings and suggestions have been provided with the director of the program in order to help with the development of future instructors and program practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Feminist Principles and Study Design

Research and writing assessment are carried out by people—a fact that should not be ignored. Educational and qualitative research scholar Judith Preissle (2007) argues that the understanding of the researcher is crucial in understanding the purpose of a study (p. 522). To help in this process, Harding (1987) calls for “the researcher [to appear] to us
not as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests” (p. 9). The researcher exists in a time and place and has been enculturated into a disciplinary perspective but will also have a past that influences the manner in which questions are generated and data is interpreted.

Feminist standpoint methodologies call for a more accurate representation of the researcher in the project itself. Brisolara and Seigart (2007) write, “There can be no, and it is not desirable that there be any, dispassionate research; individuals approach research questions with particular interests in the questions, people, or issues involved” (p. 285). In the spirit of standpoint theory and feminist principles, I tried to remain open throughout this study. Thus, in the Introduction, I provided experiences that created my situated perspective. It is for this reason that I provided the commonplace books that present some of the academic and nonacademic influences that are a part of my internal/external balance.

**Reflexivity**

Brenda Jo Brueggemann (1996) is just one of the scholars who has discussed the difficulty of managing the internal/external and insider/outsider positioning of the researcher. As Heat-Moon (1999) aptly states, “it’s easier to comprehend where some place else is than where you are” (p. 105). The internal/external balance does affect the researcher and often in ways that are not easy for the researcher to see. Feminist research practices call for active reflection throughout the research process from the creation of guiding questions to the interaction with participants along with data interpretation and analysis (Naples, 2003, p. 41; Hesse-Biber, 2007, pp. 16-17). This includes paying attention to, reflecting upon, and valuing the tensions that are part of the research project.
For as argued by activity theorist Jayson Seaman (2008) “these tensions—moments of confusion, hesitation, ambiguity, doubt, or insight—represent key analytic events” (p. 12). Grounded theory encourages this type of reflection through the memos that are used during the analysis of data, but many feminist research scholars call for deeper, more sustained reflection. This act needs to be one of both self-reflection and communal reflection to gain a deeper understanding of one’s personal actions and influence on the project as well as the greater community’s influence on the project (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p. 496).

Throughout the project, including the early stages of research question development, reflection and different methods of documenting my thoughts were a part of the research process, though, admittedly, there were points of deeper reflection and journaling than others. The act of reflection was encouraged early on via some of the people who would in time be on my dissertation committee and those helping me work out my thoughts about writing assessment as well as the manner in which my experiences influenced the development of this project and others. Thus my community has influenced the project in a circular way by encouraging my development while helping me keep track of their involvement in my decision processes. To help, I maintained what Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) call “reflexivity sampling” (p. 509) throughout the process. They suggest that a journal that is kept separate from both the notes and research journal. I balanced this with a research journal as that suggested by grounded theory. The AnSWR analysis software’s memo function was linked to the specific memos with the analysis and coding itself.
Participants As People and Ethical Concerns

Like reflexivity, the concern for ethics needs to be a part of all aspects of the research design, data collections, interaction with participants, and reporting (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 17). As Sprague (2005) notes, traditional empirical research has been known to objectify participants. However, she warns that qualitative research also has this ability (p. 136). Basically, in a colonizing practice, the researcher appropriates the experiences of the observed to do with as he/she pleases, and the researcher’s representation of the subject becomes that person (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007, p. 498), in processes similar to those described by Mehan (2003). This is a point realized when Ann Blakeslee, Caroline Cole, and Theresa Conefrey (1996), among others, clearly articulate that researchers need to be wary of how they use the data and voices provided by participants (p. 136). For this reason the ethical practices that play an important role in feminist research methodologies take on major significance—a fact that has become more important in research in Composition and Rhetoric (Kirsch, 2003, p. 138).

The participants are not just subjects; they are people that deserve respect. In a call that resembles Huot’s (2002) desire for a sense of responsibility rather than a sense of accountability in writing assessment (p. 66), Priessle (2007) draws upon Nel Noddings’ ethics of care in her discussion of research practices (p. 518). Noddings writes that to do the right thing because it is “the right thing to do” lacks an important component—empathy. Basically, care should not be a societal requirement but rather a personal desire driven by empathy and compassion for others (Priessle, 2007, pp. 519-520). While research has been governed by a set of ethical principles enforced by internal review boards and human subject research boards for decades, a process through which
this project has undergone (please see Appendices for the submitted HSRB materials), the ethics of care moves beyond the social requirements. An ethical concern and treatment of participants then needs to be a conscious effort throughout the research process.

During the data collection stages there were several ethical issues that I overtly addressed. Sprague (2005) provides considerations that were a part of the interview protocol for this study, particularly in the representation of participants. Part of the ethical representation processes of participants, Sprague (2005) argues, is remembering that people’s perceptions and beliefs change over time. Thus, as the participant becomes fictionalized and represented by the researcher, care should be taken to account for these changes. One such method is interviewing participants more than once and at different intervals to allow them to change their perceptions (p. 134). For this study, participants were interviewed at the beginning and the end of the term. JL was also interviewed after using the program rubric for the first time. I also accounted for differences in JL’s beliefs by providing him interview transcripts so that he could note places where his perceptions changed. When he did so, which wasn’t often, I accommodated him.

There were also ethical considerations that needed to be made for the interview process to minimize the separation between myself and the participants and to care for JL’s needs. I tried to be cognizant, as DeVault and Gross (2007) point out, that the positions are not and cannot be truly equal as the research process itself is built on unequal relationships (p. 191). Therefore, as Helen Dale (1996) reminds researchers, care must be maintained because of the intimate nature of qualitative research (p. 92). There is debate among scholars regarding the level of separation that should be present between
the researcher and the participant. For instance, there are several perspectives regarding the amount of information the researcher should reveal about their positions to the participants. Within this study, the participants were people with whom I worked, as I too was a part of the M.W.P. community. Sprague (2005) notes, though, that a relationship of this nature can cause problems as the participants may feel too comfortable, allowing them to reveal sensitive information that they don’t really want known (p. 140). I kept all information that JL asked to be excluded out of the transcripts and study.

The issue of separation also connects to the researcher’s attitude toward participants, how much a researcher reveals, and whether the researcher should answer the questions asked by the participants during interviews (Sprague, 2005, p. 134). As a researcher, I believe it is important to be truthful with participants. Part of this belief means answering their questions honestly. Also, the level of relationship can cause worries about the truthfulness of the answers provided. In particular, some scholars worry that the participant will provide what they think is the correct answer or the answer that the researcher is hoping to hear. Renate Duelli Klein (1983) argues that the need to provide the correct answer should be analyzed as part of the situation (p. 91). This is a consideration that was important to this study as JL did, in fact, make comments like, “I am guessing this won’t help with your diss,” or “I know what you want me to say is” In the end, there are no clean answers to how these issues should be handled. There are things I would do differently and opportunities I missed, but by keeping the lines of communication open with the participants and providing transcripts and representations, I tried to make decisions that hinged on respect and the ethic of care for the participants.

Beyond consideration of the relationship between the researcher and participant
are ethical concerns for the risk and physical needs of the participants. Thomas Newkirk (1996) noted the risk/reward balance is often framed in a way that the participants take on the risk and the researcher reaps the rewards (p. 8). The participants are indeed giving of themselves. That gift, and the risk associated with it, needs to be dealt with appropriately. Kirsch and Ritchie (2003/1995) write that feminist researchers should “question their motives in gathering, selecting, and presenting those stories” (p. 145). DeVault and Gross (2007) also point out that the researcher should consider the need for the desired information and whether that information is available through sources that don’t involve the participants (p. 188). When interviewing is necessary, I believe it is important that the interview occur in a place where the participant is comfortable and the risk is minimal. For this study, interviews were conducted in places chosen by the participants, generally outside of the M.W.P. offices.

Another aspect of the ethical treatment of participants briefly discussed earlier is the consideration of how participants are represented in the reporting stages of the project. Bonnie Sunstein (1996) reminds readers that representation is rhetorical, and while this cannot be avoided, researchers should handle the manner of representation in a responsible manner (p. 189). In the end, it is still the researcher that is interpreting and making decisions about what should and should not be included in what is written about the project but scholars argue for greater inclusion of the words of the participants (Sprague, 2005, pp. 167-68; Kirsch & Ritchie, 2003/1995, p. 145). Other scholars encourage researchers to show the representations to the participants in order to gain their feedback and perspective on how they are represented (Newkirk, 1996, pp. 13-14; Priessle, 2007, p. 527). This was the process I used in this study. I provided JL with the
representations of his views and experiences and invited him to respond to those representations. Generally he was pleased, but when differences arose, I defaulted to his interpretation.

**Reciprocity**

Perhaps one of the most important ways that an ethic of care can be a part of a study is through the desire to give something back to those that have given to the research process. Within feminist methodologies, the idea of reciprocity is a very valued concept. Ellen Cushman (1996), for instance, provides an important discussion of reciprocity in “The Rhetorician As an Agent of Social Change.” For my study, several methods have been employed, some more formal and others built around the pre-existing relationships. For instance, following Sunstein’s (2009) suggestion, I kept a double-journal between myself and JL to support his interest in ethnography. We also had candid discussions about my decisions. In this manner JL was able to ask questions regarding my process in preparation for his own ethnographic project. Similarly, implications are provided for M.W.P. as well as for writing assessment theory and practice. With the dual roles I played of researcher and community member, reciprocity meant more than merely satisfying a requirement. For this study it meant treating the people with whom I interacted before and during the study with care and respect, for my relationships with many of the participants continued long after the term.

The principles and issues involved with feminist methodologies are extremely important, particularly when set against the history of traditional, positivistic research. While it is true that this study is not a feminist study in the strictest sense, the impacts of feminist ideology are extensive. My desire to maintain open and ethical relationships
with the participants is an important step in not doing the damage that has been done in the past. Similarly, the inclusion of my bias and perspectives as the researcher can help readers make informed use of the historically situated outcomes of this study. Meanwhile, the reflexivity provides an important means of making strong decisions and accounting for that bias. These principles blend well with and add an important piece to the perspectives of activity theory, which also played an important role in the design, data collection, and interpretation of the data.

**Activity Theory**

Feminist scholars DeVault and Gross (2007) write, “Power is multifaceted and complex; therefore, if our aim is to understand how power works, we need to make a concerted effort to map the relations among people’s activities, experiences, struggles, histories, and broader geopolitical and economic systems” (p. 191). They also call for information to be placed in its historical context while emphasizing that the participants being interviewed are agents actively adapting to their situations (p. 188). Activity theory echoes feminist scholars in each of these perspectives. It is a way of seeing that looks to the past, the people, and their active role in shaping the present.

**The Components of Activity Theory**

Activity theory maps the interactions of people and objects in activity systems. Scholars have noted its usefulness in discussions of education and educational practices (Spinuzzi, 2008, p. 93). David Russell (1997) defines activity systems as “any ongoing, object-directed, historically conditioned, dialectically structured, tool-mediated human interaction” (p. 510). Vygotsky’s first-generation activity theory focused on an object-oriented system that centers around the relationship between subjects, artifacts, and
objects represented in the upper portions of the triangle in Figure 7. These components are discussed as they come together and lead to outcomes that may or may not be intended.

Leont’nev’s second-generation activity theory complicates activity by adding more social structures to the mix. In second-generation activity theory, as discussed by Leont’nev and emphasized by Engeström, rules, community, and division of labor add another layer of influence to the system (Engeström & Miettinen, 2006, p. 9). The relationships among the three components seen in the lower portions found in Figure 7 in conjunction with the original components are mapped over time to see how each component changes and is changed by the others as seen in Chapter 5, “Drawing the Map: An Activity theory Analysis.”

Because of these components, activity theory is a means of understanding human activity that accounts for the many different relationships and perspectives affecting
why and how a person or group works together. This interaction can effectively contribute to a deep map of writing assessment. In an activity system, the participants (often termed as subjects) are the people whose actions are being discussed, but they are recognized as part of a larger group. It is within this group that activities can be situated. In other words, people act and react to the world and people around them. The decisions people make will be influenced by the situation(s) in which they find themselves and will in turn influence those situations.

**Mediation**

The participants interact with the artifact(s), which mediate the action and are understood through their interaction with the participants and the object (Kaptelinin, 1996, p. 46). The artifact being discussed can be a physical artifact or ideological premise (Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 38), such as the M.W.P. rubric and portfolio, which actually have both physical and ideological presences in the classroom and program-level systems. The key aspect of the artifact, though, is that it takes on a mediational role which shapes the actions and even psychology of the participants and in the end influences the object and outcomes of the system (Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 38). The artifact becomes part of the way of seeing while also shaping it.

The use of a specific tool or genre will carry forward what is valued through its form and function. Spinuzzi (2003), drawing from Morson and Emerson, writes that “Genres are not discrete artifacts but traditions of producing, using, interpreting artifacts, traditions that make their way into the artifact as a ‘form shaping ideology’” (p. 41). The M.W.P. writing assessment practices are a strong example. They are tangible traditions that shape the writing in multiple ways. For example, the portfolio exchange dictates that
products be paper based, the rubric helps define good writing, and the lore of portfolio evaluator expectations based on the rubric and program standards influence the rhetorical practices of the students.

The genre can become a sustained artifact within the system so people don’t have to “reinvent the wheel,” a phrase which JL used when referring to his use of the M.W.P. rubric (personal communication, September 4, 2008). Consistent use then reaffirms the values within the genre (Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 115). The genre begins to mediate the cycles of acts and operations within the system. Basically, after a paper is written, the rubric and its values are used to evaluate the paper, thus shaping the type of writing done in future papers. This can also work to aid the forgetfulness as the history is packed away in its blackbox.

In the case of the M.W.P., students write papers and instructors evaluate papers knowing that those papers will be read by others at the end of the term to determine whether or not students pass the course. The end-of-term process then becomes a distinct meditational factor around which the cycle is built. Thus the genre becomes a product and mediator of sustained activity in the manner described by Spinuzzi (2003, p. 115). Official genres are known to resist change, which can create a subversive push for local innovation, empowerment, and solutions (p. 118). A genre of the past can be used to solve current problems (such as the evaluation of writing); however, the solutions of the past won’t necessarily match the exigencies of the present. This creates a double bind (p. 117). The classroom decisions surrounding the writing assessment practices, in this case, are where double binds become visible.
The Object

The object of an activity system is the problem space or raw materials. Basically, as Engeström (2006b) discusses, this is the direction in which the activity is oriented and determines the “horizon of possible actions.” It is not the goal or goals of the subjects (p. 381). Basically, goals tend to be connected with the actions that build toward an object. An example in the case of the writing classroom and assessment is found in the goals of students, instructors, administrators, and the program, all of which might include showing improvement in the writing of students. However, the object of the students might be movement toward future careers whereas the object for instructors and administrators could be seen as their current careers. The object of the program may be continued involvement in the university system. This is useful to the study of writing assessment and particularly study of the effects of a common tool used within a program and among instructors and students within the greater community.

While the goal is not the object, it is part of achieving the object since it affects motivation for system participation. The object is greater, constantly evolving, and often exists beyond the participants themselves. The various motivations help illustrate the differences in the various stakeholders. Students may see the writing and its assessment as an action that has a definite beginning and end. In other words, it is something that needs to be done in order to get graduation and future success. Instructors and administrators can see assessment as both an action and part of their greater object. Thus, though these groups of people are connected, they are in fact headed in different directions which can lead to tensions.
With such differences in motivation, the object becomes the defining boundary of the system itself. Human activity, not the conditions, becomes the shell of interaction—the context (Nardi, 1996, p. 76). In other words, the human interaction takes the forefront over other conditions or situations that could be seen as boundaries through other forms of analysis of system-level interaction. The researcher, then, becomes the driving agent, or perhaps more fittingly the decisive agent, as the researcher clarifies the boundaries of the system (Nardi, 1996, p. 82). The researcher starts by defining the object and moves inward, thus placing focus on what the researcher deems to be significant and unifying. This rhetorical act is couched in what is observable and objective. Thus, the reflection provided via feminist principles helps make those decisions in an ethical and meaningful way as the researcher interrogates her or his definitions.

**Agency and Activity Theory**

The use of activity theory as a guiding methodology allows for a strong focus on development and the agency of JL in reaction to a greater M.W.P. system. Kuutti (1996) argues,

> The flexibility of basic concepts makes them useful in describing developmental processes. On the other hand, it also means that it is impossible to make a general classification of what activity is, what an action is, and so forth because the definition is totally dependent on what the subject or object in a particular real situation is. (p. 32)

This focus on the situation provided through activity theory is important; however, this openness comes with specific needs. Activity theory does allow for shifting of community (physical or ideological) depending upon the researcher’s definition of the
system when the initial blurriness based on the definition provided serves as a beneficial aspect of activity theory. However, the flexibility can also be cumbersome. Feminist methodologies help as activity theory needs the reflexivity on the part of the researcher who is defining the boundaries not only to specify insider/outsider status but also to be sure to understand the role she or he plays in this form of situated knowledge.

**Networks of Activity Systems**

Neither people nor activity systems exist singularly. People are involved in a number of different systems, and every system is connected to and surrounded by many other systems. The way in which activity systems interact is through networks. Paul Prior (1998) and later Prior and Jodi Shipka (2003) have discussed the concept of laminated chronotopes. This idea pertains to the layers of activity systems that come together in a person or act. The concept of networks is addressed by Spinuzzi (2008) as well, but he writes that activity systems overlap, are chained, or come together through “polycontextuality” and “boundary crossing” (p. 79).

Through laminated chronotopes, systems interact via people and proximity. Basically, the multiple systems in which different participants are members are connected by those participants. Overlapping systems are much like laminated chronotopes but through the connections of objects. This layering is a splicing of systems in which systems come to the same object but through different paths. Spinuzzi (2008) also notes that the objects will be viewed in different manners (p. 77), as in the case of writing assessment and different stakeholders.

Chained activity systems come primarily from the evolution of systems. Spinuzzi (2008) writes that as an activity becomes more complex, a system may naturally diverge
and separate into separate distinct systems. Meanwhile, polycontextuality and boundary
crossing come from participants within a system. Polycontextuality refers to the multiple
systems in which a single person is involved and boundary crossing refers to the
transference that occurs when that person switches from a one system to the next and
brings with her or him the experiences that then affect both systems (p. 79). Each of these
interactions plays a role in the interaction of this study, particularly through JL’s
simultaneous interaction in his academic and M.W.P. system.

Acts, Operations, and Hierarchical Levels

Though the system is the primary means of focus, objects and system-level
interaction are built on act(ion)s. In other words, activity theory views human actions
based on a specific hierarchy: activity, acts, and operations. An act is a specific action
that has a beginning and an end. Using a rubric to evaluate a single paper is an act as it
has a distinct time frame. With early iterations of the act, very conscious choices are
made. Instructors in the M.W.P. must actively think about the criteria in the rubric
categories. With internalization the act becomes an operation. This is when the
participant no longer has to consciously think about the use of the mediating tool.
However, a change in conditions can quickly make an operation become an act again.
The artifact then simultaneously represents and maintains the activity (Spinuzzi, 2003, p.
39). Once operationalized, the act can affect the object, becoming a goal of sorts, such as
a rubric being used for the sake of the rubric.

Clay Spinuzzi (2003) takes the hierarchy of acts and operations and addresses
analysis and data collection through three levels of analysis: macroscopic, mesoscopic,
and microscopic (p. 30). These layers serve to deepen the map. The macroscopic view is
aligned with the activity itself, such as teaching and learning in the classroom. The mesoscopic view focuses on the action with its specific endpoints and goals and is more removed. The microscopic view focuses in the operationalized, which is affected by the conditions themselves. Thus, methods of data collection and analysis for this study addressed these levels as a contradiction on one level will affect the other levels as seen in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Macroscopic</td>
<td>System history Interviews with Administration and Program Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Find patterns across the system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts</td>
<td>Mesoscopic</td>
<td>Interviews with the Novice Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Find goals and motivations behind classroom operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Microscopic</td>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Find classroom patterns</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Activity Theory Hierarchy and Data Collection

As these levels are analyzed, specific contradictions become apparent. These contradictions interrupt the smooth lines of activity and are a natural byproduct of human interaction. The writing classroom is by no means immune to these sorts of contradictions, as Tom Deans (2006) argues. Drawing from Peter Elbow, Deans notes that there are inherent contradictions regarding classroom writing assessment due to the conflicting roles of advocate and judge (p. 300).

In activity theory, there are four levels of contradiction: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary. A primary contradiction, the type to which Deans refers, is an immediate contradiction in daily activities. This would occur at the microscopic level,
generally breaking down an operation or keeping an act from becoming operationalized by forcing conscious decisions, such as ethical dilemmas or disagreement between the instructor’s values and those of the program’s rubric. A secondary contradiction is a contradiction between elements due to outside influence. A tertiary contradiction is a contradiction when a more advanced object is introduced and resisted, such as in the case of outside assessment practices imposed on class activities. Finally, a quaternary contradiction is in the interaction activity systems, such as when the object is transplanted from another system (The Activity System, 2004).

In the activity theory analysis for this study the classroom is viewed as separate from but connected to the program. Thus an understanding of the different types of contradictions plays a role in the different systems being addressed. With the interaction of the systems, the number and types of contradictions become greater and more complex. This is complicated further by the myriad of systems in which the novice instructor is involved, such as academic programs, family, and community, and the rules and roles played in those systems as will be discussed in the introduction to the participants in the following chapter.

Understanding the contradictions within the levels of the system is important to understand the pressures and positive acts of resistance as well as the effects of those acts with the systems being analyzed. Understanding the contradictions also provides context for the sense of agency and urgency that is a part of writing assessment. Activity systems, like genres, are only temporarily stable (Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 62). The system-level interactions flow back and forth through the levels in several ways creating contradictions at the macroscopic level, discoordination at the mesoscopic level, and breakdowns at the
microscopic level. A disruption at any level will lead to disruptions and destabilizations at other levels and among interacting systems (p. 50). Breakdowns regarding artifacts result in the shift of an internalized act reverting to a conscious operation (p. 145). Within the M.W.P. assessment practices, which seek the internalization of the rubric criteria, the common contradiction results in the conscious effort and decisions regarding the assessment processes such as the one noted by Deans (2006). The reaction to these discoordinations and contradictions then becomes important, as JL actively seeks balance between acceptance and resistance.

The concept of resistance serves another important aspect within activity theory. Judith Diamondstone (2002) considers the importance of resistance within the classroom. She, like Deans, notes that if everything is fine, there is no change, but disconnects result in acts of resistance, making resistance a powerful and productive force (p. 10). Bonnie Litowitz (2001) also addresses issues of resistance as a positive force in that it is a part of identity formation that allows a novice to break away from those whom she or he respects. As Diamondstone (2002) and Litowitz (2001) note among children and students, resistance is a way to achieve individuality and for teachers to recognize students needs. With the study of programmatic writing assessment practices, it is important to expand this notion to the greater system as well as to look at how the instructor takes on an individual role through resistance of structured assessment practices. As Mary Smith (1991) notes in primary and secondary education, teachers can choose to go along with the assessment practices or resist them; however, with resistance comes consequences.
Motivation and Enculturation

Like systems, interaction among the participants, artifacts, and objects does not occur in a social vacuum. Rather, the events are shaped by social forces in particular the written and unwritten rules of conduct, the other people involved in the community with the influence of their other systems, and how the labor is divided, including the system’s hierarchical structure, if one exists (Kain and Wardle, 2005). The relationship between individuals and societal rules becomes even more important with the discussion of motives that connects to the individual’s level of participation. This then affects how the participant addresses contradictions—does the participant accept the contradiction and move on or is the participant invested enough to actively seek to change the system.

Three levels of participation are found in the classroom: “passing,” or doing just what is required to get by; “procedural display,” in which the student understands the roles and understands them as a means to an end rather then the end in itself; and “deep participation,” which “opens the path toward full participation” and “increases opportunities to assume privileged roles in the community” (Prior, 1998, pp. 101-103). While this is by no means a static designation, the level of participation is important to the degree to which a person will be affected by the practices of the chosen community. The level of participation discussed by Prior (1998) factors greatly into the balance of internalization and resistance that comes with the use of the value-laden artifacts. With the balance of motivation and participation, there will be resistance. Reijo Miettinen (2005) notes that with discontent there is a need, which translates to real motivation (p. 56).
Similarly, students will choose their level of participation, which affects and is affected by the writing assessment practices. Though using an actor-network theory approach\(^3\), Habib and Wittek (2007) use Wertsch to discuss mastery and appropriation in connection to portfolio assessment showing that students will write to the portfolio standards showing a mastery of the desired writing skills, rather than appropriating the skills. Appropriation brings the ability to manipulate the writing skills in other rhetorical situations.

For this study the level of participation can also be extended to the instructors using the writing assessment and interacting with the pedagogical practices of a given program, especially when participants are in a more transitory role, such as G.S.T.A.s. A person’s motives will affect the degree to which a she or he is invested in the goal (Miettinen, 2005, p. 65). In a situation involving norming and the use of prescribed positions and values, the level of acceptance of those practices and values can affect the instructor for years to come. How the person addresses the rules of the community and accept the roles created in the division of labor as well as the degree to which that person goes through a psychological change based on the meditational artifact will be affected by the person’s level of participation.

Issues of motivation and acceptance such as those discussed may or may not be overt. The use of an artifact for assessment purposes, such as the rubric and end-of-term portfolio system, is not just a surface-level issue. As systems are social in nature, each system will be built upon and influenced by previous systems (Engeström, 2003, p. 68).

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\(^3\) Engeström and Escalante (1996) point out that activity theory works on an asymmetrical relationship between humans and artifacts rather than a symmetrical relationship as is found in actor-network-theory (p. 339). This perspective keeps nonhuman entities from acting on the system. Instead, humans make decisions regarding nonhuman entities in order to construct the use of the artifact.
Activity theory works to account for the different influences and structures that are at work within the activity leading to a possible goal and the actual outcome of the activity, which in this case are the beliefs and ideas embedded within the M.W.P. assessment practices. The rubric being a scoring guide to assist in holistic scoring of student writing connects to the social history of writing assessment, which is partially detailed in the literature review found in the next chapter. The reason that this can occur is that assessment tools and processes are value laden. Susanne Bødker (1997) shows that “artifacts crystallize knowledge” (p. 150). A rubric, even when localized, will serve as both an ideological and physical artifact that crystallizes knowledge, values, and positions of the system in which it is exists.

Since the artifact crystallizes and carries forward the values of the system, the historical context of the activity becomes very important. As discussed by standpoint theorist and feminist methodologies, the participant, like the researcher, is influenced by her or his own culture and history. In this case, JL does not exist only as an instructor for M.W.P.; rather, his identity is full of experiences that interact, cross over, and exist separately from M.W.P. It is for this reason that I discuss historicity of the system.

Feminist scholar Adele Clarke’s (2007) situational analysis calls for social worlds/arenas maps which help to illustrate historical connections. Figure 9 begins to show the history and levels of values addressed in this study. JL’s classroom is not isolated; on the contrary, his classroom is part of the M.W.P. assessment practices, which have evolved since the early 1970s as seen in the site description found in Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The People and the Place.” Those practices exist in a century’s worth of history and values, as discussed in Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain
Unfold: A Literature Review.” It is for this reason that the organization of this dissertation starts with the methods and methodology before moving to the literature review. I discuss the greater set of values and perspectives of writing assessment and gradually move through the localized history proceeding to the participants that now interact within this history.

Figure 9. Novice Instructor Classroom Social Worlds/Arenas Map

With activity theory’s focus on situated relationships and view of history which is
compatible with feminist principles. With the momentary focus of grounded theory and the ethical focus feminist principles, there lies a balance of organized inquiry with an important acknowledgment of my biases and their effects and an overt effort not to objectify the participants in a colonizing appropriation of perspective.

This Multilayered Map

As activity theory notes, a tool that mediates interaction and will affect those that use it. The tool, and its values, will become a part of the thought process of the user, the object, and, thus, the outcome. Methodologies, as tools, mediate approaches and objects, and I have been influenced. Each of these methodologies—autoethnography, activity theory, feminist methodologies, and grounded theory—plays an important role in this study. I am intrigued by these forms of thought, particularly activity theory and feminist research methodologies, and the methods with which they connect. Therefore, it would be false to think that they don’t have an influence on the project as a whole. In a manner similar to this dissertation, I have been influenced by these methodologies which affect my way of seeing.

Figure 10 illustrates the basic interrelation of the methodologies I used for this project that influence how the data was collected and interpreted to create this deep map. A very basic explanation is that this project relies primarily on feminist principles, activity theory, and grounded theory all surrounded by and negotiated in an individual/insider role I have chosen to address with the help of autoethnography.
These methodologies come together in many powerful ways. Grounded theory is a means of using observed experience to create meaning. However grounded theory is a product of positivistic perspectives and assumes that there is Truth to be found in the data. Feminist methodologies, like grounded theory, also value experience; however, feminist methodologies emphasize the complexity and the idea that there are many truths to the experiences and interpretations of the data. Activity theory, like feminist methodologies, can help compensate for this weakness as activity theory’s focus on the situated context in which the data is found and the connection of the data to a culture and history can help place that data within a framework that allows for its subjective nature.

A grounded theory approach is important to the activity theory component of this study as it not only helps in the analysis but also because it provides a counterbalance. Activity theory can become cumbersome due to a limitless chain of events and decisions that can be connected to a single, situated activity. The use of grounded theory can help to keep activity theory focused in a more direct discussion and give weight to the data.
that has been obtained. In other words, grounded theory provides a scope and a more defined role of the importance of the data itself, and activity theory provides a context that is crucial to understanding data.

With its emphasis on actions histories and its focus on agency leading to systematic change, activity theory provides a strong means of addressing the issues raised by Nancy Naples (2003) in terms of the Foucaultian lack of agency in the face of socially constructed systems (p. 28). Similarly, with activity theory’s emphasis on varied data collection methods (Nardi, 1996, p. 95; Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 29), activity theory aligns with the calls for agency and contextuality of feminist scholars, such as Gesa Kirsch (1992). Activity theory benefits from the attention to reflexivity and positioning found in feminist methodologies due to its flexibility and the lack of tangible boundaries.

Activity theory, which draws from many of the same underlying theoretical perspectives as materialist-feminist standpoint perspectives, emphasizes the human subject as immersed in social situations, but it speaks specifically to and values the agency of the person. However, activity theory relies on boundaries that can be somewhat arbitrarily devised by the researcher, lacks an overt ethical perspective, and while some activity theorists emphasize the empowerment of the participants, reciprocity is not emphasized. All of these issues are provided via feminist methodologies.

In an important balance, feminist principles help account for weaknesses in activity theory and activity theory provides an agency-based view for feminist and standpoint theories. Standpoint theory, meanwhile, complements and can provide an important ethical stance to activity theory. The group emerges through externalization of values rather than the internalization of the values. Though this is where activity theory
becomes useful because it can watch for these changes and empowerment, as researcher tends to define the groups somewhat randomly, standpoint theories are important as they help to ground the process and encourage the researcher to truly reflect on what is going into that decision to create that boundary, whether physical or ideological—to think about their epistemology.

The similarities and balance do not end there. Through its focus on and value of contextualization and the belief that those interacting within a specific context are the important people to speak to, activity theory supports an epistemology that complicates the traditional, positivistic qualifications of “knowers.” Drawing from and returning to specific situations as in feminist methodologies and grounded theory, activity theory becomes an important descriptive tool for mapping relationships, for the activity system exists not as an entity but in the relationships between the community members (Miettinen, 2005, p. 53). Similarly, components of a second-generation activity theory map correlate with Clarke’s (2007) “situational maps that lay out the major human, nonhuman, discursive, historical, symbolic cultural, political, and other elements in the research situation of concern and provoke analysis of relationships among them” (p. 353). Activity theory, much like feminist methodologies, acknowledges the long and circling horizons.

Each of the perspectives comes together through my eyes, as a researcher and insider. Thus the autoenthographic connection provides another check for me as a participant in the system. Each of these methodologies comes together to affect the process and the following chapters in many ways. As with me, the methodologies have influenced my use of qualitative methods. Not only is the ethical structure emphasized in
feminist methodologies put into action but the methods focus on interviewing and observation of a single participant and his negotiation and resistance to the M.W.P. assessment practices. Moreover, the entire framing device of the deep map as a situated study of a single place directly connects to the principles found in feminist methodologies and activity theory brought to bear through grounded theory. The layers, though separable, become blurred.

The organization of the following chapters also builds off of this interrelation. As both feminist methodologies and activity theory not only acknowledge but also value situatedness and the history that is a part of a specific situation, this study is organized itself to allow the connections to become clear. Taking on an organization that is similar to a social worlds/arenas map, this study starts with the general values and history of assessment. Next, connections are made to specific movements and decisions within M.W.P. history and the site for this study. Once the greater scene is set, the participants are emphasized and introduced before discussing their perspectives as much as possible through their words. This dissertation draws from the experiences of those learning and involved so that the M.W.P. and assessment community can learn from them.

During his travels, Heat-Moon (1999) met a “civil engineer, squarish and short, a friendly man of pronounced opinions” (p. 421). This man argued that “for six generations we’ve given our kids a picture of the American West that’s no better than the dime novels of the 1880s—nationalistic, imperialistic, romantic, and distorted ‘til hell won’t have it” (p. 422). The man spoke of white, male scholars that valued theory and didn’t understand the realities of the people that lived the experience. He referred to one scholar in particular saying that he “couldn’t tell a sycamore from a cottonwood, hadn’t the least
idea of what kind of tree to cut a wagon axel out of. He wasn’t exactly sure what an ox is [. . .]—and he got paid fifty thousand a year to tell college kids about the West” (p. 422).

Fortunately many scholars involved in conversations regarding writing assessment do have deeper understanding of how writing assessment can be done and have done it on different levels and in different contexts, but the call to extend inquiry and development of writing assessment to more stakeholders is still relevant. We have the opportunity to break “past the barriers of ignorance and forgetfulness” and to find a way into some things and escaping from others—to rethink and research our ways of seeing. The singular voice of experience provided by JL, the novice instructor, and the voices of others within the program is an opportunity to see writing assessment from multiple levels. Through this deep map we can learn from those actively engaged. We can grow through their experiences. It is true that this deep map is merely a representation and can never truly show the complexities and the realities involved. Hopefully, though, its cultural-historic perspective and respect for the lives of the participants can bring an important voice to the call for ethical writing assessment practices.
CHAPTER II.

SEEING THE TERRAIN UNFOLD: A LITERATURE REVIEW

“ Summon them, those who knew the people in time gone, and call them to speak the story, to give testimony.” (Heat-Moon, 1999, p. 561)

As William Least Heat-Moon (1999) found when facing the Kansas prairie, what appears to be simple may actually be too complex to allow easy access. This is similar to discussions regarding writing assessment as it can encompass a plain where the horizon of possibilities seems endless, and, sadly, where we want to be may be just beyond that horizon. Though it is tempting to believe that writing is a simple task with simple methods of assessment, viewing the past and present as well as the individual and social is all necessary to understand the writing assessment landscape.

The writing assessment practices used in the Midwest Writing Program (M.W.P.) have a topography with its linear views displaying the here and now. A momentary glance of the surface can lull the viewer into a sense that the land exists only as it appears now. The linear, though, hides many layers and lives. To understand a place and create a deep map, one must understand the layers of activity—both the current growth and hidden past.

In order to find a way into the layers, one must, as Heat-Moon (1999) alludes, “comprehend where you are” (p. 105) and, as Haraway (1988) writes, “be somewhere in particular” (p. 590). This involves multiple ways of seeing, for “vision,” after all, “is always a question of the power to see” (Haraway, 1988, p. 585). As a literature review, this chapter provides a sense of the values guiding the actions discussed later, but that is just one function. This literature review also seeks to create a sense of the landscape. This literature review shows where writing assessment is now by showing where it has been.
This literature review begins to place M.W.P. among the voices, calls, and actions that are now folded into its current assessment practices. These are the very same voices, calls, and actions that JL, the novice instructor, unwittingly works with and sometimes against.

This literature review also provides a community for this study by positioning it among other scholars’ positions. However, it is important to remember that as with every community, this one comes with a system of beliefs. This is crucial for a history of place. N. Scott Momaday (2000) writes:

Loneliness is an aspect of the land. All things in the plain are isolate; there is no confusion of objects in the eye, but one hill or one tree or one man. To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this you think, is where Creation was begun. (p. 177)

The researcher risks getting lost in the immediate experience when in fact JL’s relationship and my analysis are directly connected to the values and experiences of others. These connections are important. This literature review is meant to place my thoughts among the thoughts of others. The quotes are meant to provide the original voices speaking to and about writing assessment. Moreover, these voices impact and inform JL’s actions even when they go unheard.

Perhaps most important, this literature review provides a sense of history—a reminder of how and where the conversation began and a reanimation of values that are folded into the current experience. This is part of an important process of reanimation
discussed by Paul Prior (1998), connected to the prominent activity theorists Engeström and Hutchins, which requires:

(a) identifying the elements of a functional system of activity; (b) tracing the histories of some key elements, especially to recover the particular motives, goals, values, and practices interiorized in material and semiotic artifacts and practices as affordances; and (c) reanimating artifacts, treating them as participants with a voice in constituting contexts of activity. (p. 188)\(^4\)

This is an important process because as Heat-Moon (1999) writes, “The American disease—and I’m quoting someone I can’t recall—is forgetfulness.” He continues, “A person or people who cannot recollect their past have little point beyond mere animal existence: it is memory that makes things matter” (p. 166). Memory and a sense of history enable connections. Memory, though, is complex. David Manier (2004) argues that memory is an act, not a thing. He also discusses that there are unwritten rules which dictate who is allowed not only to remember but, in essence, to shape those memories. Thus, just as Haraway speaks of the power to see, there is also the power to remember.

JL, as a novice instructor, is one whose views may not seem relevant to some since he has not studied composition or assessment, but many first-year writing teachers have not actively done so.

Buried within writing assessment practices and genres are choices, hopes, and motivations that continue to play an unseen role in the decisions made today. Heat-Moon (1999) shares the experience of finding a small arrowhead while investigating an

\(^4\) Prior provides an important quote from Hutchins: “We may attempt to put temporal bounds on the computations that we observe now, today, in any way we like, but we will not understand that computation until we follow its history back and see how structure has been accumulated over centuries in the organization of the material and ideational means in which the computation is actually implemented” (p. 188).
area. He writes, “Out of the thirty centuries it had lain there, I had a thirty-minute chance at conjunction during my rest, and in that brief concurrence, the old spearman and I ended up brushing past each other” (p. 594). Via a deeper understanding of the histories, a reanimation of values occurs, and past and present brush against each other through JL. Hopefully, this brings a better understanding of not only how but why the landscape of writing assessment and M.W.P. practices have taken shape. The current assessment practices did not just happen. The site description found in the introduction provides a glimpse into its specific history and the development of now, but there is more.

This literature review, then, seeks to accomplish many purposes. It overtly addresses several of the guiding questions for this study as it illuminates the values built into current writing assessment theory and specifically into the M.W.P. writing assessment practices. The main issues it addresses are the influences of science at the turn of the twentieth century, issues of agreement leading to rubrics, portfolios, and conceptions of validity. The reason for this is that these beliefs and values are a major factor in the acts of enculturation directed toward M.W.P. instructors, particularly JL. These events and discussions have informed and even become the embedded value sets that influence JL’s classroom decisions as is discussed in the latter portions of this review.

Then and Now: Breakthroughs or More of the Same?

Writing assessment history and the values it carries needs to be understood to provide context for the current events seen in the activity theory analysis in Chapter Five. Examples of the significance of a discussion of historical values are prevalent. Paul duGay (2007) reminds his readers in the chapter “Which Is the Self in Self-Interest” that
self-interest and the concept of “rational economic man” were specific choices and a means of breaking away from religious violence that can come from blindly following a group. He provides the warning that understanding what brought the current emphasis on the individual can help to maintain a balance between an overly rational view of people and a return to the dangers of the group thinking—an idea which should not be lost in this particular landscape. A more immediate example is found as Norbert Elliot (2005) provides a history that shows the values and intentions involved in the development of writing assessment. He also shows that change is possible, as in the case of Carl Brigham’s recantation of the racist underpinnings of intelligence testing (p. 77), and that the best of intentions can have very real consequences, such as immigrants being kept out of the United States due to Brigham’s original conclusions (p. 71). Early testing is also linked to sexist values as early IQ tests were renormed because girls were achieving higher scores than boys (Huot, 2002, p 140).

It is crucial to understand the values that flow through the history of writing assessment. These values remain, though sometimes tacitly, in the written artifacts and beliefs that guide assessment. Bazerman, Little, and Chalkin (2003) show that genres create other genres. They also provide the warning that the values present in the old genre are still present. The new genre, even when removed from the old landscape, still maintains the values that played a role in its development. It is not hard to argue that rubrics are a genre in assessment that carries the values originally instilled in their inception. This point will be illustrated later.

The values embedded in assessment have an effect on classrooms via the decisions made by instructors and the influence of the tools used to assess writing. Habib
and Wittek (2007) have shown that portfolios do in fact become an actor in assessment and that they influence the writing of students. Thus, understanding the history and values of that system is part of understanding the values of that system. In the following pages, this chapter lays out a general discussion of the recurring features in the current topography. It illuminates early connections between efficiency, science, and assessment that influence the relationship between JL and the M.W.P. writing assessment practices. Issues of standards and standardized assessment will be explored as well as their products: scoring guides and rubrics. Early values of educational specialists and administrators will be traced through portfolios and validity, before looking at the current effects of standardized assessment on teachers, particularly via discussions of primary and secondary education. Each of these discussions is held in the search for the connections of conversations past with current M.W.P. practices.

The current M.W.P. rubric contains general attitudes as well as connections to long maintained values in writing assessment. For example, the original design of the M.W.P. rubric is directly connected to the work of Diederich. A deeper sense of history brings a productively complex view of reliability, rubrics, portfolios, and validity and their effects to contextualize the data and findings in Chapter Four, “Under the Soil: The Data and Its Analysis.” This reanimated and contextualized view of localized writing assessment practices, though, should come with a warning. While there needs to be an understanding of the past, it must be remembered that it is just that—the past. As Richard Haswell and Susan Wyche-Smith (1994) relayed in conjunction with the creation of their assessment practices, “It is a serious mistake to think that a local context sets current problems to which solutions will be found in the literature of past assessment” (p. 227).
By reanimating the values, their influence becomes evident. Then conscious decisions can be made about writing assessment that address the specific needs of current, local populations.

Writing assessment’s set(s) of values and history have built to this point and are a part of the values now seen in the M.W.P. procedures. Ignoring the history allows issues to remain unaddressed. Mike Rose (1985) discusses “the myth of transience,” which speaks to the consistent cry that students can’t write and that something must be done to “fix” the situation. Rose writes:

Despite the accretion of crisis reports, the belief persists in the American university that if we can just do x or y, the problem will be solved—in five years, ten years or a generation—and higher education will be able to return to real work. [...] Each generation of academicians facing the characteristic American shifts in demographics and accessibility sees the problem anew, laments it in terms of the era, and optimistically notes its impermanence. (p. 355)

This recurring lament noted about the abilities of students is a part of writing’s past. Writing assessment itself, though, has its own choruses that are rewritten, yet unchanging, and continue to flow throughout its practice.

Early in the twentieth century new scales for writing assessment were being developed by many scholars based on the call for consistency and efforts at Harvard which led to the first required writing classes, the establishment of entrance criteria, the pinning of blame on secondary education, and the eventual formation of the College Board (Brereton, 1995; Elliot, 2005). This all occurred in the belief that science would fix everything, including education and assessment. James Crosby Chapman and Grace
Preyer Rush (1917), like many others, believed in the power of these scales. They offered both hope and warnings in their book, *The Scientific Measurement of Classroom Products*. Hope could be seen when they quote the Director of Reference and Research of the Department of Education to the City of New York: “There could be no better exercise for a teachers’ seminar than a series of discussions on some selected tests that would invite the independent judgment and criticism of intelligent teachers” (p. 187). A similar sense of hope has been heard recently as well though challenging rubrics that work in the same manner as the scales. Bob Broad (2003) writes:

> Coming face to face with colleagues, reading and debating with them your judgments of students’ writing, putting your rhetorical values on the line and advocating for them, and listening to others do the same—these intense collegial activities lead to professional growth for teachers of writing unlike any other experience. (p. 121)

A similar sentiment can also be found in the M.W.P. *Guide to Portfolio Assessment* as it states, “[The evaluator practice sessions] allow [M.W.P.] to touch base with instructors—finding out, we hope, how the portfolio process is working for them and which components of Portfolio Assessment (if any) may need revision” (p. 43). M.W.P.’s norming, as the guide indicates, is more directive with a focus on calibration accompanied with opportunities to voice opinions.

Another major theme that runs throughout discussions from the turn of the twentieth century is an emphasis on reliability and, specifically, interrater agreement. Associate Professor of Experimental Education J. Crosby Chapman and philosopher Grace Preyer Rush (1917) provide an example of this desire for agreement, writing, “The
great problem of measurement in education, therefore, is to construct objective or universal scales, about the use of which there can be no misunderstanding when they are placed in the hands of competent teachers” (p. 5). Educational scholar Frederick James Kelly (1914), whose work is directly connected to Thorndike and Hillegas, writes, “By [the scales] use it is expected that the same paper will be given more nearly the same mark by several judges than would be the case without the scales” (pp. 85-86). A very similar tone can be found in the National Council of Teachers of English and Council of Writing Program Administrator’s White Paper on Writing Assessment in Colleges and Universities’ (2008) call for reliable assessment:

A reliable assessment provides consistent results, no matter who conducts the assessment. Because writing assessment often involves more than one rater scoring student performances, it can involve interrater reliability, a measure of the degree of consistency from one rater judgment to another[. . . .]Attention to reliability is an integral part of any responsible validity argument. (p. 3)

M.W.P. acknowledges this desire in the design of its rubric: “teaching assistants learn to use the rubric through discussing numerous samples and through working together in practice sessions, they learn to apply the rubric with a large degree of uniformity, thereby keeping [M.W.P.’s] evaluation standards consistent across the program” (Nelson, 1993, p. 92). The desire for interrater agreement is still seen as an important part of writing assessment in many circles. As is evident in Chapter Five, “Drawing the Map: An Activity Theory Analysis,” this desire had a large impact on JL’s classroom.

Not all of the connections are pleasant. Issues with reliability, for instance, have led to questionable practices and sacrifice of what doesn’t fit. Elliot (2005) notes that
when issues of reliability kept hindering initial efforts at standardized practices in the United States, Carl Brigham, a major player in standardizing assessments and intelligence testing, focused his “cameras” and used only readers that had proven to be consistent with the others in the group (p. 84). Situations in which cameras are being focused are still very prevalent today. Bob Broad (1994) conveys a similar story, writing: “Faced with several discrepant scores for a particular portfolio, a chief reader invites the anonymous discrepant readers to take a job other than grading, explaining that their lack of calibration may undermine the group’s interrater reliability” (p. 270).

Chapman and Rush (1917) also provide a warning about the effects of standardized writing assessment on classroom decisions, as well as the limitation these assessment formats can bring to those involved, when they write:

The scales also bring with it the danger that the teacher may sacrifice everything in the classroom to the production of work which can be measured objectively, and, as already pointed out, the scales may fail to give sound relative values to different elements involved in that work. (p. 185)

In an incredibly influential piece, Pamela Moss (1994) once again calls into question the limitations of assessment practices that cannot capture the entire picture:

[T]here are certain activities that standardized assessments can neither document nor promote; these include encouraging students to find their own purposes for reading and writing, encouraging teachers to make informed instructional decisions consistent with the needs of individual students, and encourage students and teachers to collaborate in developing criteria and standards to evaluate their work. (p. 6)
Other assessment scholars, such as Brian Huot (2002) and Ed White (2007) have also pointed out that what is assessed will affect what is being taught. For M.W.P., the writing assessment practices were designed to promote consistency, which affected not only JL’s classroom decisions but those of other graduate student teaching assistants (G.S.T.A.s) as well as is evident in Chapter Four, “Under the Soil: The Data and Its Analysis.”

Finally, Chapman and Rush (1917) worry that the assessment practices may encourage teachers to teach to the test (p. 185). Years later, Sandra Murphy and Barbara Grant (1996) write that portfolios, the method of evaluation used by the M.W.P., “operate to standardize a richly diverse curriculum, influencing teachers to ‘teach to the test,’ to focus on perfecting performance in relation to a few kinds of assessment rather than providing with diverse audiences and purposes for writing” (p. 292). On a grander scale, this effect of standardized assessment has become such a worry that it is even seen in popular forums such as the lines, “Each box that you mark on each test that you take, remember your teachers, their jobs are at stake. Your score is their score, but don’t get all stressed. They’d never teach anything not on the test” of the John Forster and Tom Chapin (2008) song “Not on the Test.” Teaching to the test is real, as documented by Peter Sacks (1999) and others. Throughout primary and secondary education, No Child Left Behind (N.C.L.B.) has encouraged schools to teach to the test. The extent to which all of these problems exist and influenced JL’s classroom and development is evident in the data analysis and implications of this study.5

5 It should be noted that the desires and values underlying this study also have a long history. Chapman and Rush wrote in 1917, “Many of these tests need criticism and revision, and such questions as their fairness and practicability can be answered only by teachers who use them” (p.187). This sentiment is echoed when Brian Huot (2002) writes, “[W]e must be accountable to those people who are most expert about teaching and learning—students and teachers” (p.179). It can also be seen in CCCC Writing Assessment
As seen in White’s (1996) “Power and Agenda Setting in Writing Assessment” and Huot’s (2002) (Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning, writing assessment is, at least in part, a political act that needs to be carefully considered by the varied stakeholders. Huot argues that writing assessments should empower teachers and students in part because of the value-laden nature of writing assessment. The stark reality of the importance of careful attention to assessment lies in the words of White, Lutz, and Kamusikiri (1996): “Assessment expresses a hierarchy of values, and those who control assessment determine the values that prevail” (p. 1). There are issues of power and ethics that are inherent in assessment. Those designing and evaluating assessments are making decisions about what can and should be valued regardless of whether they mean to. By emphasizing a set of characteristics or even formatting preference, the people designing the assessment practices are asking others, particularly teachers and students, to accept and align with those values. This deep map of assessment looks at the current manifestation of the values as well as the layers of values that have built to this point.

**Science and Assessment**

There are shards of ideas and themes that run through the layers of writing assessment and its history with striking consistency. One such theme is a desire for scientific-based assessment. Yancey’s (1999) crucial piece “Looking Back as We Look Forward” discusses issues of writing assessment starting with the 1950s by reviewing issues of College Composition and Communication. Similarly, Bob Broad’s (2003) What Position Statement (1998): “Assessments of written literacy should be designed and evaluated by well-informed current or future teachers of the students” (p. 1).
We Really Value discusses this time period to show the development of rubrics. Arthur Applebee (1974), Mary Trachsel (1992), John Brereton (1995), and Norton Elliot (2005), though, show that discussions very similar to those of the mid-twentieth century took place at Harvard and among scholars at the turn of the twentieth century. Early in the twentieth century, as part of a societal reliance on science and efficiency, calls for standards were common among educational specialists in the desire to make all assessments more consistent. Writing scales, such as the Hillegas scale and the Trabue scale, emerged. Issues of reliability and interrater agreement that play a role in the developments of the 1960s are seen throughout pieces written around and after the turn of the twentieth century (Chapman & Rush, 1917; Kelly, 1914; Lewis, 1921). The values embedded within this desire for agreement are still playing a major role in writing assessment today as is evident in M.W.P. practices and the 2008 NCTE/WPA White Paper on Writing Assessment.

Many of the decisions made early in the twentieth century were done so with a nearly blind faith in science and as part of a push for efficiency in education. Elliot (2005) explains that during this time there was a move toward a positivist perspective and German educational ideal that fit with a “national shift toward dispassionate scientific systematization” (p. 9). The College Board, formed in 1899, followed suit with its reliance on scientific modes (Trachsel, 1992, p. 113). This move and those values connect to another discussion common to both then and now—a business model of education: “Generally, scientific business methods had come to seem the solution to all the nation’s ills; and schools, ever a drain on taxpayer’s pocketbook, were a tempting target for reform” (Applebee, 1974, p. 81). The hope that science could save education

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6 Scales were created by some for everything from handwriting to hygiene.
much as it was perceived to have done for agriculture is even voiced in the introduction to Monroe, DeVoss, and Kelly’s 1917 book *Educational Tests and Measurement* (p. viii). These changes pushed discussions of educational standards, standards of writing, and writing assessment toward a privileging of objective and efficient assessment—values which are still prevalent in scholarship today and in conversations regarding M.W.P. assessment.

Positivism in education had been connected to a perceived waste of efforts. In 1897, Charles Francis Adams, Edwin Lawrence Godkin, and George R. Nutter demonstrate such attitudes in their “Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric,” which analyzed 1,300 papers from students at Harvard and Radcliffe. The report states,

> [T]he lamentable waste of time and expenditure of misdirected effort revealed throughout these papers, is largely due to misunderstandings among those engaged in the work of the proper functions or province, as resents English education, of the college and the secondary schools. (Brereton, 1995, p. 119)

Clearly, there is the feeling that students, teachers, and administrators were wasting opportunities, especially in primary and secondary education. Norbert Elliot (2005) documents a similar attitude in the comments of Charles W. Eliot referring to the beginning of admissions testing which “prevents a waste of instruction upon incompetent persons” (p. 21). In order not to waste education, assessment took on the role of gatekeeper. This role was connected to others through a perceived need for reforms, efficiency, and standards for students and schools to make comparisons.
The desire to make education more efficient was then linked to science. Applebee (1974) indicates that the above-mentioned needs were found “against the background of a widespread but loosely formulated identification of ‘scientific’ with ‘efficient,’” and that “the concern with the application of science to education, [had] an ultimate focus on efficiency” (p. 80). “Efficient’ education came to be identified too closely with ‘good’ education” (p. 81). The privileging of science and efficiency with positivist perspectives lead to changes in what was valued in education and writing assessment.

The valuing of efficiency had great effects on assessment itself, specifically writing assessment. It was the value of efficiency that pushed for the sorting of students as well as objective and reliable tests. In other words, valuing efficiency was one of the major factors in the development of assessment and fed into the desire for agreement that is still prevalent in discussions of writing assessment (Williamson, 1994/2009, p. 69). Yancey (1999) argues that the first wave of writing assessment was conceived – the objective test (p. 484). These values, and the first wave, also affected the development of the second wave of writing assessment: holistically scored essays. Holistic methods had to contend with and in part compromise with previous methods in order to gain acceptance over the efficiency and reliability of objective tests (Huot, 2002, p. 24).

Efficiency is still important in education. Writing assessment must be conducted in real situations among real demands. Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) argue that it is often “power rather than theory that drive important assessment decisions” (p. 331). They add to this thought saying, “Crucial decisions concerning assessment are often made by regulatory agencies and political and educational policymakers based on practical and political concerns of cost, efficiency, and public opinion” (p. 331). Efficiency plays a role
in many programs as budgetary and labor concerns are a part of writing program administration. Both are clear in the M.W.P.’s desire for agreement and use of standardized practices.

**Standards and Standardization**

At the turn of the twentieth century it was thought that scientific means could eliminate the waste and reinforce efficiency in education. The scientific method also meant that, as Thorndike stated, “Whatever exists at all exists in some amount” (as cited. in Rose 1985, p. 343). If something can be measured, then comparisons can be made and standards can be set. An early definition linking efficiency and standards was provided by Monroe, DeVoss, and Kelly in 1917:

> A satisfactory standard must be reasonable and must be “efficient.” To be reasonable a standard must be such that it can be attained by pupils, under school conditions, and with an appropriate time expenditure [. . . .] The second qualification of satisfactory standard is that it must be “efficient.” By this it is meant that the standard must represent a degree of ability which equips pupils for meeting present and future demands with a high degree of efficiency. The word efficiency has been borrowed or rather adopted from the field of engineering and mechanics. (pp. 263-264)

With the call for standards, at this point, came an effort to standardize. Samuel Chester Parker (1915) supports the connection between standards, standardization, and efficiency in education when he writes that “efficiency and economy in instruction” from “adapting instruction to contemporary social needs,” “sound psychological principles,” and “scientific business management” purges “processes that have no direct social value.”
The “waste of effort resulting from the use of uneconomical and ineffective methods of learning,” and “waste of time which results from failure to standardize materials and processes” (p. viii).

The sense of efficiency was applied to high and low ends of the spectrum. While not living up to the standards was bad, Monroe, DeVoss, and Kelly (1917) point out that a teacher should not take pride in the fact that she has brought her pupils up to a point well above the standard. This condition may mean that she is just as inefficient as the teachers whose pupils are below standard, her inefficiency being due to unusual expenditure of time for the engendering of this particular outcome. (p. 270)

At that point in education and assessment history the standards were seen as the important ends to which all means should lead. They were, in fact, both the compass and the destination.

The use of standards and comparison has not disappeared from modern American society and, to a certain extent, rightfully so. Standards play a part in our daily lives. As Yancey (2005) points out, we rely on standards in many areas, such as the medical profession, as they provide safety and assurance. She suggests that standards for education are meant to do the same thing though she balances this point with the idea that uniform, large-scale standards can cause problems for assessment practices (p. 19). Edward White (2007) also focuses on the presence and reality of standards. As teachers, White argues, we have to accept and work with the standards used by schools and society writing, “An essential part of the writing teacher’s job is to teach and enforce standards of performance that will allow students to succeed in college” (p. 51). Educational
measurement specialists Gregory J. Cizek and Michael B. Bunch (2007) likewise underscore that separation and classification of students is a natural part of education citing examples of selecting chair positions in band and starters for an athletic team (p. 7). They maintain that psychometric methods are a means of making sure that “decisions and classifications are based on high-quality data and that the data are combined in a systematic, reproducible, objective, and defensible manner” (p. 8).

There are other benefits of standards that scholars bring to light. One such benefit is that standards help stakeholders contextualize performance criteria and that they encourage the trust of outside stakeholders (Cizek & Bunch, 2007, p. 8). Standards also allow for more consistent planning and discussion of why particular skills and actions are included in a curriculum making “richer, more motivated, more multi-resourced challenges” (Bazerman, 2003, p. 465). Establishing trust and ensuring quality are important benefits. This, after all, is part of ensuring that academic programs and their teachers are living up to their missions and places within the greater educational system. This is a desire implied in the use of the standards and standardized methods in the M.W.P. Guide to Portfolio Assessment (2008):

Portfolio Assessment helps to standardize evaluative criteria and grading among all sections of a course. This is especially important in composition, where well over one hundred sections of the same course can be offered during one semester at [M.U.]. Without some regulation by [M.W.P.], students could be receiving positive or negative—as well as vastly different—writing experiences. (p. 43)

A consistent, strong experience across sections is not a bad desire. This is especially true when a single program, such as the M.W.P. and other first-year writing programs, is
charged with providing a general sense, or a complete discussion, of writing for all students.

The use of standards often brings the desire for standardized practices, such as those connected to large-scale situations. Educational specialist Craig Mertler (2007) defines standardized tests as “any test that is administered, scored, and interpreted in a standard consistent manner” (p. 3) and discusses the fact that many tests make use of “constructed-response test items,” such as essay questions. He writes that “by specifying ahead of time the particular scoring criteria, this subjectivity is kept to a relative minimum and scoring remains, for all intents and purposes, consistent” (p. 5). The M.W.P. uses a localized set of standards and practices, but through the designation of criteria via its rubric and the end-of-term portfolio exchange, its methods of assessment are criterion referenced standardized practices. This allows the M.W.P. to state that successful students have achieved a certain level of skills that are required for graduation.

The benefits to setting standards and using standardized processes for measurement do come with drawbacks. Compositionist and writing assessment scholar Chris Anson (1999), for instance, complicates discussions of standards in assessment by noting that they come from very different places and levels (p. 308), which will impact the motivations driving the standards similar to the manner discussed in White’s (1996) “Power and Agenda Setting Writing Assessment.” As stakeholders approach the classroom and assessment from various perspectives and desires, there will be dissent regarding what standards should be set and at what levels. This is why Huot (2002) calls for localized assessment practices as those affected by the assessment practices are involved in the important decisions. The question that this dissertation seeks to ask,
though, is what are the effects of the localized practices on a novice teacher when they are standardized.

Whether connected to a greater group or program or not, all teachers have standards. However, not all standards will necessarily be the same. This can cause administrative decisions to help make those standards consistent, as is the case with the M.W.P. (Nelson, 1993, p. 92). The desire to ensure consistency through standardized practices, though, comes at a cost. Mark Wiley (2005) charges that “standardization means teacher compliance, with compliance managed and enforced through standardized testing” (p. 25). Also, Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) point out that standardization deletes context (p. 332). For instance, regarding portfolios, the standardization of contents removes reflection, choice, and classroom decisions (Huot & Williamson, 1997/2009, p. 339). The psychometric concern for impartiality, similar to the benefit noted by Cizek and Bunch (2007), “silences voices of those who are most knowledgeable about the context and most directly affected by the results” (Moss, 1994, p. 10). The elimination of context can have a major effect on the assessment of writing as “the construction of textual meaning depends upon social context” (Broad, 1994, p. 265). Ironically, Huot (2002) suggests that it is the lack of context that actually creates the problems that reliability is supposed to fix (pp. 99-100). In M.W.P., classroom context is meant to be added to the assessment practices through the inclusion of assignment sheets and by leaving instructor comments on the papers in students’ portfolios (Nelson, 1993, p. 61).

An issue that can be raised in conjunction with standards and standardization is the natural difference that exists among readers and instructors. Investigations of the
influence of standardized assessment practices on novice instructors, such as this study, need to account for the fact that teachers are different. Therefore, while White (1996) shows that most writing teachers are generally conflicted in their views of assessment seeing it is overbearing but necessary (p. 13), the effects are not going to be the same for all teachers. This reality is both a reason for and limitation of this study as a single instructor is being observed.

Huot (2002) complicates assessment when he draws upon Arnetha Ball to illustrate the effects of “ethnic diversity” on the evaluation of writing in that “‘writing quality’ [. . .] is a feature influenced by cultural identity” (p. 116). He notes that “teachers with different cultural orientations saw very different things in student writing” (p. 117). Similarly, Roxanne Mountford (1999) writes in “Let Them Experiment” that “portfolio assessment, while allowing for pluralistic standards of ‘good writing,’ is only as flexible and inclusive as the administrative procedures which govern it” (p. 386). She argues that the values and techniques privileged in the criteria used for assessment can exclude different ways of making and conveying meaning for groups traditionally seen as minorities, such as women, African Americans, and nontraditional students (p. 367). As Elliot (2005) shows, writing assessment was connected to racist beliefs at the turn of the twentieth century (p. 69) and privileged white, male perspectives. It is important to research the effects caused by standardized assessment techniques and portfolio assessment procedures that not only tell women, African Americans, and other “nontraditional” assessors that they must write in uncomfortable ways but that they must also make sure others do the same. Because of the pool of volunteers, these issues are beyond the scope of this study but should be considered as areas for future study.
Scoring Guides and Rubrics

Standards and standardization have traditionally been concerned with agreement, as this is a part of discussions of reliability often connected to validity. Basically, as Wiley (2005) indicates, if a specific level of standard is being used then there generally needs to be a standardized method of measuring and comparing progress in connection with that the standard. M.W.P.’s standardized writing assessment practices hinge on the use of a program-level rubric and end-of-term proficiency measure through the portfolio assessment processes. The use of rubrics is not uncommon, though it is debated.

Throughout the history of writing assessment, especially since the turn of the twentieth century, the call for agreement has been prevalent and has taken many forms. It has been linked, at times, with the comparison of students and efficiency as there was a perceived need to be able to compare and rate compositions and students particularly in conjunction with a need for remediation (Monroe, DeVoss, & Kelly, 1917, p. vii). Thus, as Applebee (1974) shows, there is a connection between “scientific management” and “scientific measurement” (p. 81). Early in the twentieth century, scales were seen to be the answer: “The great problem of measurement in education, therefore, is to construct objective or universal scales, about the use of which there can be no misunderstanding when they are placed in the hands of competent teachers” (Chapman & Rush, 1917, p. 5).

These scales for composition fell into two categories, “general merit scales” and “special merit scales” (Lewis, 1921, p. 10). The “general merit scales” made use of writing samples that were not of the same type in order to create a scale that could compare to all types of writing. The Hillegas scale, an important early scale for the assessment of writing due to its extensive use, for example, contained a letter, character
sketches, a descriptive piece, and a narrative piece. “Special merit scales” were connected to specific types of writing or groups of students, such as letters and eighth graders (p. 10).

These efforts illustrate the desire and values of agreement early on in the twentieth century. This is further illustrated in the evaluation practices of the College Entrance Examination Board, formed in 1899, in which agreement among assessors played a crucial role (Elliot, 2005, p. 39). Agreement in discussions of writing, though, is often not easy to come by. This was illustrated in the process of creation of the Hillegas Scale itself. Though many writing samples were originally included, the samples used in the final stages of development were only those for which the readers showed agreement (p. 42). Other scales, such as the Thorndike Extension to the Hillegas Scale, Trabue’s Supplement to the Hillegas Scale, the Harvard-Newton Scale, the Breed and Frostic Scale, and the Willing Scale, were devised at that time. Many of these scales were based on or made major use of the Hillegas Scale and also used selections centered on agreement as is detailed in the first chapter of Lewis’s (1921) book, *Scales for Measuring Special Types of English Composition*.

Trouble with agreement led to indirect measures of writing ability, such as tests requiring students to find and fix errors. However, Elliot (2005) shows that experiments with essay tests still continued. Though meeting varying levels of success, these tests were consistent as the designers sought to include direct assessment throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It was in 1961, as Bob Broad (2003) relays, that Deiderich, French, and Carlton, using “distinguished readers,” were able to narrow and classify the thoughts of their readers:
The ETS researchers eventually derived [. . .] a list of five “factors” that seemed to capture the values of their readers:

Ideas: relevance, clarity, quantity, development, persuasiveness
Form: organization and analysis
Flavor: style, interest, sincerity
Mechanics: specific errors in punctuation, grammar, etc.
Wording: choice and arrangement of words

And thus was born what became the standard, traditional, five-point rubric, by some version of which nearly every large-scale assessment of writing since 1961 has been strictly guided. (p. 6)

The value of agreement in the development of writing assessment continues to shape the genres that followed and tools developed for assessment as is evident in the influential 6+1 Traits of Analytic Writing Assessment Scoring Rubric (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2007), used in primary and secondary education which judges student writing in the categories of “ideas and content,” “organization,” “voice,” “word choice,” “sentence fluency,” “conventions,” and “presentation.” The original rubric used in the M.W.P. was also based on the work of Diederich and used the categories of “expression,” “organization and development,” “mechanics and usage,” “sentence structure,” and “word choice” (Eck, 1992, p. 59). Through various revisions, the M.W.P. rubric now has the categories of “audience,” “organization/theme structure,” “development,” “syntax,” “word choice,” “grammar/usage/mechanics,” but it is easy to see the original values are still present. Please see Appendix C.
Throughout the past fifty years, rubrics and scoring guides have found a place in the assessment community. Broad (2003) notes that rubrics did, in fact, do some good. Diederich, French, and Carlton were able to use what they found to break away from multiple-choice tests. He also writes that rubrics brought “affordability” (p. 8), which, in essence, allowed for the still necessary desire for efficiency to be satisfied. But Broad (2003) also points out that they did have to compromise in that “Diederich, French, and Carlton traded in rhetorical truth confronting them (that readers value texts differently) in exchange for the grail of high inter-rater agreement” (p. 8).

Broad is not the only person that has been critical of rubrics. The rubrics often used to encourage agreement among readers have been noted as having problematic effects. For instance, “As agents of standardization,” Linda Mabry (1999), a scholar discussing primary and secondary education writes, “writing rubrics make direct writing assessments more like the multiple-choice tests they were meant to improve upon, thus rendering ‘alternative’ assessment something of a misnomer.” Peter Elbow (1996) also points out that agreement and scoring guides “just hide the problem” not fix it (p. 121). These issues create a need to study the effects of unified programmatic assessment practices as a standardized form of assessment.

Equally critiqued is the desire for agreement itself that drives the creation of tools meant to achieve consensus. Pamela Moss (1994) has shown that the desire for agreement and reliability stops discussion by emphasizing “procedures that attempt to exclude, to the extent possible, the values and contextualized knowledge of the reader and that foreclose on dialog among readers about specific performances being evaluated” (p. 9). In other words, the individual values of the reader are subjugated by the values built into
the rubric. In this way as Mabry (1999) writes reliability and agreement may merely reflect “collective tunnel vision rather than informed consensus about the quality of student writing.” Broad (1994) also points out that “in equating interrater disagreement with ‘unfairness,’ we cling to what for most of us outmoded and ideologies: foundationalism and scientific positivism” (p. 266). What is certain, as Huot (2002) points out, is that the focus on agreement and rubrics can not only divert attention within a program, but that it has also diverted the attention in the field of Composition as articles regarding writing assessment are often procedural and focus specifically on interrater agreement and norming practices rather than critical discussion (p. 89).

For instructors, rubrics can hide the fact that there is often not agreement when discussing writing, and that the disagreement that naturally occurs among readers is not necessarily a bad thing. Assessment scholars Durst, Romer, and Schultz (1994) make the argument that disagreement is an opportunity for “negotiation not calibration” (p. 287) based on the conscious point that teachers won’t always agree (p. 295). Even with rubrics in place, and under strict psychometric experimental constraints, educational measurement specialist Robert Marzano (2002) notes that there will be disagreement. He attributes differences among scores to varying criteria used by readers for rubric categories, differences in belief regarding the extent to which criteria is met, and different definitions of criteria used (p. 258). In order to counteract these issues, Marzano (2002) suggests exerting more control over criteria and readers through greater standardization of rubrics and protocol (pp. 264-65). Similarly, mathematician Barbara Moskal (2000) points out that there can be differences among raters, though she believes that this means

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7 White (1984) reminds his readers that the same piece of writing when scored by a single reader will often receive different scores (p. 407)
the rubric needs more clarification. Educational measurement specialist Pamela Moss (1994), though, rather than calling for greater control, points out that in actuality “Initial disagreement among readers would not invalidate the assessment; rather, it would provide an impetus for dialog, debate, and enriched understanding informed by multiple perspectives as interpretations are refined and as decisions or actions are justified” (p. 9).

Sadly, the effect is not limited to instructors. By eliminating the discussions that surround what makes good writing, rubrics and the desire for agreement limit the possibilities for achieving good writing by the students. Mabry (1999) points out that “rubrics standardize scoring and so they standardize writing.” This is not a new idea. Chapman and Rush (1917) worried that teachers would begin to teach to the form of assessment (p. 185). More recently, Bazerman (2003) acknowledges this issue writing that rubrics “homogenize the variety of approaches” (p. 458) to the rhetorical situation, much as the Schools Council and Britton noted in 1975. Students know they are in a testing situation, so they will adapt to the requirements of that situation (Bazerman, 2003, p. 458). Therefore, when the criteria for writing are provided, students are denied practice, which does not help them learn to devise criteria on their own (Murphy & Smith, 1999, p. 332). Thus this study asks if providing a standardized set of criteria is helpful for instructor development, and to investigate just what the effect, if any, there is to teaching to the rubric on the instructors like JL.

Portfolios, just as rubrics, have been questioned because of their normative affects coming from the desire for agreement, particularly when students are not allowed the choice as to what goes in the portfolio. C. Beth Burch (1997) speaks of the “chilling effect” that can occur when portfolios and their contents are standardized (p. 55).
Whether intended or not, standardizing portfolio contents places the power of students and teachers in the hands of those making assessment decisions (Huot & Williamson, 1997/2009, p. 336). The problem, as Bazerman (2003) notes, comes because the focus is not on individuality (p. 458). In this situation, the portfolio assessment process starts to direct the decisions made by teachers and students. In this situation portfolios can encourage a form of writing that merely satisfies the portfolio and rubric (Habib & Wittek, 2007; Murphy and Grant, 1996, p. 292; Bazerman, 2003, p. 458).

The idea that assessment affects what happens in the classroom has been noted by many as an effect of standardized practices. In an interview of TAs involved in norming practices, Durst, Roemer, and Schulz (1994) provide a very real example. TA “#1” states that the norming session was frightening. Fearing the unpreparedness of the students after the norming session, the TA took in samples from the norming into class to specifically work with students on what had been discussed (p. 289). This is a practice that is often seen and encouraged in the M.W.P. and noted by mentors in Chapter Five, “Under the Soil: The Data and its Analysis.”

These effects on the classroom are complex. Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) note that “the simple truth of education assessment is that what we choose to evaluate in our students’ performances will determine what they attend to in their approach to learning” (p. 334). Positively, White (1984) reminds his readers that this truly is an effect of writing assessment. The ability of portfolios and rubrics to pull writing assessment away from indirect measures, such as multiple-choice testing, is crucial (p. 401). Basically, the forms of standardized assessment based on direct writing do in fact allow the use of student writing rather than indirect testing measures. In this situation, the form
of assessment is allowing focus on the decisions that are a part of writing. Even Huot (2002) acknowledges that the change in pedagogy is not necessarily bad when draws from Grant Wiggins to point out that “teaching to the test” may not be that bad if teaching to the right test (p. 75). Similarly, Bazerman (2003) notes the “equally important phenomena of learning to the test.” He continues to write that if “assessment engages attention and calls upon complex resources to produce exciting performances, students grow” (p. 477).

Beyond the gains that rubrics afford, the long history of rubrics does suggest that standards and the assessment practices driven by them do serve a need in education. Good scoring guides start discussion about writing, especially when created with students (White, 2007, p. 75) and can support personal and class-based reflection as well as revision (Bargainnier, 2003; Inoue, 2007; White, 2007, p. 68). The crucial benefit identified by scholars is that rubrics increase the articulation of assessment criteria and reduce the subjectivity of evaluations (Arter & McTighe, 2001, p. ix; Mertler, 2001; Moskal, 2000; White, 2007, p. 85). Rubrics also speed up the process of assessment, which is a great benefit to busy instructors such as JL (Andrade, 2000; White, 2007, p. 68). However, as high-school teacher Maja Wilson (2006) notes, “An assessment method must convince us that it reflects our values about teaching writing before it seduces us with its claim to save us time” (p. 28). It should also be noted that for instructional purposes, many scholars point out that analytic rubrics, which is similar to what is used by M.W.P., provide information and clarification to students in order to encourage development (Andrade, 2000; Bargainnier, 2003, p. 1; Marzano, 2002, p. 58; Mertler, 2001; Moskal, 2000). In their landmark study on commenting and error, though, Connors
and Lunsford (1993) noticed that scoring guides with many different traits were often accompanied by lower grades as the scoring guides kept the writing from being read holistically (p. 217). Thus the breakdown of criteria can pull from a holistic approach and negatively affect the evaluators perceptions, which was an effect also noted by JL’s mentor, Sam.

Rubric proponents also identify benefits for rubric use across programs, as is the process within the M.W.P., that could be seen as beneficial for new instructors like JL. One benefit is that rubrics provide a common language that can then be used to discuss writing, no matter how much experience the instructor has in the program (Nelson, 1993, p. 91). Rubrics also provide a means of instructor training (Nelson, 1993, p. 38). Sandy Bargainnier (2003) acknowledges that rubrics can provide stability across courses and course sequences (p. 4). For novice instructors, rubrics help in the justification of grades (Andrade, 2000). This makes it, as Bargainnier (2003) points out, less likely that students will challenge the grade. In this sense, rubrics can ease anxieties associated with grading by “making it easier to assess portfolios with rigor fairness, and compassion” (Burch, 1998, p. 55).

Many of the proponents and opponents of rubrics focus on the same concept: agreement. Where some see cohesion others see a subtle form of coercion that comes through norming practices, such as those called for by Morzano (2002). Broad (1994; 2003) is one such scholar that questions rubrics, such as those used by the M.W.P., because of the norming and calibration practices which are meant to address issues of interrater agreement and reliability. Durst, Roemer, and Schulz (1994), however, argue that norming brings out what is denied in a manner similar manner to the dynamic criteria
mapping that Broad (2003) encourages and that norming helps with uncertainties, and allows the sharing resources (p. 227) which is similar claims made by M.W.P. about its norming sessions in its *Guide to Portfolio Assessment* (p. 9). White (1984) also describes a positive process centered on norming that can “lead the participants (indirectly) to reconsider teaching practices through the social interaction of colleagues working together to achieve a common goal” (p. 27). However,

> when the readers feel intimidated or coerced by insensitive leaders, or harassed by an uncomfortable autocratic working environment, the whole situation becomes destructive to personal and professional relations. The worst of these readings allow the leaders to exercise an awkward kind of bureaucratic power instead of academic leadership, and such readings set up an adversary relationship between exploited readers and their employers. (White, 1984, p. 409)

It is, then, important to question whether consensus is found, enforced, or if it is even possible. Thus, as is reflected in the questions guiding this study, part of the discussion of the effects of M.W.P.’s assessment need to account for its methods of norming and how they influence the activities and JL’s perspective.

**Reliability and Validity**

The debates that have been discussed so far also connect to definitions of reliability and validity. Bob Broad (2003) writes that “within the world of positive psychometrics, the world in which ETS and other commercial testing corporations still operate, precise agreement among judges is taken as the preeminent measure of validity of an assessment” (p. 5). If validity is truly measured by the agreement of readers, then methods of norming and the use of rubrics are ethical and necessary to match multiple-
choice tests, which while achieving the same results no matter who is conducting the test can have issues regarding its validity as a means of testing a student’s ability to navigate rhetorical situations. This is similar to debates regarding experimental measures themselves. While proponents of psychometrics claim objectivity, Nagy (2000) points out that argumentation is a part of constructing validity and reliability (p. 271). In a discussion of four types of validity, Scharton (1996) illustrates this point by writing, “Creating validity is in fact not so simple as establishing a satisfactory curve of score or statistical correlation. Rather, the issue turns on the beliefs of the affected parties” (p. 54).

Validity also has very important ethical implications. Broad (2003) calls into question the validity and ethics of rubrics. He reminds his readers that the purpose of a rubric is to “focus and narrow the factors or criteria by which readers judge” which in effect “diverges from the ‘real’ values of the program” (p. 11). Huot (2002) has called for an extension of discussions of validity regarding writing assessment and points to Samuel Messick’s oft-cited discussion of validity as an important place to start (p. 93). Messick (1989) explains that a study’s validity ensures the interpretations accurately connect to the testing procedures and data. He extends this to argue that if decisions made regarding the students from the results of assessment aren’t ethical then the test is not valid (p. 11). This call for ethical decisions and effects should not stop with the students. It is also important to study the effects of assessment on the teachers, for effects on the teachers cannot help but filter down to the students. In the end, I believe validity and reliability to be important concepts and necessary. I, too, value fair, accurate, and authentic writing assessment practices; however, as seen in the implications to this study, the ethical implications of traditional writing assessment practices deserve more discussion among
writing assessment scholars. This is particularly true as interrater reliability can destabilize construct and ethical validity.

**The Effects of Assessment**

As is evident, discussions about assessment are common and some do touch on the effects of assessment of students and teachers. It is easier, though, to locate discussions of the effects of assessment practices on primary- and secondary-level teachers written primarily by scholars in the field of education measurement due to large-scale standardized testing. For instance, Mary Smith’s (1991) article, “Put to the Test: The Effects of External Testing on Teachers,” documents the following effects on teachers: lowered moral, teaching to the test, feelings of “dissonance and alienation,” feelings of guilt for the effects on the students, reduced time and creativity, narrowed curricular choices, deprofessionalization, and consequences from acceptance or resistance. Nearly twenty years later, the article “The Effects of No Child Left Behind on Teachers’ Writing Instruction” by Sarah J McCarthey supports these findings. McCarthey (2008) writes that teachers had strong feelings of “powerlessness” as curricular decisions were taken out of their hands. She also found a sense of guilt among the teachers and the loss of class time as teachers felt the need to teach to the test (p. 481). The teachers in McCarthey’s (2008) study did feel that NCLB brought a certain level of awareness, similar to the points made by Durst, Roemer, and Schultz (1994), but also that it undermined their classroom practices and led to acts of resistance by the teachers (McCarthey, 2008, p. 450).

There is a certain amount of protection from large-scale standardized testing in postsecondary education level. Bazerman (2003) discusses this protection stating that
“the disciplinary and epistemic culture of modern universities does limit strongly the role of standardized assessment, as universities prize individual contribution and thought” (p. 434). He continues to discuss the individualized nature as well as the German based system of majors and electives as another buffer against the encroachment of standardized testing in higher education (p. 434). However, this buffer may be fading. Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) discussed the National Assessment of College Student Learning, which may bring about more governmental control and influence of higher education (p. 335). This has not been the only discussion of standardized assessment on the collegiate level.

Even without a large-scale system of standardized assessment in place, discussions of standards and outcomes assessment are common. Still, less is done to discover if there are pressures similar to primary and secondary teachers on postsecondary composition teachers. It is true that conversations concerning primary and secondary assessment and writing assessment are often connected to large-scale standardized testing which is not found in postsecondary education; however, there are enough links between these documented effects of standardized assessment and discussions concerning the composition classroom that the effects on composition teachers deserves attention.

Conflicted Perspectives on Assessment

There are many layers of history, value systems, and sometimes contradiction for writing assessment. It serves many different functions for many different stakeholders who maintain different perspectives and needs. Acts of writing assessment are connected, often, with acts of power (Moss, 1994; Huot, 2002, p. 152; Huot & Williamson,
Programs like M.W.P. will have demands placed upon them, which will affect the policies of the program. Universities have outcomes to which programs must adapt. Thus, when a program must live up to standards, and is faced with many different attitudes about writing and teaching from teachers with many different experiences, the administration may choose to use standardized practices to help even the playing field (Broad, 1997, pp. 141-142). Writing assessment can be a sensitive subject, as the stakes affect the various needs and jobs of polymotivational, polycontextual people, especially when processes are standardized.

As part of this process, a first-year writing program, like M.W.P., may feel the need to resort to norming practices and methods to help ensure consensus, such as standardized portfolios. This sentiment is clear in the M.W.P. as seen in the following example situations:

Teaching assistants who have a tendency to give high marks for creativity while overlooking mechanical difficulties or those who have a tendency to pass any piece of writing as long as it is mechanically sound are kept on track through using the [M.W.P.] rubric. (Nelson, 1993, p. 92)

The M.W.P. is by no means the only program doing so, nor is it the only program that finds benefits in these methods.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the effects of these efforts on a novice instructor. In M.W.P., positive feelings that come through the assessment practices have been documented:

Teaching assistants report that perusing through the many rubrics throughout the portfolio assessment process is excellent for helping them measure their own
responses against the majority of instructors, for helping them to keep in mind all
the components of writing that should be commented upon, and for helping them
as they struggle to be consistent with the evaluations of other instructors in the
program. (Nelson, 1993, p. 92)

Others have noted positive feelings such as these. Durst, Schulz, and Roemer (1994)
interviewed several TAs involved in communal writing assessment and norming, one of
which replied that the norming processes were comforting as she found that she agreed
with her colleagues. In the same comment, however, the TA showed signs of the guilt
seen in primary and secondary education and concern over the possibility that those same
colleagues would disagree with her assessment when it came to her students (p. 222).

Broad (1994) notes similar issues. He points out that for those aligning with the majority,
all is well. However, for the minority, the same norming processes that bring reassurance
can “undermine instructor’s sense of professionalism, dignity, intellectual integrity, and
community. Interviewees use words like oppressed, silenced, intimidated, frustrated,
angry, depressed, and insulted to describe such episodes” (p. 271; Broad’s italics). This
study seeks to investigate the effects on a single instructor over the course of a term.

The psychometric tradition calls for agreement, thus the minority is not as great of
a concern; however, there are still repercussions whether the instructor is in the majority
or the minority. Assessment conveys values, and when those values come from
elsewhere, a conflict can occur which requires some form of individual response (White,
2007, p. 52). It should be noted that for the M.W.P., the standardized practices were
conceived and implemented as a way of eliminating or at least helping to alleviate the
writes that “Many sources of anxiety for the writing teacher spring from deep-seated conflict between our beliefs and the activities we engage in, especially when external requirements dictate what we do” (p. 58). Whether accurate or merely perceived, with the lack of control over classroom activities, teaching anxiety increases (Marso & Pigge, 1998, p. 9). In her dissertation regarding teacher anxiety, Brennan Thomas (2006) shows that assessment from beyond the classroom can cause anxiety for teachers, not only due conflicts of ideologies but also because the teacher cannot or will not comply with requirements (p. 40). However, Bonnie Litowitz (2001) and Thomas Deans (2006) note that contradictions can be productive and can lead to change. As addressed in the implications to this study, I believe a sense of negotiation can help this productivity.

A sense of mistrust frequently accompanies assessment that is generated outside of the classroom. Huot (2002) notes that English teachers have often stayed out of assessment, but this lack of input has only added to the mistrust because of the feeling that the values of others are being imposed on their classrooms (p. 81). Bazerman (2003) writes that because assessment brings visibility, it can also be accompanied by a “scent of mistrust” (p. 443). He continues “that scent of mistrust can become a very strong odor if there is any indication that people are being monitored because they are not toeing the line, achieving enough, working hard enough” (p. 443). The desire to monitor G.S.T.A.s can arise from the natural learning curve that comes from teaching for the first time and the problems that can come from that experience, such as the examples discussed by writing program administrators Lynn Langer Meeks and Christine A. Hult (1999). The feeling of being watched by those designing assessment may or may not be warranted but can still affect the instructor. The M.W.P. does not explicitly monitor the results of
portfolio evaluation. However, as the pieces included in the portfolio do contain the comments and names in order to help supply context, “it is only natural that instructors will form opinions about what they perceive as strengths and weaknesses in the work of other instructors” (Nelson, 1993, p. 112). Whether meant or not, there is a very real form of monitoring as seen in JL’s interview responses in the coming chapters. One instance described was seen when a G.S.T.A. was given a stack of portfolios that didn’t fit with program standards. He took the portfolios to the administration and the full-time instructor was separated out for special training (Nelson, 1993, p. 114). In this situation, the G.S.T.A. reported physical manifestations of the anxiety coming from the experience (p. 115). This cannot help but affect the instructors in good and possibly harmful ways.

Writing assessment is a crucial part of teaching composition. I see it as a powerful form of inquiry into systemic values and beliefs and an even more powerful teaching tool. It is also an important opportunity for instructors as it is both an “ethical and professional” requirement, but “[teachers] are also rightly concerned about the adverse effects that assessment can have on their classrooms and students” (Huot, 2002, p. 59). Assessment is part of the writing instructor’s identity. In the grander view, “because assessment is a direct representation of what we value and how we assign value, it says much about our identities as teachers, researchers and theorists” (Huot, 2002, p. 11). This dissertation seeks to ask what happens when that identity is at least partially defined by others.

Writing assessment is complicated. Each act of writing assessment calls upon many different groups and traditions:
Back of all instructional response lie at least four muscular regulative apparatuses, intricately fused: criteria, or teacherly notions of good writing; rule of genre and mode, or parameters erected by the established history of particular discourse forms; disciplinary styles, or parameters erected by professional groups; and standards, or levels of writing achievement set by social groups. Each is elaborate. Interplay, constraints, and contradictions among them are rife.

(Haswell, 2006)

The reality is “[instructors] must accept some responsibility for standards, for the sake of both the institution and the students who will be required to fulfill its demands” (White, 2007, p. 52). The ability to do so has real consequences for G.S.T.A.s.

Writing assessment truly is in a landscape that while beautiful can also be contested and troubled. Rather than picking a moment and hoping to understand the complexities of the landscape, using activity theory and feminist research principles, I add another voice to a history. This voice can begin to address how unified assessment practices and tools affect instructors of composition classes, for the needs of teachers are sometimes overlooked in the desire to maintain standards while creating agreement among those assessing writing.

After finding the arrowhead and brushing up against the past, Heat-Moon (1999) returned the arrowhead to the earth. I bring these conversations forth knowing that I “cannot occupy the same space at the same time” with all of these perspectives, but perhaps, by knowing and working to understand the voices we can occupy “the same time at the same time” (p. 593) be that time the turn of the twentieth century or a decade into the twenty-first century. Rather than returning these shards to the earth, though, I ask
that we, you and I, take up these histories, desires, and perspectives to try and understand
JL’s perspective. The instructor whose experiences about to be discussed does not know
of many of these issues, yet he had to deal with their repercussions. Though a bystander,
JL is coming into direct contact with the past and present.
CHAPTER III.

BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF ANY MAP: THE PEOPLE AND PLACE

When looking at the materials he had collected while researching Chase County, Kansas, Heat--Moon (1999) wrote that what he created “was a topographic map of words that would open inch by inch to show its long miles” (p. 15). The county he was mapping had been “seen” by many; after all, it exists in atlases and on maps tucked away in glove compartments. Others, though, have seen it. He wrote:

You may see the county from one of the many transcontinental flights that pass right over it, or you view it from an Amtrak window (no stops in the county), or you can get fired down the long, smoking bore of the turnpike that shoots across it. You may also see it from graveled roads, dirt lanes, pasture tracks, or vestiges of historic trails, or from its couple hundred miles of canoe-navigable waters, and you can travel it by leg and butt—that is, by walking and reading. (Heat--Moon, 1999, p. 18)

The ways of seeing this area do indeed change what is seen. What Heat--Moon (1999) found was that his map and that landscape exist beyond the hills and structures that dot the countryside. The landmarks are an important part of the map, but it is the people the make the county (p. 182).

One can see a place, but to know a place, you must know the people and the history. Before a discussion of the data can take place, the program and the instructor need to be introduced. For this chapter I specifically draw from the call of feminist scholars Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie (2003/1995) and Joey Sprague (2005) to include the words and voice of participants. Thus, several extended excerpts from JL’s interviews
are provided so that he may speak for himself. Analysis of the interviews comes in later chapters.

The values and history discussed in the previous chapter are an engrained part of writing assessment history. They are crucial to the conclusions found when discussing the decisions and connections that come from the use of standardized writing assessment practices, even when localized. They truly are a part of the local history that will be discussed. But, as with Chase County, it is not the practices that hold this program together. Rather, it is the people who have devoted parts of their lives to this program and worked within these practices that make up the program.

The social worlds/arenas map illustrates the greater set of values that intersect behind the scenes and at times overtly. The Midwest Writing Program (M.W.P.) developed its practices over many years based on the needs of its students. This development, however, took place as views of direct writing assessment were changing as seen in Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain Unfold: A Literature Review.” Traces of the values espoused by writing assessment scholars can be seen in M.W.P.’s development as a program,
its early writing assessment practices, and its current practice. The map illustrates the writing assessment practices’ 40-year evolution which took place within the coexisting development of the university and field. JL’s involvement in the program, development as a teacher, and class itself takes place among these values. His class is influenced by those histories and values via the programmatic assessment practices, but JL’s perspectives and values also play an important role. As Prior (1998) notes, when systems come together, there is change to all involved. Because of this interplay of values, a discussion of the interaction I observed without some understanding of the histories and values of the field, program, and JL would be wholly incomplete. One must see the greater picture to see the effects on the classroom and, as Mary Smith (1991) states, “learn what reactions are incorporated into the teachers’ identities and subsequent definitions of teaching” (p. 8).

This chapter provides a fuller view of M.W.P. and the novice instructor, JL. From these descriptions it is possible to obtain an understanding of the enculturative and norming practices used by the M.W.P. Also possible is an understanding of the values that flow through those practices and a sense how M.W.P. and JL each view the object of their respective systems. Deeply tied to the research questions guiding this study, the description of the program is placed next to the history and value sets brought by JL that help shape the system. Thus, the varying motives that come together begin to come to the forefront.

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8 Perspective, as I define it here, is an idiosyncratic mix of history, lived experience, and learned experience. Values are the underlying, often subconscious beliefs and importance of those beliefs that influence the way in which an individual or entity interacts with external forces. As noted in Chapter One, perspectives and values are a complicated mix of individual viewpoint and social influence.

9 The object of an activity system is the problem space or raw materials and will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.
What also begins to emerge via the description of the program particularly in conjunction with JL’s perspectives is the way in which the program becomes an entity in and of itself as the history of its practices get blackboxed. As an entity, it is drawn upon in intended and unintended ways by JL. The descriptions also serve as a reminder that the program is made of people with agency. Much as feminist researcher Nancy Naples (2003) and activity theorist Clay Spinuzzi (2003) address, the people that have been a part of M.W.P. development and JL are actants. At times they choose to align with the greater values sets and at times they choose to resist. These descriptions help illustrate the purposeful decisions that are being made by the participants on behalf of the program, instructors, and students. It is important to remember, though, that the program and JL have much fuller lives than can be represented here. Though I do my best to provide the relevant information, in doing so, I have created versions of the program and JL that are simpler than they truly are.

**The Landscape: A Site Description**

Writing requirements and the use of G.S.T.A.s/T.A.s to teach those requirements are very common; however, not all institutions have unified, separate program to teach writing classes, nor do all institutions make use of a standardized set of writing assessment practices. M.W.P. at Midwest University (M.U.) does. The charge for teaching the required first-year writing courses at M.U. does not fall on the English Department. Rather, since 2001, there has been a separate program that undertakes this mission. Prior to the separation and since that program has had a long and impressive history of providing consistent courses for incoming students. This history illustrates a
concerted effort to do what is best for those students. The evolutions have not been isolated; rather, they have been part of and within a university, field, and society.

Required writing classes have long been taught at M.U., but several major changes started in the early 1970s during a time of major transformation and upheaval. Norbert Elliot (2005) writes that the number of students in college rose from 2.5 million in 1955 to 5.7 million in 1965 (p. 184). This growth in student population did not pass by M.U. Phyllis Eck (1992) notes in her history of the M.W.P. that during the 1960s M.U. also experienced an influx of students and began shifting toward becoming a research institution (pp. 42-43). This institutional change was merely one of many elements that had an influence. The early 1970s were a time of change in the way that composition courses were viewed and taught. This was also a time when scholars like Edward White were changing views of assessment through their research with holistic scoring, which allowed student writing to be quickly assessed and still be reliable (Elliot, 2005, p. 205). The English Department at M.U. was affected by the evolution of views of composition, which led in part to a major restructuring of the writing assessment practices in 1972 (Eck, 1992, p. 50).

The Current Program

M.U. is a mid-sized state institution. The 2008 first-year class had more than 4,000 students and many enrolled in one of M.U.’s first-year writing courses. At the time there were 46 graduate student teaching assistants (G.S.T.A.s)—21 first term and 25 returning G.S.T.A.s—and 34 full-time, non-tenure-track faculty, many with three-year renewable contracts teaching for M.W.P. Similar to other programs, its instructors came from several groups. The G.S.T.A.s were enrolled in one of four different degree
programs: literature, creative writing, and composition and rhetoric which were part of the English Department or the cultural studies department.

G.S.T.A.s at M.W.P. can teach from one to four years depending on their degree program and the availability of courses taught within their degree program. New English G.S.T.A.s teach one class per semester, and returning English G.S.T.A.s teach two classes in the fall and one in the spring while cultural studies G.S.T.A.s teach two courses per year throughout their program. The multiple programs from which the G.S.T.A.s are pulled, the individuality of the G.S.T.A.s themselves, and even the number of classes a G.S.T.A. teaches for the M.W.P. brings vastly different sets of motives and desires which directly can affect the connection a G.S.T.A. has with the program. G.S.T.A.s will often be very busy which can lead to contradictions, but the program itself and whether it connects to the G.S.T.A. future goals can also lead to contradictions. These varying motives and desires are a part of the design of this study as were discussed in the guiding questions found in Chapter One, “The Tools of Cartography: A Discussion of Methods and Methodology.”

Incoming students go through a detailed placement process. Within a twenty-four-hour timeframe of the student’s choosing, she or he writes an essay which is then submitted online. The essays are then evaluated by trained returning G.S.T.A.s who place students into either College Composition 100 (a developmental writing course), College Composition 101 (an introductory writing course), or College Composition 102 (a course in research writing). College Composition 101, the course into which students are most often placed, is a three-credit course that introduces students to traditional stages of the
writing process along, academic conventions, and argument. Following the successful completion of College Composition 101, M.U. students must complete College Composition 102, which works with critical and analytic thought, academic research, and source synthesis. Though College Composition 101 is the primary course for incoming students, successful completion of College Composition 102 is a graduation requirement.

**Alternative Grading Practices**

M.W.P. courses use a somewhat untraditional system of grading. In 1972 the M.U. English Department began experimenting with a system that does not use failing grades. Nonpassing students retake the class, but students do not receive a failing grade on their transcripts. This way students can take the necessary time to develop without penalization. Eck (1992) notes that this system was officially approved by the Faculty Senate in 1977 (p. 61). Therefore, College Composition 100 and 101 use a satisfactory/no record (NR) grading scale, though in extreme cases, generally involving students that stop attending class early in the semester or cases of academic dishonesty, students can fail which does appear on the transcript. Even in the described situations, however, instructors decide whether to assign the NR or fail the student. College Composition 102 also uses the NR, but students receive an A, B, or C designation for passing the course because of the institutional graduation requirement.

**The Standards As the Compass**

Other major changes have been made by M.W.P. on behalf of the students. For example, standardized practices have not always been the norm. In the late 1960s the English Department faculty member who would in time become the coordinator

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10 In order to protect anonymity and due to the restricted access of the manuals outside of the program, program materials have not been included in the references, though samples are included in the appendices.
responsible for the changes made in 1972 began to see the need for standards. Eck (1992) describes a time prior to 1967 in which “the diversity of teachers’ interests and the variances in the quality they demanded resulted in the two courses not really functioning as a unified sequence” (p. 41). At that time there was a great diversity among the classes regarding what was taught and the pedagogy used. Much as White (2007) describes, instructors entered the classroom with little guidance and “with so little formal preparation, it [was] not surprising that many instructors depended upon the methods they had experienced either as students or as teachers at other institutions” (Eck, 1992, p. 36). The desire for standards, unity, and standardized practices is still maintained today as evinced in M.W.P.’s Guide to Portfolio Assessment (2007), which states:

One of the major benefits of Portfolio Assessment is that it helps to standardize evaluative criteria and grading among all sections of a course. This is especially important in composition, where well over one hundred sections of the same course can be offered during one semester at [M.U.]. Without some regulation by [M.W.P.], students could be receiving positive or negative—as well as vastly different—writing experiences. By sharing the responsibility of Portfolio Assessment among all instructors, each instructor becomes sensitized to the types and levels of proficiency that [M.W.P.] would like all students to meet in each composition course. (p. 43)

The desire for regulation is evident in the general writing assessment trends discussed in the previous chapter.

M.W.P. uses several standardized processes to encourage unity and consensus, especially among new instructors. During orientation, first-term G.S.T.A.s are provided
with a suggested syllabus and policy statement for College Composition 101 and 102 in
the pedagogy course for spring. Please see Appendix A for examples. This syllabus is
also available for returning G.S.T.A.s and full-time instructors. The first-year G.S.T.A.s
must assign the same types of papers in a designated order, though the specific themes
are designed by the instructor; however, returning G.S.T.A.s and full-time faculty are
allowed to vary the order of the papers and to choose from the different types of papers
that have been used by the program. Similarly, the returning instructors can choose from
a list of textbooks, but all new G.S.T.A.s are required to use the same text. All instructors
must abide by M.U. and M.W.P. objectives which fall within five categories: Rhetorical
Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Writing Processes, Knowledge Conventions, and Values
Exploration. Finally, M.W.P. makes use of a standardized rubric and end-of-term
portfolio exchange for all instructors and classes.

The Rubric

The M.W.P. rubric, seen in Appendix C, is the primary tool for the programmatic
writing assessment practices and is required for use by all instructors on all formal
student writing. This rubric has a long history of its own. It has evolved since its
inception as it is consistently reviewed to accommodate changes in texts and the program.
Changes are piloted through an organized process involving the director and assessment
committee of full-time M.W.P. instructors.

Eck (1992) describes the development of the first rubric that was used in
conjunction with an end-of-term proficiency exam in 1972 writing:

With the right instrument, even the newest instructors could attempt to objectify
their readings, rather than depend on subjective reactions which were prone to
vast unevenness across the department. What the teacher needed was a score cord [sic] or tally sheet which would list the elements of good writing and allow the evaluator to rate a particular essay with a numbered score in each category. (p. 59)

The faculty member that created the original rubric based it off the work of Paul Diederich, a major player in the organization of rubrics in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service.\textsuperscript{11} It measured expression, organization and development, mechanics and usage, sentence structure, and word choice using a scale of 1-7. Another faculty member determined that a single rubric would work for all classes (Eck, 1992, p. 59). The use of a single rubric to evaluate all formal papers is a practice that continues to this day. There was initial resistance to the rubric when a senior faculty member voiced the worry that still resonates in current discussions of rubrics: students will write to the rubric (Eck, 1992, p. 60). However, as Eck notes, “because most of the [M.W.P.] courses were taught by inexperienced instructors who had little resistance to new methods, the rubric was generally adopted for essay evaluation” (p. 60). The rich history of the rubric, in particular its direct connection to Diederich, illustrates the overt connection to writing assessment scholarship and values. The values that were originally part of the creation, though now hidden, still exist in the rubric and come into contact with students and instructors like JL. As Spinuzzi (2003) shows, this is where problems can arise via double binds (p. 117).

Over the years several changes have been made to the rubric. It is true that the initial “concern [was] for setting an even standard among unevenly trained instructors” (Eck, 1992, p. 105). However, it evolved from a tool meant purely for evaluation to one

\textsuperscript{11} A strong discussion of Deiderich’s work can be found in chapters four and five of Elliot’s (2005) \textit{On a Scale} and chapter one in Broad’s (2003) \textit{What We Really Value}. 
meant to spur development and revision. The rubric changed from a grid to a list of traits for which the evaluator circled “yes” or “no.” Later, the rubric was reorganized to reflect the hierarchy of categories and the evaluation was expanded from yes/no to pass, low pass, and no pass (Eck, 1992, p. 106). Under the direction of the next coordinator, only minor changes were made to the rubric; however, in 1990 the current director added a second side to the rubric to be used for self-reflection and evaluation by the students (Eck, 1992, p. 108). Another structural change was recently instituted by the same director and M.W.P. staff. The questions meant to spur reflection were moved to a sheet designed to help develop audience awareness. The second side of the rubric is open for instructor comments to encourage student/instructor dialog. The rubric is also meant to be used as an educational tool. The M.W.P. Instructor Handbook (2008) states, “[M.W.P.] emphasis on writing as a process is best served by using the rubric as an educational tool which engages students in their own evaluation process and provides them with a careful analysis of a paper’s strengths and weaknesses” (p. 43).

Though still organized hierarchically, the current rubric uses categories different than those used on early versions of the rubric. These categories are Audience, Organization/Theme Structure, Development, Syntax, Word Choice, and Grammar/Usage/Mechanics. The Audience section evaluates the students’ ability to address the needs and perceptions of the reader, such as tone and credibility. The Organization/Theme Structure section assesses the students’ thesis, organizational patterns, and meta-discourse, such as clear topic sentences and transitions between paragraphs. The Development section addresses the manner in which the students advance and support the thesis and argument through secondary sources, the
acknowledgment of possible counterarguments, and the use of an effective introductions and conclusions. The Syntax section assesses the students’ ability to create correct and effective sentences. The Word Choice section evaluates appropriateness, effectiveness, and accuracy of the words used throughout the paper. Finally, the Grammar/Usage/Mechanics section addresses editing concerns (M.W.P. Instructor Handbook, 2008, pp. 44-50).

For a paper to pass, each of the categories must be designated as passing by the instructor. In other words, if any category doesn’t pass, the entire paper doesn’t pass and the paper then receives the designation of lowest category. For example, if a paper receives a pass in the categories audience, organization, organization/theme structure, receives an almost pass in development, syntax, and word choice, and receives a no pass in grammar/usage/mechanics, the paper would receive a final evaluation of no pass.

M.W.P. instructors are encouraged to evaluate papers holistically using the rubric to substantiate the evaluation. In order to do so, instructors are asked to read papers, choose an overall evaluation, and then use the rubric to note strengths and weaknesses of the paper (Instructor Handbook, 2008, p. 42). In College Composition 101, papers receive only a pass, almost pass, or no pass designation, but in College Composition 102, if the paper passes all categories, a grade of A, B, or C is also assigned.

The Portfolio Exchange

The M.W.P. rubric has been used in conjunction with an end-of-term, programmatic, summative assessment since its creation in 1972, though the form of assessment has also gone through several variations. Through the mid-1960s no common assessment was used; however, the rising desire for standards seen in the 1960s brought a
similar call for uniform assessment to ensure those standards. Thus, in 1968 a one-hour proficiency exam was instituted with grading standards (Eck, 1992, p. 49). The amount of time for the proficiency exam was later increased to three hours in order to encourage revision, and eventually to six hours with a one-hour lunch break. In later versions, students were also allowed to bring a three-by-five-inch card with a prewritten thesis statement (Eck, 1992, pp. 66-70). Eck notes that “although the [M.W.P.] Office held meetings stressing the importance of consensus in grading and even held practice sessions to try and reach that consensus, there was considerable disagreement among instructors of what exactly constituted a passing essay” (p. 114). The appeal process meant to help resolve the conflicting evaluations involved the submission of a folder containing all the papers written by the student throughout the term (Eck, 1992, pp. 114-115). In 1990, when the current director took over the program, a formal portfolio assessment process replaced the six-hour proficiency examination (Eck, 1992, p. 140). It is that portfolio process that is still used.

The end-of-term portfolio exchange is meant to benefit students and instructors. Specifically, the M.W.P. Guide to Portfolio Assessment (2008) notes that portfolios help students to see writing as a “multi-tasked process,” to “recognize the importance and interdependence of all parts of their writing” as well as to see the growth in those areas to “save and value their writing,” to do their best as there are audiences beyond the instructor, and to become more reflective and better assessors of their own writing, which “leads them to greater consciousness of their own composing process” (p. 8). The benefits for instructors are the provision of a detailed record of student writing and development, another reader for “borderline students,” an opportunity to see and share
materials as well as commenting styles from other sections and instructors, and an assurance of the “quality of instruction across the [M.W.P.], helping establish uniform criteria for proficiency in each course, maintaining uniform standards of assignment design in each individual section, and providing a means of consistent evaluation of students’ writing” (p. 9).

The process of evaluation used for the portfolios is very structured. Students must pass at least two essays and satisfy the course policy requirements seen in Appendix B to be eligible for the portfolio exchange. Students then compile all formal written work with the original instructor feedback in a portfolio. Also included in the portfolio is a reflective essay written by the student that details the student’s views of the writing and reasons the portfolio should pass. Finally, an evaluator form, which contains the instructor’s brief comments regarding the student’s writing and progress and the portfolios level of proficiency, is included with a form for the outside evaluator’s comments. Once compiled, the passing portfolios are collected as a class by the instructor.

All the passing portfolios from all the courses are then gathered and redistributed among the different M.W.P. instructors. The outside reader places her or his name on the portfolio evaluation sheet and the papers are read in reverse chronological order as the evaluator looks for signs of the necessary competency. If the outside evaluator passes the portfolio the student passes the course. In case of College Composition 102, the instructor’s designated grades cannot be changed by the outside evaluator. In other words, if the portfolio is found to be passing by the outside evaluator, the grade assigned by the instructor is recorded on the student’s transcript. Nonpassing portfolios, be it for 100/101 or 102, go to an additional, often more experienced, reader. Students that do not
pass the portfolio process, as well as students whose portfolios are not submitted for the evaluation process by the instructor, can appeal the decision through the M.W.P. office.

**Training and Enculturation**

The standards and processes used across the program are accompanied by in-service training and mentoring to reinforce and guide decision processes. Thus there is a need to understand the enculturative and norming practices used by the program which is reflected in this study’s guiding questions. Full-time faculty and returning G.S.T.A.s are required to attend portfolio discussion sessions prior to portfolio assessment for the purposes of “evaluating sample portfolios, practicing coming to consensus on proficiency, and discussing questions about the Portfolio Assessment process” (M.W.P. *Guide to Portfolio Assessment*, 2008, p. 43). The *Guide to Portfolio Assessment* (2008) also states that “As the instructor studies the evaluation criteria, he or she learns how to rank student writing according to [M.W.P.’s] standardized system of high, middle, or low level’s of effective communication” (p. 42). In this way, the “instructor learns to calibrate his or her judgment to [M.W.P.] standards” (*Instructor Handbook*, 2008, p. 22). First term G.S.T.A.s are not required to attend these sessions as this information is discussed in the required pedagogy course and with program mentors.

As the G.S.T.A.s come from many different backgrounds and programs, M.W.P. uses a structured training process for new G.S.T.A.s, which, like the other components of the program, has evolved over time. Eck (1992) notes that throughout the 1960s, there was very little guidance provided to new instructors. Starting in 1972, a two-day informational session prior to the start of classes was introduced. Instructors were also required to take English 700. However, the course sequence lacked unity. By the mid-
1970s all G.S.T.A.s were teaching College Composition 101 and English 700 became more focused. The course went through many more changes including the move toward a workshop format when the current director began teaching the course in 1988 (p. 65).

Currently, new G.S.T.A.s attend an intensive six-day training session prior to the start of courses, which is held in conjunction with M.U.’s official five-day graduate student orientation. Once the term starts, G.S.T.A.s take the required pedagogy course, which meets twice each week throughout the majority of the fall term and a month into the spring term. This course is designed to help new instructors become comfortable teaching composition and to address different pedagogical concerns, such as teaching persona, working with students in the classroom and in conferences, effective commenting, and working with writer-based prose. This course also discusses M.W.P. policies. This class is where G.S.T.A.s are introduced to the different types of assignments used in College Composition 101 and 102. G.S.T.A.s are also provided a number of different consistently updated M.W.P. manuals, such as the Sample Assignments Manual and the Sample Evaluated Assignments Manual, which are meant to guide many of the curricular and assessment decision processes. Please see Appendix D for a list and description of the manuals. This is also the class in which G.S.T.A.s are normed.

New G.S.T.A.s are required to attend a weekly, one-hour meeting with that M.W.P. program mentor. Program mentors discuss classes, work through problems, and reinforce the standards of the M.W.P. by approving classroom materials, comments on student papers, and formal evaluations of student writing. The program mentors also attend the required teaching rerated course with the new G.S.T.A.s. Program mentors are
supervised by M.W.P. administration and meet with the director on a weekly basis and their offices are housed in the main M.W.P. offices. Because of the time spent mentoring new G.S.T.A.s, program mentors receive a course release each term. Thus, they only teach one course in the fall term. This practice was instituted in 1984-1985, when new G.S.T.A.s began being formally mentored by returning G.S.T.A.s (Eck, 1992, p. 100). The mentors are chosen by the director based partially on suggestions from the outgoing mentors for their ability to comment on student work, the creativity and effectiveness of their classroom, and the ability to maintain and explain program policies.

Because of its structure and history, M.W.P. provides a strong site to begin investigating the effects of standardized assessment practices on a novice instructor, such as JL. Not only does the program make use of standardized practices and curriculum, but it also uses an intensive training system and norming. Thus, it can provide a glimpse into the effects that assessment practices standardized across a program on the classroom decisions of a novice instructor. It provides the setting for this map—a terrain to explore.

**JL: The Novice Instructor**

Along with the longstanding themes illustrated in Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain Unfold: A Literature Review,” M.W.P.’s history is filled with calls for standards and validity driven by the desire to do what is best for students. Monroe, DeVoss, and Kelly (1917), Chapman and Rush (1917), and Lewis (1921) all wished to improve the education that students receive. While there are those that wished to restrict education, often discussions of writing assessment are held with the best of intentions. Still, as Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) argue, writing assessment decisions are often based on “power rather than theory that drive important assessment decisions” (p. 331).
In the end, no matter where, when, or how discussions of writing assessment are carried out, when enacted, they have real effects. Norbert Elliot (2005) shows just how important social issues are in writing assessment history. Likewise, as Huot reminds readers, writing assessment “says much about our identities as teachers, researchers and theorists” (Huot, 2002, p. 11). As the decisions are taken, a psychometric concern for impartiality “silences voices of those who are most knowledgeable about the context and most directly affected by the results” (Moss, 1994, p. 10). Thus, the writing assessment practices, when external, partially create the instructor’s identity and become the instructor in official circles.

It is evident that the people involved in M.W.P.’s evolution were seeking a strong, unified program for the students. Likewise, the move from an exit examination to portfolio assessment was part of greater changes to help lessen the pressure and stress placed on both instructors and students. These efforts show a continual desire to develop and improve practices. The following description and interview excerpts provide a view of the program from the perspective of the novice instructor, JL. They bring his voice to the forefront and provide a first-hand account of the portions of the history, motivations, and beliefs that JL brings to the classroom and writing assessment practice.

The quotes begin to illustrate the complex interaction of values that exists within JL’s choices. The description and quotes provide an important framework for understanding the concrete ways in which field-based and programmatic values flow into the classroom. Through JL’s voice comes a perspective of the mesoscopic level by providing the goals and motivations behind the specific acts seen in the described
classroom interaction. Once again, I seek to allow JL to speak in his own words, and analysis will come in the following chapters.

**An Example Class Period**

It is well into the term and as usual JL is there when I arrive, sitting at the table in the front of the room getting ready for class. His computer is hooked to the classroom projection system quietly playing cheery music over the speakers. He looks up with a smile and welcomes me. We chat briefly about the weather and what’s going on around campus before he gets back to business. Though there are at least ten more minutes before the start of class, students are already sitting in their seats. It is clear that they had been joking with JL before I arrived.

The room is a large, tan, and tiered with long counter-like tables. The chairs are separate from the tables and there is an audible shuffling as the rest of the students file in. JL greets each student with a smile, some with a teasing comment, and others with question about what they did over the weekend. By the comfort of their responses, it is clear that this is a normal morning.

Each student takes out the laptop required for class and turns it on. Many of them speak quietly with one another as they check email, sign in to Facebook to check their news feed, and open the class discussion board. Though some move back and forth with JL’s music, the time is spent getting ready for class. Virtually everyone is present when JL glances back at the clock and brings up the slide with the “food for thought,” which is generally an inspirational quote that is connected to the day’s discussion. The students quiet down. JL asks how everyone is, a couple of students answer, and some light teasing goes on as JL takes attendance.
The class gets down to business and JL turns off the music. Today is a peer-review day, but there is some business to get done first. The students start by handing in one of the required portfolio sheets for paper number four. Things are moving quickly at this point in the term. JL emailed the evaluated drafts of paper three a few days prior and now briefly talks about the general patterns he saw in paper three. This is followed by a quick reminder that every student needs to pass two papers to be eligible for the portfolio exchange. He tells students that if they have received two “no passes” (the first paper does not receive a pass/no pass designation) they should consider revising the stronger of the two papers. JL, like many of the M.W.P. instructors, emphasizes the fact that portfolio readers start with paper number five and read backward through the papers so students should work really hard on papers four and five. JL also reminds students that the writing center is busy this time of year so they should consider calling ahead to make an appointment rather than just walking in.

The class moves on as JL pulls up a slide with an outline from his mentor, Sam, for paper number four. The class asks a few questions about what they see and JL patiently answers. He provides an example and tells the class that he will email them the outline. He also asks that everyone keep the information in mind as they conduct a peer review. Students then type their name and email address in the class discussion forum and JL randomly picks groups of three for the peer review. Students grab their laptops and move to their groups. After emailing their papers to each other, they start reading, using the comment feature in the word processor to give advice. Students also fill out a peer review sheet to help their partners.
JL turns the music back on at a low level and places the slide containing Sam’s outline back on the board and circulates to see how each group is doing. He answers several questions and jokes with a few students. Though he is generally relaxed and the students react well to his demeanor, there mood is serious. He reminds the students that they are in it together and will make it through the portfolio process. The students work hard and, shortly before the end of class, discuss what they saw with each other.

As the class comes to a close, JL reminds the students about some of the more pertinent points they had discussed earlier. When he asks for questions, a student asks again which paper he should revise, and JL reiterates that he should choose the stronger of the two. He then reminds all of the students that he is available via email or in his office to help them out if they need it. The students pack up their laptops and leave. JL and I then talk a bit about what I saw and the impending portfolio process.

As feminist research methodologies and activity theory acknowledge, this snapshot is just that. It represents just over an hour out of JL’s life. Yet there is much more to this person, far more than can be represented in the following excerpts.

**JL’s History, Motives, and Connections to His Class and M.W.P.**

JL’s life, like many graduate students that are part of the first-year composition landscape, is complicated and extends far beyond the classroom. He has to negotiate a complicated mix of student needs, degree-program demands, and life in general. He is a unique mix of experiences, desires, and self-perception that exists within the rules and roles of those and other communities. JL articulated this in a very concrete way during his second interview. When I asked JL how things were going in his class, his reply revealed quite a bit about the interaction of his systems. He stated, “I think things are
going fairly well. . . . I mean [pause] grad school for me is like one slice of a pie that has four different slices” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). Each of these slices, though not included because of their ability to identify JL,¹² is very demanding and extremely important to him. He went on to say,

I always have to be mindful of trying to balance that out. [. . .] But so far so good. I don't feel stressed. I don't feel like I’m . . . I’m not spending every waking moment on school whether it is M.W.P. or classes. I probably put in about forty to fifty hours a week at this point because my personal philosophy is that if you work past that your level of productivity begins to suffer and the quality of your output begins to suffer . . . so it’s just not. . .it’s counterproductive and the work’s always going to be there next week. It’s not like I’m putting it off. If anything, I try to get stuff done ahead of time. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

The unique mix, for JL, is one that comes with a lot of responsibilities filled with commitments. JL noted in the interview that took place at the end of the term, though, that his position did provide some benefits:

My lifestyle is much more regimented and frankly I'm not going out to the bar, you know, and stuff like that. So, when other graduate students tell me how swamped they are, how busy they are [. . .] I just felt like my time management skills really paid off. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

¹² Other information removed from the quotes themselves is done for this reason as well.
These needs that come with JL’s commitments cannot help but impact his classroom decisions, a point he discussed in the second interview. When I asked JL if he noticed an influence on his classroom, he replied:

[Big sigh] Um, yeah, I mean there's always . . . It's just a matter of juggling stuff. To be honest, the [College Composition 101] stuff is busywork. It’s the kind of thing I do first when I know I've got a really major reading assignment or my own writing to do, and if I want to put off my own homework, it’s like, “Oh I really should work on a lesson plan for Thursday,” even though its Monday night, you know? That sort of thing. Um, it’s always easy to use 101 as an excuse not to do my own work . . . Um . . . Ideally, priority wise, 101 is sort of and [the required pedagogy course] I should say, are second to my primary focus at [M.U.] which is my [own coursework]. Now I suppose if I were a rhet/comp person that wouldn’t be the case because it would be part and parcel with sort of what I am here to do, but since I am in [another program] it is definitely not as important. It’s a job. I am here to earn money, and while I do care about the welfare of my students, and I want to do my work well, it’s a job, you know? And [my program] is my vocation. There's a difference. A job is what you do to pay the bills, a vocation is what you do to live a life. Yeah, that’s sort of my sense of things. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

The intersection of systems didn’t stop there and it was accompanied with frustration, as JL noted when I again asked how things were going:

As a whole, you know, I think it could have been worse. There are definitely weeks when I, you know, felt like I was pushing the limits of my ability to do my
own scholarly stuff for the sake of getting my M.W.P. stuff done and not that I was angry with that, I just realized that being a person [from another program] who has never taught for M.W.P. before and not a rhet/comp person, this stuff’s not going to be as easy for me to throw together as some of the other people. I have no idea if [people from other programs] have the same kind of challenge that I had, you know, but I’m assuming the rhet/comp people probably put it together easier, um, or at least knew the lingo better. So yeah, there were times during the semester where I felt a little squeezed. Where it would be the night before a class that I had to teach and it would be, you know, pushing midnight before I finished up a PowerPoint or whatever. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

Even though he is trying to balance several commitments and the needs of several systems, in the first interview, JL stated that he did see himself in a beneficial relationship with the M.W.P. He received monetary compensation and the program receives “a reliable professional person who does their job well” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). JL expressed the same sentiment in the second interview when I asked him about his role in the program, to which he replied:

I guess my role in M.W.P. is to aid and abet the program overall. It’s kind of like a positive form of symbiosis. I have a need to fulfill my part of the deal to get my tuition waved and a little paycheck beside. And M.W.P. has offered me the opportunity to use what little experience I have in the field to come in and teach a class. I’m getting a tremendous experience just being in the classroom environment. I am sure that next semester, on the first day, I am going to walk in there with a totally different level of anxiety. Much less than I did this semester,
and that kind of experience is invaluable. You can’t learn it in a book. It is something you have to do. So, my role in M.W.P. has been a reciprocal role. I’ve given to them and I’ve taken from them. It seems to be mutually satisfying thus far. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

The realities of the sixteen-week term and the systems in which JL is currently involved are not the only influence on his classroom. He has a personal history that influences his decisions. JL excelled in English classes for long time. Part of this success meant that JL tested out of the required composition courses for his undergraduate degree. He also worked as a tutor, though he relayed that there were some problems with that position. He stated, my “writing was so intuitive at that point that I didn't know what I was doing. You know . . . I could just write, but I couldn't explain how” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). He noted in a later interview that this intuitive writing style persists and has become a part of his assessment style.

JL and I also discussed his formal pedagogical training in the first interview. He stated, “I never took pedagogy or anything like that. In undergrad I was an English Lit guy. I wasn’t really studying to be a teacher” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). JL discussed his love for writing when I asked why he decided to teach English for M.W.P.:

Being an English major in undergrad, I really enjoy writing and I do an awful lot of writing. Um, I have a book manuscript sitting in a drawer that’s 170,000 words that I probably will never get published, but at least I can say I have written a book. Um, and I enjoy working with people so it’s kind of a win-win situation. Like I said, I have never had much practical pedagogical stuff taught to me about
how to teach it so I’m kind of feeling my way through it and I tell the kids. If I think I am doing something wrong, I apologize and I own my mistakes, you know? I don’t want them to think that I know it all. I want them to think that I don’t. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

JL wasn’t worried when entering M.W.P. I asked JL how prepared he had been to teach writing. He replied:

Not—not very. I mean, I went in with the reassurance that everything would be spelled out for me very thoroughly and carefully and so I didn’t have a lot of anxiety about it going in. I was just, you know, I was looking forward to having the experience in the classroom, which was after ten years of having a lot experience being in front of groups of people. This would be a new and different way of being in front of groups of people and, uh, I found that in a lot of ways this was less stressful than the other roles that I performed. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

JL and I had discussed before, though, how his other experiences would play a role in his classroom decisions. He replied:

It seems like the teaching . . . what they’re asking us to do is a little different than what I experienced as an undergrad and uh, but, of course what I learned in undergrad, as a writer, is, well, you know, part of what enables me to read these papers and to make a decent assessment of what the author is trying to say and what I can hopefully do to help them say it. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)
As the previous quote makes clear, there are direct ways that many of JL’s experiences have influenced his classroom decisions, particularly in the ways he looks at writing and writing assessment. When I asked JL how he developed his teaching style when he replied,

Actually coming out of undergrad, I was in advertising for [... ] newspapers. And for me it’s more like a sales tactic because I was able to use those kinds of statements to convince my advertisers to buy more advertising. You know I’d be like, “You know this ad looks really great. It’s got an awful lot of text here and looks really sharp, but you know, I want you to just imagine for a minute how the newspaper reader would react if it were a quarter of a page bigger and we were able to put more white space in it.” You know, so it’s the same sort of psychology. I am trying to sell the students what’s best for them in terms of the effort they’re making. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

JL’s Views of Teaching and Personal Goals In Relation to M.W.P.

Though JL’s formal experience with teaching writing and the theory that drives it was self-admittedly limited before starting with the M.W.P. program, he was not remiss in his efforts to help his students learn. On the contrary, JL cared deeply for his students. JL’s rapport with his students was very good, which is not surprising based on time spent working with teenagers in a previous position. He described what he had learned:

I’ve come to understand that [teenagers] try and come across like they’ve got it all together, but really when it comes down to it these kids are in the middle of adolescence and, especially moving into the college scene, they are really going through a big change in their life. It's very traumatic for many of them and my
goal is just to provide plenty of positive reinforcement and be able to say to them, “You know, even if you do get a no passing grade on one of your papers, that doesn't say anything bad about you as a person, it just means that you need to learn a new skill set and I believe you have the skills to do it if you want to work for it,” you know? So, I think for me teaching is almost half guidance counselor . . . you know, half coach, and the other half of it is just having some of the technical knowhow to be able to explain what it is that they are supposed to be able to put on the page. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

This attitude carries over to JL’s style in other ways. Though he was teaching writing, he understood the transition that students undertake and sees their relationship extending, at times, beyond the scope of the syllabus.

I’m a very relational person. I am very interested in a holistic approach to teaching. I care not only about the student’s writing but about the student as a whole. Like I had a kid come into class yesterday who had obviously gotten drunk the night before or a couple of days ago and he fell down and bruised up his face pretty bad and I am going to keep an eye on this kid and uh make sure . . . and if I think he’s in trouble, I’m going to discretely pull him aside and say “Man, are you doing ok? Are you pushing the edge of the envelope a little too much? Do we need to get you some help?” That kind of thing. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

This perspective didn’t stop with the first interview. Later in the term, JL told me about one of the students that had dropped his class:
The one case, it was kind of sad. He was a fairly bright kid and . . . and just really motivated to work, but he had to withdraw because his dad got laid off from work and he couldn’t afford to stay in college and he had to go out and get a job to help support the family. So . . . you know . . . it’s that kind of stuff that helps you remember first of all that you’re part of a larger picture and that there’s a big wide world out there. Uh, but otherwise the class . . . I think the rapport between myself and the students is pretty good. I am still trying to maintain that balance between being their lovable but dorky friend but also their . . . their . . . teacher because I think that works for me. And it seems to be working for them too. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

JL’s attitude toward his class is also present in the “us against them” attitude that comes through in his comments and in class. This is something that is afforded by the use of outside readers, as Ed White (2008) points out stating that in that situation the instructor can take on the role of “coach” role more than “judge” (p. 172). JL pointed to this when he stated,

Well . . . this is probably a little heterodox . . . I mean . . . I kind of tell the students that it’s you and me against the system and they like that feeling of solidarity that we have. And I am not trying to paint M.W.P. as this big evil Death Star kind of thing, but there is this sort of element of “ok how can we convince these people that you are worthy to go to English 102” and there’s sort of a certain amount of, you know . . . oh I don't know . . . It harkens back to those really bad movies of how this baseball team struggles to make it into the final, you know?
That kind of mentality . . . Bad News Bears type stuff and, you know, I'm kind of, really . . . I don't trash-talk M.W.P. to the students but personally I have a couple of reservations about the system and how it is sort of designed. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

This feeling of solidarity comes from the respect JL had for his students. He truly believed that his students could reach great heights.

I’ve realized that if you set the bar this high (JL moves his hand back and forth at a mid-chest level) well that’s to what they will aspire, but if you really encourage students to reach beyond and to do some real critical thinking you’d be amazed at what they are capable of doing. [. . .] I’m a very strong believer in telling these kids that they have really something important to contribute to the world and so, for example for essay number four, I'm not afraid for them to tackle [tough issues] and have because even though I realize that they are not going to solve the issue, I think they can still think critically about it and I think they can contribute something to the larger conversation. I would like to give them the benefit of the doubt. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

This respect and perspective also filters into JL’s view and ultimate goals for the course. Part of his goals are connected to the writing assessment practices themselves as is evident in how he positions his teaching methods in relation to the M.W.P.:

What I’m focused on. . . my kids have to write five essays for this portfolio and in order for my kids to pass, two out of the four graded essays have to be passing.
Um and really, that’s what I'm focusing on and I'm focusing on how I can meet these kids in a place where they feel secure and comfortable accomplishing that task. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

The students were at the center of his decisions. This was evident in his ultimate goals for his course. In the third interview, I asked him what he wanted the students to get from the class, to which he replied:

Um, for me, from a holistic standpoint, I wanted these kids to feel like college was possible. That whatever misgivings they had or anxieties they had about coming to college and shifting into that higher gear of academic work from their high school experience, that they didn’t need to be nervous about it—that there was a bit of understanding and collegiality between professors and students. And a lot of times I would say things like, “You know, you may think I am being hard on you now, but I’m trying to help you understand that this is what the expectations of a university are.” And there were times when I really felt like the students, we were really kind of a team approaching an obstacle together and I felt like that was the biggest and best way that I could shape 101 to be really useful for the students. As opposed to just being a lecturer who stood up there and describe what a comma splice was, I was able to help them get a grasp, an understanding of what the whole university experience was supposed to be, you know? And I think there were a couple of times when I was able to ease some of the anxieties on the part of the students, and then some of them just sat there and Googled Carmen Electra. [Laughs]. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)
I also asked JL about what he felt was the most important aspect of writing. This helped me gain perspective into how his views of writing fit within his overall goals for his class. His early response was relatively straightforward and was very similarly to the language used by M.W.P., particularly in its focus on the audience.

The answer on that depends on what sort of writing you are talking about . . . if it’s technical or narrative or journalistic or dramatic. There’s all sorts of classifications here. I would say that the most important aspect of writing in general, this a real general statement, is the ability to convey what it is that you are trying to say, without, in your own voice, without confusing the reader, without ignoring the audience, and without getting hung up on your own vocabulary? (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

His response in the final interview focused on the constraining nature of language and was tied directly to the coursework from his academic program (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008).

I asked JL if this fit with what he felt the students wanted from the course. His answer showed an appreciation for the students and the greater picture, as well as the “us against them” perspective. He replied:

[Big sigh] Well, the students test into 101 and they are fully aware that there are other students that test directly into 102 and students who test out of the M.W.P. process altogether. So these students, had they really been aware of that process, must have realized that they were not nearer to completion of what the university was expecting of them and so, I think, my assumption is that some of them came in there wanting to learn whatever it is that they had to learn in order for them get
through this particular system and then move on. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

**JL’s Views on Writing Assessment in Relation to M.W.P.**

JL’s background and respect for the students factor into his perspectives when it comes to assessing and evaluating the writing of his students. This was particularly evident when discussing the M.W.P. program practices. The first interview was conducted early in the term, prior to the use of the program rubric on his students’ papers. I asked JL about the assessment techniques he would use when reading his students’ papers. His reply illustrates both his desire to use techniques that supported the positive environment he was trying to construct in his classroom as well as the connection to his past.

Well, I think definitely, if there’s anything I want to do, I want to start out with a lot of positive stuff right at the outset. As a matter of fact, I will go through the paper on the first read and highlight the positives before I go back and start working on the constructive criticism. I guess the vocabulary I like to use for it, I would say to the students, “Your writing has a lot of gifts and it has a lot of growth edges.” When I say “gifts,” I mean the stuff that they do well intuitively without having to be taught, and when I say “growth edges,” you know, stuff that they are obviously dropping the ball on whether its grammar or sentence structure or being able to articulate themselves and that they have the potential to learn. And I think that puts a positive spin even on the negative aspects. So when I go through and read their papers, I will probably read them twice, you know? Once for the positives and once for the stuff that needs to be improved, um, and I try to
make my comments as affirming as possible. When I was an undergrad [. . .] I was a proof-editor for their textbooks and that was really nitpicky. We had to work on even the smallest stuff, you know, comma splices and all that crap, you know, and I’m not going to be reading these papers the same way I did the editing [there]. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

JL’s reasons for his choices really illustrate his values. He was very passionate about his class. He has several reasons for how he interacted with his students via their papers.

I think that the key to unlocking a kid’s potential really needs to come from a divergent path. In other words the straight Eurocentric method of using a red pen and slashing the bejeezzes out of their paper isn’t going to work anymore. It’s going to make the kid anxious. I think they're going to be more likely to make the same mistakes in some ways than if you say “Ok . . . this is how you said this in this particular sentence . . . um . . . is there anything about this sentence that you could say it in a different way or maybe phrase this differently that would make this easier for the reader to understand?” In other words, “Help me understand what it is you are trying to say.” You see how that puts it in a positive light? (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

In the second interview, after using the rubric for the first time on his students’ writing, JL articulated that how he assessed writing has an effect on the students. I asked
JL about other purposes or roles the rubric had in his classroom. His response, though, went back to the nature of the rubric in conjunction with his classroom environment.

I’m sure that the rubric, for the students, it’s probably going to have some sort of psychological effect. . . . Um, and I’m very aware of that when I use the rubric. I just want to make sure that I am not that cavalierly putting stuff on their rubric that’s going to really hurt their self-esteem or their ability to write a paper next time. But no, I don’t think the kids sit there entirely intimidated by the thing either. I think for the kids that have an almost passing paper, and there were quite a few of them with this last paper, I think they are going to look to the rubric to see where they are going to improve. What other tool do they have at this point other than going to the writing center and having someone looking at the paper with them? Hopefully the person at the writing center will give them the same feedback that I gave them anyway; otherwise, there is something wrong with my grading process. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

Just like his efforts to balance all of his commitments and as with his views of the class, JL’s relationship and philosophies regarding writing assessment directly link with what he has done throughout his academic career and what he does in the classroom particularly within the programmatic writing assessment practices. The following extended excerpt from the third interview, following the end of the term, illustrates this complicated interaction. I asked JL about his writing assessment techniques and the following exchange took place:

Jeremy: How do you evaluate the writing of your students?
JL: Not, not nearly as well as I’m supposed to. For me it’s a gut thing. It’s always
writing for me has always been intuitive. I mean I . . . I tested out of my comp
stuff in undergrad, so I never understood what little milestones you were
supposed to hit. I can’t point to a student’s paper and tell you this is a passing
paper because of a, b, c, d, and f. I just get a vibe from it that this kid is
articulating his stuff well. He’s thinking about how the reader comprehends what
he or she is trying to say as opposed just vomiting on the page. And I think,
personally, I think there's a point at which if you really want to be a good writer,
you stop writing narcissistically, writer-based prose, and start writing for the sake
of the reader and there’s a certain detachment that occurs and you can see it in
some kids, kind of a before and after. So that’s what I kind of look for. It’s when
they start to . . . to write assuming that you don’t know everything they know not
because they think you're stupid, but because they want to help you. They want to
compel you to finish reading the essay. . .

Jeremy: Well, how do you go about translating that instinct?

JL: Well, I just tell them to, you know, in the comments I make on their rough
drafts and final drafts, I . . . I play stupid. A lot of times, even though I know what
they’re inferring, I you know, say “What do you mean by this?” “What is ‘it’?
Are you talking about a canary?” [chuckles] You know, these are the kind of
things that you need to be able to be very specific about in academic writing
otherwise you’re gonna . . . your professor’s gonna nail you to the wall on this
stuff, and they do. So I was always very clear. Um . . . I always tried to, with a light touch in my comments on their papers, help them to understand that they can’t assume that the reader knows what they know because that’s how they were writing and they needed to change that.

Jeremy: So how did the methods evolve?

JL: Over time [laughs]. You begin to put stuff together after, uh, you know, it’s a lot of trial and error. I think having never taught before, you know, suddenly it clicks with you at one point where you realize, “Oh ok, this is why my writing, which I have just been intuitively doing all these years, this is why my writing is different form theirs.” So thank god I figured out how to do academic writing so I can turn around and apply what works for me and give it to these kids. But I don’t, I don’t use the same vocabulary as [the textbook] or other books. As a matter of fact, there were a lot of times when I was kind of stymied by the terminology and I had to go to the glossary and look it up and make it sound like I knew what I was talking about, when really I didn’t know the language, you know?

Jeremy: Would you say that your style of assessment fits with M.W.P. practices?

JL: Um . . . I don’t know. I guess, you know, it appeals to my ego to think that I am a completely heterodox, off the wall, Robin Williams, Dead Poet Society type
of teacher, that the kids just [say] “Oh my God.” They just get it because I am such a charismatic person, but that’s not necessarily the case. I mean, to a degree, where if I, did I, if I had enough time and energy, it would be fun to totally color outside the lines and redesign 101 to my own wacky sense of how to get the kids to enjoy writing and develop a passion for it and maybe we’d all be down in a cave and read poetry or something, but in reality I only had so many hours a day, so I just kind of toed-the-line and used what was available out there. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

On several occasions JL said that he understood the need for the programmatic structures as the mix of people and levels of experience can make them necessary. He also noted that there were good things about the program’s policies, particular in terms of his mentor.

Sam’s comments were always really helpful. Sometimes I would cut and paste what [Sam] said about people’s papers right into their papers, and I told [Sam] I was doing that ’cause [Sam] knows the vocabulary. Sam’s a rhet/comp person, obviously, whereas I’m not, so it was really easy for me to just rely on Sam’s opinion. If there was a paper that I was having a hard time grading, that would be the one I emailed to Sam, you know. There were others that were so obviously passing or failing that I had no worries. Even I could figure it out, but the one's that were borderline, those were the ones I sent to Sam, usually. And Sam was very helpful. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)
The description of M.W.P.’s history and the interview excerpts with JL, in conjunction with the history detailed in the literature review, provides a much stronger sense of the macro- and mesoscopic forces at play. The portfolio exchange and rubric, along with the values that are engrained within them, are meant to create a common object for this activity system via the shared tools, raw materials, and a common ideological “problem space.” The individual interaction with those tools and raw materials, though, will be different. The rules, roles, and values that are a part of this system will interact in unexpected ways in JL’s classroom. The perspectives brought to the interaction by JL do affect how he perceives and reacts to the history and values of the system. He, though, like the people involved in the ongoing evolution of M.W.P., is making decisions based on his history and how he sees the goals of the system interacting with personal motivations.

These excerpts show a very busy person who cares deeply for the students in his class. JL also brings a strong identity to the classroom that he must then negotiate with the roles and rules that have been created through the history of the M.W.P. In a manner that is similar to many writing assessment theorists, such as White (Elliot, 2005, p. 205), JL must find a way to do what is best for his students while being a part of a greater system. In many ways what the program sees as being best for the students and what JL sees as being best for the students align, such as creating a positive learning environment that encourages the development in writing needed for success in other areas and at other points in their academic careers. However, there are also considerable differences and constraints that affect the concrete actions between JL and his students via the classroom and his feedback.
Building from the histories and values the following chapter will analyze JL’s specific classroom decisions to see how and where there is negotiation and acts of resistance to draw conclusions about the effects of M.W.P. writing assessment practices. In other words, from here, the effects of the localized yet standardized practices used by M.W.P. can begin to be seen on the JL’s classroom decisions. In this way I can, as Mary Lee Smith (1991) writes, “learn what reactions are incorporated into the teachers’ identities and subsequent definitions of teaching” (p. 8).

The picture is complex. As JL negotiates his identity, the program’s identity, and the constraints brought by his personal life and academic programs, something has to give. It is as the words of JL remind us as we prepare to look at his classroom and draw conclusions. Some days, as with every teacher, he and the program are just trying to survive:

I know it’s not a popularity contest but for me since, since I have no pedagogical style I’m almost counting on what little charisma I have to kind of goad the students into doing their work. That’s my methodology [laughs] so... if I were a real teacher I’m sure I’d have a system, but right now its kind of me pleading and cajoling using comedy and YouTube to get them to do the work. (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008)

In a simple picture the program, JL, and his students exist as a series of passing stories, but this is not the case. Each is an important part of the system and each is working to serve and exist, which cannot help but create tensions. Both JL and M.W.P. are doing what they can to satisfy the needs of the students; however, they each have a separate
perspective that affects how they perceive and address the needs of the students. The intersection of these entities will be analyzed in the following chapters.
CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE SOIL: THE DATA AND ITS PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

When William Least Heat-Moon (1999) began to look at Chase County, Kansas, he wondered just how he could enter and represent that seemingly simple yet complex area. After laying a series of maps on the floor that used a traditional, subjective pattern, he found what he needed:

Maybe the grid was the answer: arbitrary quadrangles that have nothing inherently to do with the land, little to do with the history, and not much to do with the details. [. . .] Would coordinates lead to connections? Were they themselves the only links we can truly understand? (p. 15)

Much like Heat-Moon, my deep map contains a great amount of data that I was not sure how to represent.

Donna Haraway (1988) writes, “vision is always a question of the power to see” (1988, p. 585). By seeking JL and his students as participants I positioned them as “knowers.” I chose to engage their experiences and illustrate their agency as they negotiated their classroom experiences with the policies established by the Midwest Writing Program (M.W.P.). What cannot be lost in this process is that this “data” comes from their lives.

Feminist sociologist Joey Sprague (2005) discusses the problem of “abstract individualization” which is an “individual in isolation from and unconnected with its interpersonal, historical, or physical context” (p. 16). She continues to say that this leads to objectification, which is “the tendency to talk of and treat people as though they were
objects, devoid of subjectivity, the opposite of agents who are developing analyses of their situations and working to cope with them” (p. 18).

My goal in this dissertation has been to avoid that type of positivistic misuse. JL does have a history, as clearly noted in the previous chapter, and he made strong decisions for many different reasons as he adapted to M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices. This is something I sought to emphasize by showing JL’s decisions in several formats, specifically through his comments on student writing, interviews, and class observations.

I do, however, use different organizational patterns for the data sets. The analysis of the comments and classroom observations are chronological. This organization shows the way that JL’s decisions play out over time in specific acts and in the activity system itself. For JL’s interview responses, though, I use a thematic organization. I do this to emphasize that JL is an agent “developing analyses of [his] situations and working to cope with them” (Sprague, 2005, p. 18) by showing his process of recognition and adaptation in a focused manner.

The data graciously provided by all of the participants is extensive and fits with the call for contextuality and multiple perspectives in activity theory and feminist research principles (Kirsch, 1992; Nardi, 1996, p. 95; Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 29). Specifically, I use five sets of evaluated rough and final drafts, three interviews with JL, one interview with a student, four interviews with the program mentors, and six class observations all from a single sixteen-week course. As not to misappropriating their experience, I also include, when possible, JL’s and others’ perspectives in their own words as feminist scholars suggest (Sprague, 2005, pp. 167-168; Kirsch & Ritchie, 2003/1995, p. 145).
For the data analysis I used grounded theory to allow the patterns to emerge from the different data sets. I triangulated the patterns by first illuminating them separately in the order of evaluated papers, JL’s interviews, and classroom observations and then as systems in the following chapter’s activity theory analysis. The organization of the data sets also reflects activity theory’s designation of acts and operations through microscopic, mesoscopic, and macroscopic levels (Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 30). Specifically a microscopic perspective comes through in papers evaluated by JL, the mesoscopic perspective lies in JL’s reflection and interview responses, and the macroscopic perspective comes from the class observations.

**JL’s Comments**

At the end of the term five students provided me with complete, electronic copies of all the evaluated work that was in their paper-based portfolios. 13 The assignments included asked students to present opposing viewpoints, argue a position, search for causes, propose solutions, and, finally, evaluate an electronic text. The papers enabled me to see emerging patterns and changes that took place in JL’s commenting practices over the course of the term and possible effects of M.W.P.’s norming practices and values per my research questions noted in Chapter One, “The Tools of Cartography: A Discussion of Methods and Methodology.”

Edward White (2007) acknowledges that the same person will change his or her opinion of a single piece of writing over several readings. This change can cause discomfort if a completely objective assessment of writing is desired. This natural change

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13 Collecting the physical portfolios themselves in the very short time frame between the completion of their portfolios and the submission of those portfolios for the end-of-term portfolio exchange would have been too risky for the students. The portfolios, after all, represent the students and without them they cannot pass the course. However, two of the students provided their paper-based portfolios to use in the study after the term was over.
cannot help but be compounded for novice instructors when they comment on writing. After all, they must sort out their personal values and negotiate those values with their histories and writing assessment tradition – possibly for the first time. For JL and other novice instructors working within a structured system such as M.W.P. there is an additional influence of the programmatic values that are meant to provide consistency through the natural changes that occur during the first term. As Dethier (1999) and Thomas (2006) argue, though, programmatic policies can be a source of anxiety for instructors. Even with the programmatic influence, and possibly because of programmatic influence, there cannot help but be some change in a novice instructor’s commenting style. JL was no exception. As the endnotes and marginal comments showed different patterns, I describe them separately.

**Endnotes**

I analyzed the endnotes JL placed on his students’ papers for length, function and order of content, tone, and the issues addressed. With the exception of an average length of fifty-four words of the rough drafts’ endnotes for the second paper, there was a relative consistency in the length of the endnotes for the papers up to the final drafts of the third paper. The length of the first four sets of endnotes, as seen in Figure 12, averaged 80 to 85 words. With minor variation, the endnotes offered brief praise, discussed the issues that needed to be addressed, ended with a statement of encouragement, and mentioned or suggested use of M.U.’s writing center. The tone of the notes was generally collegial and supportive with sporadic humor as is evident in the following example:

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14 Because JL was still figuring out the paper-based end-of-term portfolio system, JL did not comment on the final draft of paper one electronically.
I am very impressed with this first draft. Here I thought you were sitting in the back row making fun of my old-man shorts and you were actually paying attention! You won’t have to do a lot of major revising to make this a really polished piece. This means you can go through the draft with a fine-toothed comb to improve the mechanics of the thing (spelling, grammar, etc.) If you have the chance, make an appointment at the Writer’s Center to have someone there go over your work, and the results will be fantastic. Keep up the good work!

Early endnotes exclusively addressed grammar and mechanics, but the types of issues JL addressed grew to include logic, organization, and metadiscourse, with an occasional request for a conference. Generally, JL encouraged student agency by allowing students to decide how to address the issues he pointed out.

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![Figure 12. Average Length of Endnotes](image)

There was a subtle change in the rough drafts of paper three. For the first time JL made overt references to M.W.P.’s conventions discussed in the pedagogy course and expected by portfolio evaluators. This occurred via requests for students to pay more attention to the “main cause” in statements like “You don’t seem to support one cause,
but all of them. I want you to tell me what the primary motivation is for people to admire stars in your thesis, and then organize the paper around supporting the thesis” and “I like your main argument here—the media has a powerful influence on what we perceive to be ‘normal.’ Stick with arguing this as the main cause.”

The differences in the endnotes for the final drafts of paper three built off that subtle change. Paper three represents an important point in the class as, at that point, students have only two chances left to pass two papers in order to be eligible for the end-of-term portfolio exchange without relying on revision. As there had been only two passing papers in all of the students’ previous attempts, the stakes for the papers that followed were rising.

Figure 12 illustrates a spike in length for the final draft of paper three’s endnotes. While there was one shorter note, the overall average length was 126 words. This was one of several differences. Though each of the endnotes started on a positive note and most ended with reassurance and calls for revision, the tone was anxious and pleading via phrases like “Please don’t get frustrated. You are almost there,” “Please please please revise this,” and “Courage! You are closer to the mountaintop today than yesterday.” JL mentioned several issues ranging from addressing the “main cause” more directly to more overt counterarguments and metadiscourse—all terms and requirements from the M.W.P. rubric. Furthermore, a more direct approach emerged to the extent that one note stated:

I like your logic and love your tone in this paper. However, it lacks counterarguments—you know, other reasons why divorce may be on the decrease which you might point to and then gently push aside saying something to the
effect of, “But even this cannot compare to the benefits of a college education and time to mature” or something like that.

With these notes JL starts to take a more direct role. Student agency starts to decrease as JL began to tell students, at times, exactly what to write. This trend continued in the endnotes for the rest of the papers and meshed with other patterns seen in following chapter’s the activity theory analysis.

Along with these changes, the endnotes for the final drafts of paper three had a strong undercurrent of JL’s “us against them” approach. JL’s balance of half coach and half instructor noted in the interviews in the following section was very evident in statements like “I am going to give this paper an AP, but you would totally have to re-write the whole thing to make it fit the speculating about causes assignment. Please talk to me about this ASAP. I have an idea.” I also see this as connecting to a primary contradiction noted by Deans (2006) that can come as instructors try and balance the roles of advocate and judge (p. 300). In activity theory, primary contradictions are tensions created at the microscopic level (Spinuzzi, 2003). However, a contradiction at one level will lead to contradictions on other levels. In this case, JL’s primary contradiction is connected to a quaternary contradiction, when a different object is substituted. The object, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, is the “‘problem space’ at which the activity is directed and which is molded or transformed into outcomes” (Engeström, 2003, p. 67).

As noted, paper three is an important time in the term; however, paper four is often discussed by M.W.P. mentors and administrators as a pivoting point in the term. This is when student writing tends to dramatically improve, which also connects to the
quaternary contradiction. The endnotes for paper four and the rough drafts of paper five contain a subtle change in technique and a different set of evaluative principles. The length of the endnotes decreased with each set of papers from 76 to 71 words. The tone of these endnotes, though still collegial, is less anxious and more directive. For instance, the drafts of paper four and five encouraged revision through phrases like

You have to show data that supports your argument. You will also need to prove that there is more than enough parking for faculty/staff in order to support your main conclusion, otherwise You might want to propose building a parking garage as a main solution.

and

Okay—

■ You still need a works cited page, even if Wikipedia is the only thing you are citing.

■ You should list the criteria in the intro., which you do, and then craft a separate paragraph which shows how Wikipedia is either up to snuff or not based on that criterion.

■ I only see on counterargument in here.

■ Why not have more fun and cut and paste the actual article about your friend being the president so the reader can see it too?

Many of the students needed to pass both of these papers, or revise the third paper to a passing level, in order for their portfolios to be eligible for the end-of-term portfolio exchange. Thus, if they did not pass these papers, they could not pass the class. This increased in pressure led to decreased student agency. The endnotes for the final drafts of paper number four also coincided with the explicit use of an outline provided by JL’s mentor as seen in the observations discussed later in the chapter. Furthermore, the

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15 The endnotes for the final drafts were perfunctory since there is no time for revision. These endnotes were short and congratulatory, such as “The stars are shining on you today. Good paper” and “Great work! Another P in your portfolio!” Thus, they provide no significant data.
endnotes exemplified the change in principles as the conventions expected by portfolio evaluators and M.W.P. writing assessment language became more prevalent. This is illustrated in the following notes which emphasize conformity with M.W.P.’s expected format:

The main problem with the paper has to do with the logic of your argument and some sentence-level errors[. . . .] Nonetheless, I am going to give this paper a P-, which means that the structure and development outweigh the errors . . . and “Anyway, I have to give this paper an P- because even though it follows the correct format, it really has a weak main solution due to the lack of support.” Once again, the change in technique and principles suggests a change in JL’s goals and object.

Comments

As with the endnotes, I found patterns in the marginal comments. Specifically, trends emerged in the amount and length of the comments, the types of issues addressed, tone, references to outside sources and audiences, and the concreteness of JL’s advice. There were certain aspects of JL’s commenting practices that were fairly consistent, however. For instance, as is evident in Figure 13 with the exception of the rough drafts of the third paper, the balance in the amount of comments dealing with surface issues as compared to those responding as a reader or addressing more global issues hovered between 50 and 60 percent. Several changes were sporadic such as a slight increase in the amount and length of comments for paper number four seen in Figures 14 and 15. There were also changes that were more consistent, such as a decrease in the amount of praise.
Figure 13. Proportion of Local to Global Comments

Figure 14. Average Number of Marginal Comments per Paper

Figure 15. Average Number of Words per Marginal Comment
As with the endnotes, the patterns and tone of the marginal comments JL provided for the first and second paper remained relatively consistent. Over this span the amount of comments per paper rose slightly from approximately 11 to 13. Meanwhile, the length of the comments decreased from an average of 18.29 words per comment to 15.68. With a slight exception in the drafts of paper two, the comments were generally conversational in nature with several jokes and emoticons appearing throughout, such as “Good transition except for the ‘that of Obama’s’ part which sounds a little funky. How can you re-word this to make it sound better?”, “Cliché alert! Woop! Woop!”, and “Citations are placed at the end of a sentence, okay? 😊.” JL also used an indirect approach that encouraged student agency and made several references to “other professors.” The mention of generalized professors was consistent with early observations and fit with JL’s early object, which involves ensuring students can write for multiple situations.

I found the greatest difference in comments between the rough and final drafts of paper number three. While prior papers had a slight but steady increase in the amount of comments, there was a drop from an average of 13.5 comments on the rough draft to 11.6 on the final draft. However, the length of the comments, which had been steadily decreasing, increased from 13.56 words per comment in the rough drafts to 16.3 in the final drafts and accompanied the spike in endnote length for the final drafts of paper three. Also, while the comments for the rough drafts the highest concentration on MLA and surface issues at 70 percent, the comments for the final drafts the lowest at 48 percent.

There were differences in the tone of the comments between the sets of papers. The tone used by JL on the rough drafts, particularly in longer comments, was
conversational in nature; however, in the final drafts the tone was very professional with no jokes or emoticons, which matched the differences in the endnotes. Prior to paper three there was little use of the rubric’s terms and M.W.P.-based language from the pedagogy course; however, program-based language started to appear in the comments for the final drafts, particularly in those referencing the “main cause” such as “Okay, this is your main cause, and also your thesis statement—it appears a little late in the paper, so up until now the reader is left to his/her own conclusions as to what you are trying to prove.” The amount direct comments also increased, such as:

Okay, you had me thinking that “the joy of giving” was going to be your thesis and main cause—a little confusing because you are drawing the reader into a trail of deduction. It would make more sense if you stated that you were going to do this at the beginning—something like: “What is the main reason? Let’s see if we can find it using the process of elimination.”

Generally, the comments for the final drafts of paper number three provided the most balanced set of comments in terms of JL’s and M.W.P.’s separate objects in that the comments represent and address both objects. This was partially evident in the five references to other professors accompanied by the use of M.W.P. specific conventions. This balance, though, represents a tipping point of sorts that is supported in interviews and observations and, once again, suggests the substitution of a new object via a decreasing sense of student agency as comments shifted toward M.W.P. conventions and away from rhetorical choice.

The shifts seen between the rough and final drafts of paper three continued into the rough drafts of paper number four. Many students get to this point in the term without
having any passing papers. Therefore, this is the point in the class at which the stakes dramatically increase since students need two passing papers to be eligible for the end-of-term portfolio exchange. The average number of comments and in the average length peaked in rough drafts of paper number four. As Figure 16 shows, the rough drafts of paper four also had the greatest amount of comments over 20 words long. The variation in the comments themselves also increased. Three of the papers had extensive commenting while the other two had far fewer and followed the previous patterns of mostly short and surface-based comments. One set of comments contained several jokes but the language is more straightforward and professional than in the others. The level of detail also varied from short, vague comments to much longer developed comments about rhetorical issues, such as:

Okay, this conclusion would be more effective if you could include some final chunk of data—how about contacting the health center on campus and asking

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16 Paper four also has the shortest amount of time devoted to it in M.W.P.’s syllabus.
someone there about what percentage of Freshman illnesses are stress-related?

Also, I like the fact that you mention the counterarguments again, but perhaps it would be more effective to simply stick to your main solution to the problem.

Finally, the language of the rubric was very prevalent in some papers and completely absent in others.

The comments for the final draft of paper number four and the rough drafts of paper number five showed a number changes from the rough draft of paper number four. The changes were partially based on the fact that all of the collected papers were passing, JL’s use of a more restrictive assignment sheet, and changes in the in-class practices that are discussed later in the chapter. There was a decrease in the amount and length of comments for the final drafts of paper number four and the rough drafts of paper number five. The variation in comments was greater, as JL noted in his interviews, but there were several direct comments, particularly in the rough drafts of paper number five, such as, “Thesis, but you need to state specifically the criteria that the university is using—even though you list them in this paragraph, the reader needs to know that these were chosen by the university, see?” and “In your conclusion, you should re-state your thesis, including the criteria you are going to go back and re-insert in your intro., and then state briefly how this website fulfills the criteria.” The more direct nature of these comments reflected the more direct nature of the endnotes. There was also a rise in single word comments, such as “Thesis,” that act as a marker for students and portfolio evaluators. Comments like these seem to be meant for the portfolio evaluators. They point out the feature ensuring that portfolio evaluators see it and agree that it’s present. Thus, the portfolio evaluators and the need for agreement was shifting JL’s commenting practices.
There were many positive developments in JL’s commenting practices, such as the increased variation between students and more concrete nature of the comments. These positive developments accompanied, though, a decrease in student agency, as M.W.P. language and conventions played an increasingly important role. The changes in JL’s commenting patterns, particularly in the rise in the amount and length of comments in the rough drafts of paper number four and the overall increase in direct comments, supports a change in object. However, just as Mary Smith (1991) writes, to understand the effects of the practices goes beyond the products and statements and into the actions. Thus, next I will discuss JL’s interviews and my observations of his classroom.

**JL’s Interviews**

JL’s commenting practices evolved over the course of the term, representing a change at the microscopic level. That evolution was part of other even greater changes. Mary Sue MacNealy (1999) argues that interview data can gather perspectives unavailable in any other format (p. 203). It is through this data that the mesoscopic perspective emerges as JL reflects on his classroom decisions. JL’s interviews are crucial to understanding his motives and history as well as how he perceives their effects on his classroom decisions. They also provided me with insight into how he perceives the programmatic and historic values that are engrained in M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices and his reasoning for the how he uses the programmatic tools necessary to answer my research questions.

The interviews were semi-structured, so while I did have a list of questions that we covered the interviews could move freely.¹⁷ JL was very open and honest during each of his three interviews. Feminist scholars DeVault and Gross (2007) and Sprague (2005)

¹⁷ The lists of questions I used can be found in the appendices.
note the care that must be used with interviews, particularly as participants will
sometimes reveal more than they intend (Sprague, 2005, p. 140). JL was often careful to
tell me if there were parts of his answers that he didn’t want revealed, which I made sure
not to include. The use of three interviews also addresses the ethical need identified by
Sprague (2005) to avoid the fictionalization that comes through a single representation of
a person when in reality people’s beliefs are constantly changing (p. 134). The views in
this section provide and account for the evolutions and adaptations that JL made over of
the sixteen-week term. It is with a sense of respect that I turn to his responses.

From JL’s introduction in “Beyond the Bounds of any Map: The People and
Place” it is evident that JL is a busy person with a vibrant past. This created time
constraints that impacted his relationships with his class and with the program. At times
during the term he used his 101 work as a way to procrastinate when he needed a break
from his coursework (personal communication, November 4, 2008), but there were other
times when his work for his 101 class would be completed at the last minute and he
wondered whether he would be able to get it all done. He speculated that it might be
easier for “rhet/comp people” (personal communication, December 26, 2008).

JL openly noted on more than one occasion that his academic program was the
most important thing regarding school, stating that it was his vocation whereas teaching
composition was his job. This hierarchy of systems can increase dis coordinations and
contradictions as frustration occurs, particularly when tasks need to be finished for
multiple systems at the same time. Dis coordinations were also present in his views of the
required pedagogy course and portfolio norming session. However, though resistant in
the beginning, his feelings toward that class softened throughout early portions of the
term. Those acts of resistance, as well as the others that emerge in the interviews and observations later in this chapter, are important and often show that some form of adaptation is necessary (Diamondstone, 2002; Miettinen, 2005). It is that discontent which translates to real motivation (Miettinen, 2005, p. 56).

**Tone**

There were several different topics, patterns, and changes that emerged in JL’s interview answers throughout the three interviews. One change was the tone of the interviews. The first interview took place just a few weeks into the term. We talked for thirty minutes about everything from his past to his perceptions of M.W.P. and what he hoped to do in the future. JL was in a good mood throughout that interview, cracking jokes and being very candid. JL’s second interview took place early in November after JL had used the program rubric to evaluate the writing of his students. We talked for nearly an hour, once again touching on many different subjects. It was evident then that JL still had a relatively positive outlook on everything with which he is involved, though he was very busy. The third interview took place in late December. As before, we talked for an hour, but it was much more focused. The tone was different and the positive and hopeful nature of JL’s answers lessened. JL was much more serious and at times he would hit his empty tea bottle on the table in rhythm with his answers. Though his serious mood was not necessarily caused by his relationship with M.W.P. or the interview, it followed a pattern I had seen in the mentors’ interviews.

**Relationship with M.W.P.**

JL’s interaction with the program was complicated. Throughout early portions of the term he spoke of “positive symbiosis.” JL noted in his first interview that both he and
the M.W.P. were gaining from the experience. This carried through in the second interview as well as he was very aware that he was gaining important experience and that the program received an instructor. He also stated that his “role in [M.W.P.] is to aid and abet the program overall” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). JL came into the term expecting the program to cover all of his needs, particularly those related to a lack of experience in the classroom, a belief encouraged at times by the mentors and the director. He made use of program resources, which was evident in various ways; specifically, he relied on the M.W.P. syllabus and noted that he didn’t look too far ahead (personal communication, September 4, 2008). This continued as he told me later that he never created his own assignment sheets. He chose instead to use examples with attribution to the original instructor (personal communication, December 26, 2008). He also relied on his mentor for help with grading difficult/borderline papers. However, he was often frustrated by having to attend the required pedagogy because he could have used the time in other ways. Perhaps his perspective was best summed up when he stated:

I mean, to a degree, were if I, did I . . . If I had enough time and energy, it would be fun to totally color outside the lines and redesign 101 to my own wacky sense [. . .], but in reality I only had so many hours a day, so I just kind of toed-the-line and used what was available out there. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

Teaching

JL’s core beliefs about his teaching remained consistent though his perspectives on M.W.P. changed. Particularly, JL stated in both early interviews that he cared deeply for his students and wanted to them to know that they could be successful in college no
matter how they did in his class. Furthermore, he understood and appreciated that students were still adjusting which led to his concern for students’ lives outside of class. However, JL’s attitude toward teaching for M.W.P. became more negative over the course of the term as he came to see his teaching in terms of programmatic control and structure. When I asked him about teaching preparedness, he stated:

You have to be prepared to teach the subject knowledge, but you also have to be prepared to teach the systemic, the apparatus that is in place at [M.U.]. So, you have to kind of combine those two approaches in order get the students to matriculate properly. So on the one hand you have to understand what [M.W.P.] means, and why things function the way they do, which I don’t always understand that, and then on the other hand, you have to appreciate . . . what are these assignments supposed to be, how are we supposed to articulate the information to the students, and what do we expect of them. Well, that has more to do with the [M.W.P.] component (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

As is common when assessment procedures come from outside the classroom (Bazerman, 2003, p. 443), JL’s sense of being monitored by the program also increased throughout the term to the point that he stated “There's a sense that there’s no true delegation. That everything has to be scrutinized at a higher level, that there’s not a lot of autonomy. This would make an insecure person even more insecure” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). JL also relayed that he didn’t think this experience would affect classes he taught in the future. JL seemed disheartened during the third interview through comments such as, “I'm not going to complain about [the writing assessment practices], yeah, I have been whining about it for the past hour, but for the most part it is what it is.
In the long run these kids will still graduate from college” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008).

JL’s goals in the classroom also remained consistent throughout the term. He believed that his class was successful “within the confines of the system.” He also noted positive trends in the writing of his students with paper number four:

Sam kept telling me essay number four is the magic essay where everybody seems to get it, [. . .] but about that time in the semester, I just saw certain things begin to develop, patterns in the students’ writing, where like, wow they really were developing counterarguments and things like that. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

Paper number four does, at times, take on mythical qualities within M.W.P. as a turning point in the writing abilities of students.

Throughout the term JL worked to create a positive environment and confident students and the writing assessment practices helped. He noted that his role was half-instructor and half-coach, which, as Edward White (2007) has written, is made possible when the writing assessment practices come from an external source (p. 172). This same perspective, though, can create primary contradictions (Deans, 2006, p. 300). JL’s role of coach was emphasized in the “us against them” approach he discussed as the term progressed. His use of this approach is explained and exemplified when he stated:

[Students] have to make people want to read what you have to say. Because believe me, your professors, and I tell my students this, for years to come are going to be looking at a stack of fifty papers and only one or two of them are going to stand out[. . .] I know that’s kind of vague, but it kind of gives them an
idea of what they are up against and also what they need to...the occasion they need to rise to. (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

This approach also allowed for a balance between being their instructor and their “lovable but dorky friend” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). The discoordination between JL’s personal goals and the rules and values of M.W.P. was most evident in JL’s desire to maintain a class that was primarily electronic, a goal not supported by the paper-based rubric and portfolio exchange.

There is a strong sense over the progression of the interviews that JL struggled with and conceded to the M.W.P. object. In the end he no longer took his role as seriously as in early interviews. He noted a sense of being watched and he became, as he stated, “more or less an average M.W.P. instructor as [the pedagogy course] taught [him] to be” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). In this sense, as Marso and Pigge (1998) note, the feeling of a lack of control over classroom decisions had repercussions. He believed the class prepared him only to teach in the M.W.P. structure.

The aspects of his object that coincided with the program’s object did play out. He discussed that, just as Sam told him, everything changed around paper four. But he also noticed that students had figured out how to “play the system” at that point. They no longer wrote full rough drafts that he was “trained to then pick apart” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). In the end, his personal object was satisfied to a certain extent in that the students all learned lessons about how to survive in college.

**Writing Assessment**

White (1996) noted that instructors’ views on writing assessment are often conflicted (p. 13) and JL is no exception. Writing, to JL, is context dependent. This view
is shared by many prominent writing assessment theorists and rhetoricians though it stands contradictory to traditional desires for objective writing assessment (Broad, 1994; Huot, 2002). JL also believed that writing assessment serves as a teaching tool that could unlock the potential of students. That is why JL used questions in his comments to try and help students see the choices they have and how their writing is being perceived (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). In the second interview he stated that his comments are based on a hierarchy of needs starting with the thesis and moving down through grammar and usage issues in an effort to help students create prose that is compelling and audience driven (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). This, too, was evident in the amount of issues addressed in his comments though the ratio between surface and deeper issues remained relatively the same.

JL’s personal assessment practices did change for the better over the course of the term. He stated that early on his comments were vague and he relied upon four or five stock comments but by the end of the term he used more context/student-specific comments and made better use of terminology, such as “metadiscourse” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). As with his in-class decisions, he noted that his “us against them” approach played a role in his comments though he meant no harm to the program; rather, he wished to build rapport with his students (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008).

JL’s views of the programmatic assessment practices changed over the course of the term. Early on his views reflected those of many rubric proponents. At several points he stated that he understood that the rubric helps “instructors and professors in the M.W.P. to grade on a uniform scale across the board” which aligns with noted benefits of
rubrics and standardization (Arter & McTighe, 2001; Bargainnier, 2003, p. 4; Bazerman, 2003, p. 465; Burch, 1998, p. 55; Cizek & Bunch, 2007, p. 8; Mertler, 2001; Moskal, 2000; White, 2007). Showing a balance in object similar to that found in the comments for paper three, JL continued to say:

We’re all assigned this particular tool so that we can make sure that each and every student is afforded the same opportunity for critical feedback. Now having said that, you’ve heard me say it before, I think the rubric is a redundant piece, a confusing piece, for some people because some of the categories have positive components and others have negative components (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

JL acknowledged that the rubric allows instructors “not to have to reinvent the wheel” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008) a noted benefit of rubrics (Andrade, 2000; White, 2007, p. 68) born in the traditional desire for efficiency (Williamson, 1994/2009, p. 69). However, for JL, this changed with each interview moving first to the idea that the wheel needs “alignment work” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008) to “the wheel needs to be reinvented or scratched” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). This progression reinforces Maja Wilson’s (2006) point that rubrics need to reflect the greater value sets connected to the classroom, not just save the teacher time and effort.

JL noted that he used the rubric too much early on and lessened its use with time. Part of his reasoning emerged halfway through the term in his sense that “[The rubric] is probably going to have some sort of psychological effect” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008), so he tries to be very careful with its use. He stated that while some
students do use the rubric to improve, most don’t use it as it is intended and suggested that the rubric be placed online to allow for specific connection between criteria and examples (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). In the end he described the process in a less positive way saying, “The rubric is for mysterious marks that show approval and disapproval” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008).

There were several signs that JL saw agreement as a crucial part of writing and assessment early in the term. In this sense, JL maintained the values that had existed since the early development of writing assessment scales as is evident in the work of Kelly (1914), Chapman and Rush (1917), and recently in the NCTE/WPA White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008). One sign came as he discussed the writing center. During the second interview he stated that he likes the writing center but also worried that he was doing something wrong if the tutors don’t agree with his assessment. He also stated that the portfolio process is a failsafe for teachers that don’t do well. However, in the final interview he relayed that during the end-of-term portfolio exchange there had been disagreement regarding some of his students’ portfolios. The first reader did not pass some portfolios that were later passed by a third reader. He stated:

I just found that very curious that you had two instructors in the same department that had such vastly different concepts of what the expectations were. Now either one or both of them just don’t get it, or the department is not clearly defining what its expectations are. And of course it’s hard to do that with materials that are qualitative in nature as opposed to you know, one plus one is two. Writing is totally subjective. There’s no absolute yes, right or wrong, black and white. Yeah, next question. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)
The illusion of agreement in writing assessment was shattered and this caused problems for him as he doubted the program—a reaction similar to those noted by scholars such as Bob Broad (1994).

JL didn’t believe himself to be alone in these opinions. In fact, in an earlier interview he stated that his work with advertising at a newspaper helped him work with the M.W.P. policies better than the other G.S.T.A.s whom he heard complain about the program and the required pedagogy class. He stated that as his major value lies in his own academic program, he accepted the M.W.P.’s definition of needs and “didn’t lose any sleep over it” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008), which fits with his polymotivational and polycontextual positioning as decisions had to be made. The change between interviews also suggests that it did begin to affect him as the term progressed. Later he was also somewhat shocked by how little the rubric was used by the full-time instructors whose portfolios he evaluated (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). Interestingly, he believed that the process is too complex with too many manuals, but portfolio assessment and the ungraded first essay are part of his ideal writing assessment practices. However, in his ideal writing assessment only borderline portfolios would be exchanged via an electronic process (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008).

**Use of Writing Assessment Tools/Artifacts**

Part of the evolution process of systems is seen in changes in tool use. The manner in which a tool is used can illuminate the need for new or different tools, changing needs, values, and ingenuity of those using the tools. M.W.P. acknowledges several uses for the writing assessment practices: they are a means of evaluation, they are
a teaching tool, they spur reflection, and they are a means of ensuring standards and consistency across sections. JL also acknowledged many different uses of the writing assessment practices throughout his interviews. He, too, saw the writing assessment practices as a means of evaluation, a teaching tool, means of spurring reflection, and manner of ensuring standards, but other uses became evident as well.

Evidence of the use of the practices as a teaching tool and to spur reflection is found in statements like “[Students] are going to look to the rubric to see where they are going to improve” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). Beyond those that coincided with explicit program uses, JL also noted that rubric was a time-saver of sorts. This was evident and blended with the use of the rubric as a teaching tool and way of entering into discussions about writing when he told me that he “handed back the papers, I had conferences with the students so that I was able to explain why I did on the rubric and when I did I didn’t have to write it all out” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008).

JL acknowledged that the writing assessment practices serve a gatekeeping function in that students had to pass two papers using those tools, but he alluded to the idea that the process acts as an enforcer for his and the program’s desires. This was particularly evident when he stated:

It was hilarious how when they were putting their portfolios together, of course they had all lost their rough drafts and final drafts [. . .] I’d give them a hard time about it, but it was kind of cool because that exercise helped them to realize when the professor says hang on to this stuff, they weren’t bullshitting. (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)
In this manner he used the processes connected to the writing assessment practices to aid his goal of preparing students for success in other academic situations.

Beyond his discomfort, there were points in which JL discussed how he would use the writing assessment practices to reinforce his chosen role as coach and supporter of the students by incorporating it into his “us against them” approach thus creating solidarity between him and the students. The writing assessment practices also served as a security blanket of sorts as seen in the earlier discussed comment that reference the process as a “failsafe” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). Therefore, JL illustrates White’s (1996) point that most writing teachers are generally conflicted in their views of assessment seeing it as overbearing but necessary (p. 13).

To say that his perspectives at the end of the term were caused by the writing assessment practices would be too simple. Throughout the term there was a perceivable change in the way that JL felt about teaching for M.W.P. and the writing assessment practices, but he also consistently noted how busy he was. While he cared deeply about his students, he was there primarily to satisfy the needs and requirements of his degree program and to move forward in whatever followed. The discoordination and contradictions caused by the need to make decisions between competing objects, definitions of need, and time requirements came through his responses, which at once reinforce the need for programmatic writing assessment and challenge the ethical nature of external programmatic writing assessment practices for the psychological effect they have on the instructor as noted by Dethier (1999) and Thomas (2006).

It would also be too easy to say that the writing assessment practices forced a pattern of behavior. JL is a strong person as is evident in his interviews. He made a series
of decisions throughout the term and adapted to the system itself. This adaptation, though, did not come without resistance. JL showed a great amount of agency. Early in the term he stated that he placed the needs of the students over the policies of the program. Similarly, his use of the use of the “us against them” approach was a conscious decision. Feminist and activity theorists alike note that a sense of agency is not a draw-back (Naples, 2003; Spinuzzi, 2003). Rather, JL reacted to the situation and his choices should be celebrated as should the program’s. However, as Litowitz (2001), Diamondstone (2002), and Miettinen (2005) write, this is a sign that there are areas within the system that need to be addressed, as is evident in the activity theory analysis in the following chapter.

**Classroom Observations**

The classroom is a dynamic environment. Each day will bring a different mix of factors, such as weather, campus events, and even the mix of students. Similarly, the nature of the semester brings varying levels stress and several scholars have noted that assessment practices affect what goes on in the classroom (Bazerman, 2003; Durst, Roemer, and Schulz, 1994; Huot, 2002; Huot & Williamson, 1997/2009; Moore, O’Neill, & Huot, 2009; White, 1984 and 2007; and others). The dynamic nature of the environment is why observations are important and why, as Smith (1999) notes, to understand the effects that writing assessment can have, it is important to watch it play out in the classroom.

The observations provide an important, more systemic view of the relationship between JL and the M.W.P. writing assessment practices. The evaluated papers illustrate specific acts and very conscious decisions, the interviews provide a more removed view
of acts, but the observations bring a sense of JL’s reactions and engrained behaviors. Basically, in the classroom there is less time to think about how to react as with commenting and responding to interview questions. In the classroom the needs and demands of the students bring out what has been internalized. Therefore, observing JL’s classroom afforded me an opportunity to see his relationship with M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices evolve. I was able to watch how the rubric, portfolio, and norming affected his approach and how he chose to use the rubric and portfolio in acts of conformity and resistance. I was able to see how JL’s personal history and motives interacted with the programmatic and historic value sets engrained in the practices. In these ways observing JL provide unique access to find the answers for many of my research questions.

I observed JL’s class at six different points during the term: early September, late September, late October, early November, late November, and early December. During this time I watched different types of activities in different paper cycles, such as (though not in this order) the introduction of writing assignments, a discussion of academic features, activities meant to spur topic development, a peer review, and the collection of papers.

Much like with the evaluated papers and interviews, there were several distinct changes that occurred during the term. JL noted in his early interviews that he wanted students to be successful, which clearly guided his decisions. He also noted an “us against them” approach that he used to build camaraderie. These were both present in the participation structure of JL’s classroom activities that illustrate the division of labor

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18 An early October observations couldn’t be arranged due to the semester breaks and scheduling conflicts with JL’s syllabus.
within this activity system. Similarly, changes in the rules governing the activity were evident in time devoted to M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices, particularly in reference to the end-of-term portfolio exchange and the portfolio evaluators. These, along with changes in tone connected specific activities, suggest that there was a shift in object as the class progressed similar to JL’s commenting practices and interview responses. This shift in object reinforces White, Lutz, and Kamusikiri’s (1996) argument that “assessment expresses a hierarchy of values, and those who control assessment determine the values that prevail” (p. 1).

There was a very relaxed tone and a lot of interaction between JL and the students in the first observation. Among other activities JL and the students started by discussing the purpose behind peer reviews. JL reminded students that reading others’ papers provides an opportunity to learn from their rhetorical choices. The emphasis on rhetorical choice continued as the class turned to the program’s designated handbook to discuss introductions and conclusions. JL used an initiate-response-evaluate (IRE) method in which information is presented and a question is asked by the instructor, students respond to the question, and responses receive a verbal evaluation affirming or correcting the students’ use of the information. This method encourages student participation and interaction with the materials. After reading about different options, the students created examples and posted them to the class’s electronic discussion forum. Though JL was the expert voice, the division of labor in this observation was clearly shared as information was discussed and examples were created together.

Throughout the activity, the governing rules emerged. The readings were from the suggested syllabus, but the rules governing the activity came from the handbook.
Similarly, the “us against them” approach was evident in phrases like “I am telling you this because professors are really picky,” which reinforced that JL was on the side of the students. The generalized professors and conventions also illustrate JL’s described goals and object—to teach students to write in multiple situations and be successful in college. To aid in this object JL emphasized student agency in several ways, such as answering questions about the best option saying, “It depends on what type of writer you are.”

During the first observation, there was no mention of the M.W.P. writing assessment practices by JL or the students; however, the practices were discussed during the second observation which took place in late September. The practices, though, were not directly connected to student writing. Since he was collecting the first set of finished papers, JL delivered a short lecture about assembling “a paper packet.” This lecture led to a series questions from frustrated students about the order and its reasoning. JL then discussed the evaluation process for the first paper as it didn’t receive a pass/no pass designation per M.W.P. policy. The tone during these lectures was tense, but that quickly changed when JL and the students began to work with the concept of academic argument.

As in the first observation, JL emphasized rhetorical choice and student participation. He did this by using the handbook and I.R.E. with the students creating examples for the different ways to construct an argument. Work with academic arguments continued after a brief scene from a movie as students wrote argumentative thesis statements for their second paper and posted them in the class’s electronic forum for discussion. The division of labor for the activities was once again shared between JL.

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19 As designated by M.W.P., each paper packet included in the end-of-term portfolio contains the evaluated program rubric, the final draft, the rough draft, and a sheet that guides reflection and audience analysis.

20 This is designed to give students and novice instructors a chance to get used to M.W.P. standards.
and the students and the governing rules were similar to those in the previous observation. Something was different, though. The discussion of the packets was the first overt effect of M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices. This brought the first sense of resistance in JL’s “us against them” approach. During the lecture packet assembly, and the resulting confusion, the “them” represented M.W.P. and not other professors. This was evident in statements like “I am sorry that this is such a complicated system, but we will prevail. We will not let them steal our souls.”

This switch represents JL’s agency in the situation. He chose to place the program in this position in order to create camaraderie with his students as White (2007) argues is enabled by external assessment. JL adapted to the situation over the course of the term by moving the overt resistance from “other professors” to the program itself. This act of resistance also signals a contradiction that is emerging in the system and use of the writing assessment practices.

The third observation took place in later October and shortly after JL returned the rough drafts for the third paper which asked students to identify and find the cause for a problem. The class started with a ten-minute lecture about trends JL noticed while commenting on the drafts in which JL relied heavily on language from the pedagogy course and his mentor, Sam. The primary problem, which appeared in his comments as well, was that many students did not rule out “lesser causes” in order to build toward a “main cause,” which is an M.W.P. convention emphasized in the pedagogy course. Following the brief lecture JL showed a portion from a movie he was using for the fourth paper, which asked students to propose solutions to a problem. As the class period was
passive in nature, JL played the primary role in the division of labor and M.W.P. conventions expected by portfolio evaluators guided the lecture.

Several patterns became concrete during the observation that took place in early November. The students were working on the fourth paper. As JL noted in the interviews, paper four is the point in the term when the students’ writing dramatically improves. It is also the point when the stakes are raised as students strive for two passing papers. For example, the tone of the class period was much more serious; in fact, unlike previous classes, there was no joking or laughter which was representative of a pattern that had been emerging throughout the observations. Generally, JL and the students maintained a relaxed tone, but whenever the writing assessment practices were discussed, the class was much more serious. There was also an increase in lecture, which was part of an evolution in the overall use of class time as is evident in Figure 17. The use of lecture followed by questions or activities is not necessarily an ineffective technique. However, with each lecture, a more direct tone emerged with a decreased focus on rhetorical choice. This shift resonates in warnings articulated since the early twentieth century that assessment can affect the classroom activities (Chapman & Rush, 1917, p. 185) and fits with the findings of Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) that standardization in portfolios limit reflection, choice, and classroom decisions (p. 339). This warning was also articulated by a faculty member when the M.W.P. rubric was originally created (Eck, 1992, p. 60).

Unlike the first two observations, there was less of a rhetorical/choice focus. JL started class with a “portfolio strategy session.” JL told students that if they had not yet passed a paper, they should speak with him about which paper to revise in order to get the requisite number of passing papers for the portfolio exchange. He also noted that papers
four and five “need to be your shining stars” since they would be the first essays read by
the portfolio evaluators. JL then posted an outline for paper four that he had been given
by his mentor, Sam. He accompanied the outline with a detailed lecture about each of the
paragraphs using examples from how he would write a paper using the same topic that
many of the students were using.

Drawing from M.W.P. genre conventions, JL noted that students were using too
many solutions and that they needed to choose the “best solution” and use other solutions
as counterarguments. He finished this lecture by saying,

I am going to email you this outline. This is a good way to construct your paper.
It’s a good framework for a paper and you should, theoretically, be able to sit
down with this outline and your rough draft and say, “I did this, I did this, ohh, I
need to work on this.” Make it fit this framework and it’s going to be a really
strong essay.
A student then asked about a complicated topic that had multiple solutions. JL told the student to choose one layer and use the rest as counterarguments in order to emphasize the “main solution” to fit the pattern in Sam’s outline. JL then left the outline visible for the in-class peer review activity.

Following the peer review JL asked students what they saw. They replied that they saw too many solutions instead of an emphasis on the best solution. JL reiterated that this was a problem and reminded students that the thesis should come early and “should be ‘The way we solve _____ is _____.’ Early in the opening write ‘I think the best solution to the problem is ___________.’” He then reminded students that using multiple solutions meant an automatic “no pass” on the paper and ended class saying, I appreciate the work you are doing. I know some of you are frustrated. You feel like you are doing your best and it’s still not, you know, quite to the caliber that that department is looking for but I did see a lot of improvement between essay number two and essay number three. A lot of you did move from a no pass to almost passing category, which in my book is definitely progress.

A student dejectedly replied, “We are running out of time.” Student agency was decreasing as four of the five papers I read used the organizational form seen in Sam’s outline.

There was a shift in JL’s object to a prioritization of M.W.P. rules, as will be further shown in the activity theory analysis. This is illustrated through many of the patterns, such as the amount of time devoted to the M.W.P. writing assessment practices as seen in Figure 18. There were no references to the writing assessment practices in the first observation, but there were several in each of the following observations. Not only
were there references to the writing assessment practices but there was a steady increase in the amount of classtime guided by the writing assessment practices. Furthermore, JL no longer discussed choices or what “other professors” would require; rather, he focused on program expectations and the specific M.W.P. genre needed to pass the portfolio exchange.

In a high-stakes situation, as Bazerman (2003) and other assessment scholars note, students know they are being tested and will adapt to the situation (p. 458). This is also reminiscent of worries that have existed since the inception of scales for writing assessment, that the form of assessment will encourage teaching to the assessment (Chapman & Rush, 1917, p. 185). Within the context of JL’s class and the portfolio process there was a subtle lessening of rhetorical decisions standardizing the writing itself, an effect noted in primary and secondary education by Mabry (1999) and theorized in higher education by Bazerman (2003).
The patterns that were emerging continued in the observation that took place in late November. As the class took place just prior to Thanksgiving break the students were in good moods. The mood stiffened as JL began talking about the end-of-term portfolio exchange. JL then said:

If you have two passing papers you can choose not to revise but I am not going guarantee that every person with two passing papers will pass. The department might look at your portfolio and say “JL is wrong, and this person’s writing is not strong enough to put them into 102.” Now, that is rare, but it does happen. So what we need to do is make sure that if you only have two essays passing that they are very strong essays and that your [reflective essay], which is this little tiny what-I-learned-this-semester sort of writing piece at the end of the semester, that has to be very strong as well.

JL then explained what happens during the portfolio exchange focusing on the portfolio readers. He reiterated that “this is your defense before the jury, so to speak.” The emphasis on the fact that the program might not pass students with two papers actually serves two purposes. Not only does it reinforce that JL and the students are working together, but there is also a sense of the writing assessment practices as an enforcer in order to get the students to act in a desired way – in this case to revise previous writing and to work hard on the reflective essay. The use of the writing assessment practices as a means of enforcement also shows JL’s agency and resistance to a system that he sees as depriving him of agency, which was articulated in his interview responses. Once again, this act of resistance shows the power of the instructor to adapt to situations and the evolution of JL’s classroom as a system. This act of resistance also illustrates that there
are aspects of the M.W.P. system that create the need for evolution and change which will be addressed in the activity theory analysis and in the implications for this study.

Following the discussion of the end-of-term portfolio exchange, JL introduced the final paper which asked students to evaluate a website for a fictional committee compiling a list of helpful websites for students. JL handed out the assignment sheet that had been shared in the pedagogy class and noted the criteria saying this should be “an easy essay to write because each paragraph will be about one of these criteria.” He finished with:

So when I am looking at your papers I am going to be looking for a thesis that is two-fold. It doesn’t have to be one sentence. It can be two sentences, but I want you to write, “I believe [______] should not be on the list and the following criteria are what I developed to judge this,” and you can even list your criteria at that point.

The class became more interactive as students posted possible websites in the class’s electronic discussion forum and talked about whether the sites would be good for the paper.

Next JL and the students looked at passing and non-passing examples of evaluation essays from M.W.P.’s *Sample Evaluated Essays Manual*. He pointed out the thesis structure of the passing paper several times emphasizing the way the thesis listed the criteria. He reiterated this point by showing the lack of criteria in the thesis of the non-passing example and connected it to the discussion of the websites saying, “This is what the evaluator is going to look for in your portfolio. . . .” Once again, the students
responded as all five of the papers in the collected portfolios used this thesis, and two did so with bulleted lists as suggested by JL.

The features described by JL in class were all prevalent in the evaluated writing I collected from the students. Though they were common rhetorical features, such as a direct thesis statement, transitions, and counterarguments, the decisions about the form of those features was dictated by JL’s perceptions of what the portfolio evaluators would agree upon. This suggests that the desire to create an essay that is easily agreed upon for portfolio evaluators is encouraging a product that merely satisfies the rubric and portfolio exchange, a problem noted by several scholars of similar situations (Habib and Wittek, 2007; Murphy & Grant, 1996, p. 292; Bazerman, 2003, p. 458; Huot & Williams, 1997/2009). This also points to worries of writing assessment theorist Pamela Moss (1994) that standardized practices could affect students’ abilities to evaluate their own work.

The rules governing the activities were those of M.W.P. with a directive focus. The “us against them” approach was dominant with several references to what the portfolio readers expected to see in the papers and what websites the portfolio readers would deem appropriate. There was a single reference to other professors when JL said that students should not use Wikipedia, but the emphasis remained on the portfolio evaluators. Once again the “them” was predominately M.W.P., which continued a trend evident in Table 19 which illustrates the change in the object. In each observation the overt use of JL’s described “us against them” approach to garner solidarity and allowed JL to be more of a coach than evaluator. However, there was a clear change in who was being resisted. Early on the references were to generalized “professors,” but this switched
to a generalized “portfolio reader” and “the program.” This was evident in statements made about the portfolio readers like, “This is what the evaluator is going to look at in your portfolio.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Other “Professors”</th>
<th>Portfolio Readers and Mentor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early September</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late September</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late October</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 minutes of discussion and movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early December</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 with numerous other implied mentions of portfolio readers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19. “Us Against Them” References to Professors and Portfolio Evaluators

The final observation took place close to the end of the term on the day that JL explained portfolio assembly. For this reason it is no surprise that the entire class dealt with M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices in some form or another. JL started class with lecture about the evaluation note that he would write. He then conducted a lecture-based activity in which the order the paper packets should be placed in the portfolio. This took nearly two-thirds of the class. Throughout this time the frustration clearly continued to grow. By the end of the period students were vocalizing their negative views of the process and its structured nature. JL’s frustration was also apparent when students challenged the purpose behind the portfolio organization as he did not have answers for their questions. Finally, JL provided students with an overview of what 102 would be like and students were provided with time to work on their reflection. This didn’t last long, though, as JL spent much of the rest of the class answering questions about portfolios and the portfolio exchange. In this class period the “us against them” approach was very
prevalent with “them” being M.W.P. The class itself was guided by M.W.P. portfolio requirements.

The manner in which the writing assessment practices were addressed changed dramatically over the term as they were integrated into the discussion of the students’ writing itself. This is illustrated by the fact that the first reference to the writing assessment practices dealt specifically with the physical portfolio while subsequent references began to influence the way the writing was discussed which was reflected in the students’ papers. This was particularly true in the late November class as the generalized portfolio evaluators’ expectations and needs were an overt topic and as part of the introduction of the final paper. Even though the stated audience was a fictional committee creating a list of helpful websites, the real audience associated with the high-stakes assessment supplanted the stated audience for both JL and the students.

The comments, interviews, and observations each represent an important means of interaction between JL, his students, and M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices. Each is a topographical map with separate landmarks that when placed together become much more. Much as when Heat–Moon (1999) describes railroad worker Fidel Ybarra’s map of the tracks and hundreds of thousands of ties he worked with by saying,

I watched his map fill in. Artless and accurate for its scale, it is a portrait of sixty years spent along skinny rail corridors of the county[. . . .] And he draws on and turns it into a picture, chart, chronicle, handbook. (p. 234)

These topographical maps illustrate a lived experience for JL and his students. They show an evolution, adaptation, and actions. The following chapter contains the deep maps that bring the pasts, values, motives, and lives described in this and previous chapters
together, and I hope that the “artless and accurate” maps can turn into a picture that does this complicated landscape justice.
CHAPTER V.

DRAWING THE MAP: AN ACTIVITY THEORY ANALYSIS

Heat-Moon (1999) wondered how to make sense of and show his experiences in Chase County. He found his answer in the grids that formed the county on paper, the map that symbolized and fictionalized the complexity that he, too, was representing. What he could write on a piece of paper could not truly show all that he had seen. He writes:

For thirty months, maybe more, I’ve come and gone here and have found stories to tell, but, until last week, I had not discovered a way to tell them. My searches and researches, like my days, grew more randomly than otherwise, and every form I tried contorted them, and each time I began to press things into cohesion, I edged not so much toward fiction as toward distortion, when what I wanted was accuracy; even when I got the details down accurately, I couldn’t hook it to the next without concocting theories. It was the concocting that deviled me. I was hunting a fact or image and not a thesis to hold my details together and so I arrived at this question: should I just gather up items like creek pebbles into a bag and then let them tumble into their own pattern? Did I really want the reality of randomness? [. . .] The least I hoped for was a topographic map of words that would open inch by inch to show its long miles. (pp. 14-15)

Though coincidental, from the early conceptions of this project to the beginning this chapter, I stood with 30 months of experiences, searches, and research.

Like Heat-Moon, I wrestled with how to represent this complex situation and these people. I, too, am deviled, but not by the concocting as the patterns have risen naturally from the perspectives and work of the participants, but by the layers. As Hesse-
Biber and Piatelli (2007) write, “A feminist epistemology questions the proposition that the social world is one fixed reality that is external to individual consciousness and suggests that it is socially constructed, consisting of multiple perspectives and realities” (p. 497). Subscribing to this perspective means that I find value in a productive complexity, but working with the multiple perspectives and realities is difficult. Feminist sociologists Marjorie L. DeVault and Glenda Gross (2007) write, “Mapping is fundamental to any project seeking to explicate relationships among groups, histories, and contexts. As a methodological tool, it brings the social (i.e., historicity, activity, and agency) back to the knowledge we produce” (p. 191). The evaluated papers, the interviews, and the observations of JL’s class each act as an isolated topographic map. They contain features that, while significant, can be lost unless pointed out in context. Placing these maps together will focus these moments that are built on and harbor the histories, activity, and agency described in the previous chapters in a single deep map.

As both feminist researchers and activity theorists note, the histories of the M.W.P. and JL are by no means insignificant. Not only are they necessary to stave off objectification (Sprague, 2005, p. 20), but they have also led to this moment. They play an important role in the interaction between the program as an entity and JL mediated through the programmatic writing assessment practices. The values that have evolved are now embedded within the assessment practices. The evolution appears to be smooth only because the multitude of other options and decisions were locked away in the blackbox. However they come together in a specific definition of assessment both tacitly and overtly used by the program. Contradictions can then arise because of assumed or unexplained definition. Moore, O’Neill, and Huot (2009) make the point that
stakeholders identify and define the needs of students differently and maintain different opinions about what assessment is and should be (pp. 120-121). Building from the histories and attitudes of M.W.P. and JL seen in previous chapters and placed in proximity via Clarke’s (2007) social worlds/arenas maps, I now turn to another set of maps to highlight their perspectives at the time of this study. The similarities and differences between these activity systems emerge in Figures 20 and 21 while the changes in JL’s perspectives becomes evident in Figure 22.

Drawing from the discussion in Chapter One, “The Tools of Cartography: A Discussion of Epistemology, Methodology, and Methods,” I use activity theory as defined by Engeström (2003). An activity system is represented through its various parts:

[. . .] the subject refers to the individual or subgroup whose agency is chosen as the point of view in the analysis. The object refers to the “raw material” or “problem space” at which the activity is directed and which is molded or transformed into outcomes with the help of physical and symbolic, external and internal tools (mediating instruments and signs). The community comprises multiple individuals and/or subgroups who share the same general object. The division of labor refers to both the horizontal division of tasks between the members of the community and to the vertical division of power and status. Finally the rules refer to the explicit and implicit regulations, norms and conventions that constrain interactions within the activity system. (Engeström, 2003, p. 67)

An important aspect of activity theory that I use in this analysis is the separation of goals from the object. Engeström (2006b) writes:
Activities are social practices oriented at objects. An entity becomes an object of activity when it meets a human need. [. . .] In this constructed, need-related capacity, the object gains motivating force that gives shape and direction to activity. The object determines the horizon of possibilities (Engeström, 1995).

Objects are not to be confused with goals. Goals are attached to specific actions. (pp. 380-381)

The significance of this distinction is that the separate goals and motivations of the students and JL can co-exist within a single activity system. Similarly, the goals and motivations within the overall pool of students, instructors, staff, and administrators in the M.W.P. can also co-exist. However, the objects that appear to be similar between JL and M.W.P. are actually different.

M.W.P.’s general system contains a community of administration, staff, and teachers in the midst of a greater university system. Also, the M.W.P. system contains the same students that are in JL’s class. However, the realities that are a part of JL’s classroom create a significant difference in the objects. The interaction of histories and motivating factors that came together early in the term in JL’s classroom have an immediacy that orient the system in a separate direction from that of the program.

M.W.P.’s history shows the desire to use common writing assessment practices to create consistency and is directly tied to the values of efficiency and scientific objectivity that Applebee (1974) and others note have been a part of writing assessment history for over a century. However, while teachers and students are a part of the community within M.W.P., they exist as a generalized entity. This is deemed necessary as the individual histories of over 4,000 individual students cannot be efficiently addressed by M.W.P.
This is true for the 80 instructors (46 G.S.T.A.s and 34 full-time faculty) as well whose individual values complicate the desire for objective assessment. Thus, while specific instructors and students do play a role, the needs of a generalized group are what motivates and forms the definitions for the program.

This distinction is not insignificant in how the individual instructors interact with the assessment practices. This decision also carries with it ideological implications that I have not taken lightly. As a researcher it means that I see a separation between sections within a program, which is also clear from my choice of participants, methods, and the guiding belief in macroscopic perspectives that value agency, histories, and respect. I bring my own history and biases that I have addressed and acknowledged throughout the process, but the mere use of activity theory maps does illustrate my chosen way of seeing.

The Midwest Writing Program As a System

Kuutti (1996) argues that activity theory is a strong means of “describing development processes,” such as writing assessment practices and classroom decisions, due to its adaptability (p. 32). M.W.P. is a system in itself as there is a group of people that work together toward a single object. There is an ideological problem space involved with improving student writing guided by the university and field-based values that flows through a series of program-developed manuals, portfolios, rubric, objectives, policy statements, and merit policies that mediate the activity of teaching. There are also outcomes of the activity in the form of passing rates that symbolize the student abilities with effects on student identities and graduation. Similarly, there are merit files for
instructors which symbolize careers and files for G.S.T.A.s that are drawn upon for letters of recommendation symbolizing teaching abilities and affecting potential careers.

The complex motivation for the members of the community will vary, often within polymotivational and polycontextual situations through which the participants will be motivated through connections to other systems in which they are involved (Nardi, 2005; Prior & Shipka, 2003; Spinuzzi, 2008). For instance, an instructor may be simultaneously motivated to improve the writing of students for the sake of her or his field-based community, to maintain a positive identity within the program thus providing money to help fulfill the needs of a familial system, and even to live up to or counteract examples set by the historical community of teachers that is a part of her or his identity as an instructor.

![Figure 20. M.W.P. Activity System Map](image)

The same adaptability that Kuutti (1996) mentions makes activity theory a useful methodology also enables varying definitions of the components and boundaries of the
system. The history and situations begin to shape this system, but there are other factors as well. In the previous brief description, the number of directions and perceptions is evident. The blurred boundaries come into focus via the definitions of the researcher. I see the following definitions emerging from the data.

**Subject: Director, Mentors, Generalized Instructors, Students, and Administrators**

There are many different people involved in the M.W.P. activity system itself. The influence of the director on the object and the direction of the system is relatively clear as the director makes several decisions for the system. The director also teaches the required pedagogy course for G.S.T.A.s; thus, the director interprets and defines the assessment components for G.S.T.A.s overtly and tacitly through benchmarks and writing samples. Likewise, as the mentors discuss the G.S.T.A.s with the director, there is a reciprocal relationship: their individual perceptions of the activity within the systems helps to create a generalized set of needs of the new G.S.T.A.s in turn influencing G.S.T.A.s through their interactions with the mentors.

Depending on the scope of the activity system, there is direct involvement of instructors, students, and university administration. I, however, place this involvement outside M.W.P.’s immediate system because instructors, students, and university administration will have very different conceptions of the ideological problem space directing the system’s object. Furthermore, in the day-to-day interaction of the M.W.P. system, individual instructors, students, and university administrators cannot feasibly be considered. The needs of the individuals are brought together in a generalized sense and represented through an aggregate product, in this case the writing assessment practices. Thus, M.W.P.’s standardized assessment practices and policies mediate the direction of
the system through a generalized sense of instructors and students, as seen in the *Guide to Portfolio Assessment* (2007), “Without some regulation by [M.W.P.], students could be receiving positive or negative—as well as vastly different—writing experiences” (p. 43). This perspective illustrates the continued desire for consistency built into the creation of the writing assessment practices noted by Eck (1992, p. 59).

Universities also have outcomes and missions to which programs must adapt. Thus, when a program must live up to standards and is faced with many different attitudes about writing and teaching, the administration may choose to use standardized practices to help provide consistency (Broad, 1997, p. 141-42). This is an important move on the part of many programs for, as Cizek and Bunch (2007) note, standards enable the trust of outside stakeholders, and, as discussed by Bazerman (2003), allows for more consistent planning (p. 465). Moreover, M.W.P. has also adjusted to the values of the field, which is evident in its compliance with many aspects of the 2006 CCCC’s Position Statement on Writing Assessment and more recently the 2008 NCTE/WPA White Paper on Writing Assessment.

The generalized set of needs used by M.W.P. has important implications. Hugh Mehan (2003) illustrated the means by which people’s identities can be stripped away through institutional processes. He specifically showed how, through a chain of paperwork, a young child’s behavior was classified as “special needs” though the child was not acting differently than others. Basically, the paperwork began to represent the child to the point that he was lost and while the paperwork moved on. His representation became him in the official channels, whether accurate or not.
Similar to what Mehan (2003) shows with that student, the definitions of needs and identities for stakeholders, in this case the teacher and the students, becomes the stakeholders, particularly in the process of tool creation. Though the program’s definition of needs and assessment will be more accurate for some individual students and teachers than others, the generalized picture becomes the stakeholders just as the portfolio becomes the student. On the opposite end, a similar process occurs in JL’s classroom in which the program is represented via generalized needs and definitions, particularly through its rubric, policies, and JL’s “us against them” perspective.

**Motives**

The motivation(s) of the participants will vary for each individual. Bonnie Nardi (2005) shows that motivation will affect the level at which a person will be involved and committed to an object. Through administration, the program as an entity has motivation to continue its existence within the university system and satisfy those requirements.

Sam’s motivation is layered. Sam, JL’s mentor, notes that this role fits in a career choice seen in the desire for an advanced degree in composition and rhetoric, but there is more to it. Sam also discussed the desire to help the people she mentors as her mentor helped her (personal communication, December 23, 2008). Sam added that by shaping G.S.T.A.s’ identities, mentors influence the many students in their classes (Sam, personal communication, December 23, 2008). Sam’s answers show a partial motivation that is career based, meaning that involvement in the system at this level has an exchange value that will provide a benefit later in life. Sam also demonstrates a commitment to student experience and the quality of instruction in M.W.P. writing classes which is shared by the program and gives rise to the continued use of standards and standardized writing
assessment practices. Finally, there is an immediate set of needs for Sam when she spoke to the complexity of the mentors’ positions as they need to enforce the requirements of M.W.P. while working together with the busy schedules of everyone involved without getting fired (Sam, personal communication, December 23, 2008).

Object

There are several human needs that are connected to M.W.P. There are the personal needs of the instructors regarding careers and compensation. For the students there is the need for effective communication, which in modern society can involve writing. Similarly, the motivation of providing a strong and beneficial classroom experience is predicated on a definition of needs mediating M.W.P.’s view of what should go into that classroom experience. M.W.P. makes overt use of a guiding set of outcomes that is very similar to those identified and sanctioned by the W.P.A. Outcomes Statement and the M.W.P. assessment practices do mesh with guidelines from leading authorities in the field of composition and rhetoric, particularly the CCCC, and WPA.

There are a number of principles guiding M.W.P.’s ideological problem space. The *M.W.P. Instructor Handbook* (2008) states, “Designed around a set of nationally-approved learning outcomes, the [M.W.P.] consist of a number of components which work together to produce a comprehensive, competency-based writing program which is grounded in current theory and practice” (p. 9). Thus, the values articulated in these outcomes do shape and direct the activity and are based in the categories of “rhetorical knowledge,” “critical thinking, reading, and writing,” “processes of writing and collaboration,” “knowledge of conventions,” and “values exploration” (pp. 11-12). The assessment processes themselves also carry the values of interrater reliability, objective
performance measurement, positivism, and desire for efficiency embedded within the history of writing assessment particularly through the direct connection with Paul Diederich in the design of M.W.P.’s original rubric. Thus, the assessment practices are also shaped and directed by the values inherent in traditional writing assessment noted by several scholars (Applebee, 1974; Broad, 1994; Chapman & Rush, 1917; Elliott, 2005; Kelly, 1914; Williamson, 1994/2009; and others), and CCCC’s values of complexity of writing needing multiple papers in high stakes writing assessment.

In addition, for novice instructors, the writing assessment practices have long been meant to mediate and align perspectives. Eck notes that the M.W.P. rubric was designed so that “even the newest instructors could attempt to objectify their readings” (p. 59). They were also meant “for setting an even standard among unevenly trained instructors” (Eck, 1992, p. 105). Nelson (1993) notes:

Teaching assistants who have a tendency to give high marks for creativity while overlooking mechanical difficulties or those who have a tendency to pass any piece of writing as long as it is mechanically sound are kept on track through using the [M.W.P.] rubric. (p. 92)

Thus, the rubric provides a means of instructor training (Nelson, 1993, p. 38) as well as a common language (p. 91). The general alignment, for M.W.P., is then reinforced as “teaching assistants learn to use the rubric through discussing numerous samples and through working together in practice sessions, they learn to apply the rubric with a large degree of uniformity, thereby keeping [M.W.P.]’s evaluation standards consistent across the program” (Nelson, 1993, p. 92).
Outcomes

The object mediated through the tools has an immediate outcome seen in passing rates of students which is connected to the “competency-based” measure of students’ writing abilities. For the program, generalized data from the writing assessment practices shows that the program is or is not satisfying the immediate motivation of meeting the needs of the students, which translates into the success of the program mission and in the end continued existence of the M.W.P. With the program’s continual success comes the maintained employment of instructors and mentors, which has both use and exchange value.

Community

There are several individuals and subgroups that connect to this object, such as the director, staff, mentors, instructors, and students. However, due to the number of instructors and students, a generalized discussion of needs represents instructors and students. A broader sense of community is seen as the scope is widened. M.W.P. is consistently influenced via polycontextuality and border crossing of the members of the community. It is this process that opens the system to influence from the field of composition and rhetoric as members of the community are not only M.W.P. personnel but also members of academic communities that are sometimes composition and rhetoric related and sometimes other connected to other aspects of English Studies. The subgroups also interact with and are influenced by other employees of M.U. and local community members to name merely a few of the myriad of systems connected to M.W.P.
Rules

M.W.P.’s history discussed in Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The People and the Place,” shows a program that has long been working with the needs of its students as defined by the program and university in conjunction with field-based guidelines. The writing assessment practices, particularly the rubric, have been evolving since the early 1970s with the use of portfolios beginning early in the 1990s. These assessment practices reflect current assessment theory in many ways. Specifically, the methods reflect and align with values that flow through assessment since the early in the twentieth century via the categories seen in rubrics, methods of holistic/analytic assessment, the validity of direct writing assessment, and reliability garnered through normed interrater agreement.

The practices also fulfill the “rules” as defined by Brian Huot (2002) in that they are “site based” though developed in connection with Diederich (Eck, 1992, p. 59). The practices fit the guidelines set forth in the 2006 C.C.C.C. position statement on writing assessment as well as 2008 N.C.T.E./W.P.A. white paper on writing assessment. As desired by C.C.C.C., the assessment practices are reviewed and adapted by an assessment committee of full-time faculty members and the writing assessment practices are “locally controlled” and “research based.”

The research-based nature of the practices called for by C.C.C.C. is maintained in M.W.P.’s willingness to be studied by students in local rhetoric and composition program classes and in dissertations such as this one. Similarly, the program seeks to validate the assessment practices through program reviews by outside scholars and works to maintain a culture of assessment. These practices affect and are affected by the “pedagogical and
curricular goals” of the program. Furthermore, among other policies, the assessment practices make use of several writing samples composed over time and read by “human readers.” M.W.P. has become successful enough with its writing assessment practices that the director serves as a consultant to programs across the country.

There are other rules by which M.W.P. must abide. The M.W.P. exists within the structures of M.U. The field-based definition of needs is important, but the mission and definitions provided by M.U. also shapes the object and outcomes. As noted earlier, the existence within a greater institutional set of values is one of the reasons writing programs use standards (Broad, 1997, pp. 141-142). Similarly, as M.W.P. is part of a mid-sized, accredited state university, issues of state and federal governance and funding also play a role in how and by whom the activity of improving student writing is enacted.

**Division of Labor**

For this system the primary division of labor comes through the designation of policy and the interpretation of that policy by instructors as they then implement it in their classrooms. Thus, the director, assistant director, and instructional assistant use in-service gatherings for full-time faculty and returning G.S.T.A.s to guide that implementation. Also, the director teaches the required pedagogy course to all incoming G.S.T.A.s, and the mentors work with individual G.S.T.A.s on a weekly basis. The purpose for this division of labor, as well as the manner in which the writing assessment practices mediate the activity, are evident in the following quote from M.W.P.’s *Guide to Portfolio Assessment* (2007):

One of the major benefits of Portfolio Assessment is that it helps to standardize evaluative criteria and grading among all sections of a course. This is especially
important in composition, where well over one hundred sections of the same course can be offered during one semester at [M.U.]. Without some regulation by [M.W.P.], students could be receiving positive or negative—as well as vastly different—writing experiences. By sharing the responsibility of Portfolio Assessment among all instructors, each instructor becomes sensitized to the types and levels of proficiency that [M.W.P.] would like all students to meet in each composition course. (p. 43)

Artifacts and Tools

There are several artifacts and tools that help provide the definition of needs and assessment practices that convey program values. M.W.P. manuals are distributed to all instructors. Similarly, the paper-based rubric and portfolio are used to reinforce the “competency-based” standards of M.W.P., particularly for novice instructors.

JL’s Classroom System at the Beginning of the Term

As with M.W.P., JL’s class is a system with multiple people working together toward an object. The physical space of the classroom does bring this group of people together, but it is the ideological space that binds them. Though this program is a part of M.W.P., there are some important differences in the objects. Within the M.W.P. the writing assessment practices serve to reinforce the program definition of generalized instructor and student needs. In JL’s classroom, though, the writing assessment tools serve the needs of a single instructor, individual students, and the generalized needs of the program. The program itself becomes an entity connected to the writing assessment practices which, at times, also serves JL’s needs. Once again, these vague descriptions
are based in my definitions as a researcher. The following are the definitions and boundaries through which I construct JL’s system.

Subject

JL is the primary participant and instructor, but his interview answers and actions are conveyed through my definitions and interpretation. The students are also involved in a meaningful way as their individual writing abilities and perspectives have an immediate impact on JL’s decisions. JL must negotiate their real situations with the generalized definitions provided by M.W.P. along with JL’s past and definition of needs. In the beginning, as JL was a novice instructor, he had to build off his sense of what the students would need from his history, the people he knows, and his mentor/M.W.P. administration. As he gained more experience and interaction with students, his definitions became more connected with their specific and immediate needs.
Motives

Unlike the mentors and M.W.P. administration, the success of the program does not have a use value for JL beyond maintaining an assistantship. It does have an exchange value though as the classroom experience could be useful in later job searches, but he sees no direct exchange value in term of future employment. Thus, for JL, and many G.S.T.A.s in other English-related programs, the motivation that connects G.S.T.A.s in a composition and rhetoric program is lessened or divided. JL cares deeply for his students and wants to teach, but there are other systems to which he is more devoted, such as his degree program in a less-than-static hierarchy of polycontextual involvement. JL did note that the experience he gained is valuable and that he will be less anxious teaching in the future (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008).

Object

JL clearly states that this course is his job. In this regard, this course and his involvement serve the basic function of exchanging services for education and money used for food, shelter, etc. In this case, the definition of needs identified by the program, to improve the writing of students, is important. Similar to Rose’s (1985) myth of transience, JL saw 101 as a course to fix problems, as is evident when he states, “in a perfect world these kids would come to college with some of the fundamental skills sets so that they wouldn’t even need to play catch up” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). However, JL maintained a broader definition of needs that was evident when he stated, “I am very interested in a holistic approach to teaching. I care not only about the student’s writing but about the student as a whole” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). In the first interview, JL told me that he wanted
students “to walk out of that room knowing [. . .] college is not going to be impossible and that if they want it bad enough they can succeed at it” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). Success in college and even classroom decorum has historically fallen within the realm of what is taught in the composition classroom (Brereton, 1995, p. 18). In the end, as JL notes in his first interview, the portfolios and assessment practices do shape what goes on in his classroom and his goal was to help students comfortably pass the end-of-term portfolio exchange (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). The realities of M.W.P. portfolio assessment are evident. JL has a desire to make sure students can comfortably pass two essays. Passing two essays does imply improved writing skills and fits within the needs of the university structure, but neither was mentioned by JL. Also, due to interrater reliability, passing two essays carries with it objective agreement.

There are other important issues in how JL perceives the space in which this activity takes place. JL values an electronic space as is evident in his use of electronic commenting practices and the class’s electronic discussion board even in a physical classroom. While JL values the classroom interaction, he made consistent references in all three interviews to the fact that the M.W.P. writing assessment practices are essentially paper based. Comments can be placed on paper electronically; however, the rubric and the portfolio itself are physical, paper products requiring that all evaluated work be printed out by the students for the portfolio exchange. It also requires students to maintain all rubrics over the course of the term. This may seem insignificant, but over the course of the term it was increasingly important to JL, which signaled a separation in values between JL and M.W.P.
Outcomes

There are several short- and long-term outcomes for JL and the students. The desired outcome from the M.W.P. perspective is improving student writing in relation to program standards. For students this leads to consequences of passing or not passing the course. M.W.P. does acknowledge that writing abilities develop over time. Therefore, M.W.P. doesn’t fail students; rather, they receive a “no record” and must retake the course. However, one of the students articulated early on that immediately passing the course is important. She stated that her intention is to go to graduate school in business and that she doesn’t “want to fail my class so I’m going to try my hardest at least ’til the end of the year probably” (personal communication, September 14, 2008). The need to pass the class meant that she would read the comments for the papers and “if he wants them to change and if he gives me an example of how I can make it better then like I’ll obviously go with that” (personal communication, September 14, 2008).

Particularly early on JL was relatively excited about the outcomes for him as a novice instructor. He noted that the classroom experience he was receiving was very valuable. He also noted that he was receiving an education and a stipend that helped pay bills and purchase food. Thus, there were some strong benefits and JL seemed to enjoy what he was doing, even if he didn’t always understand why he was doing it.

Community

The immediate community in this system is made up of JL and the students. There is also a sense of the generalized program that comes into play, as is evident in the classroom observations. This sense enables different uses of the writing assessment practices and variations in the division of labor. The polycontextual affects of system
interaction are interesting. Whereas the program maintains a generalized set of student needs, in this system the individual students’ immediate needs and needs that rise from their other systems play a direct role. For instance, with the student quoted earlier, there is a prioritized business related activity that places pressure on her in this and other classes. The desire to go to graduate school raises the stakes of this class and its exchange value toward the greater activity. Thus, her desires and the desires of other students come into contact with JL and his object of helping students be successful in college. As is evident at the end of the term, this interaction did have an effect on the object of the classroom in pressure to get students to pass the end-of-term portfolio exchange. Similarly, the other systems in which JL was involved also affected the object of the course as those systems took JL’s time and mind away from the classroom.

Rules

The rules for this system come from many different entities. There are the direct rules provided by M.W.P. that govern the materiality of the final product as well as the values used to judge its effectiveness. The effect of this set of rules is seen when JL states,

I kind of tell the students that it’s you and me against the system, and they like that feeling of solidarity that we have [. . .] there is this sort of element of “Ok how can we convince these people that you are worthy to go to English 102.” (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008)

There are also rules from JL’s past and the generalized sense of what other professors want that affect what happens in this classroom. JL openly stated that he commented on things other professors find important (personal communication, November 4, 2008). He
also spoke of other professors while teaching. It is this set of rules that illustrates a break in the definition of needs JL has for his students in relation to the definition of needs the program maintains. In this instance, as the program has to make use of a generalized student and JL the individual students, their specific social and behavioral needs play a more immediate role for JL.

**Division of Labor**

The external nature of the rules does have an interesting effect on the division of labor within this system. As Edward White (2007) discusses, the use external criteria allows the teacher to take on a more collegial role with students. This was evident within this system. Instead of a direct, hierarchical role of instructor/student or evaluator/evaluated, JL was able to take a different approach: “I think for me teaching is almost half guidance counselor . . . you know, half coach, and the other half of it is just having some of the technical knowhow” (JL, personal communication, September 4, 2008). JL also refers to the role of the “lovable but dorky friend” in trying to balance that role with his role of teacher (JL, personal communication, November 4, 2008). The external criteria, both from the program and from the generalized professors, allowed for a “you and me against the system” perspective used by JL.

**Artifacts and Tools**

There are a number of artifacts that played a role in this system, but there were several artifacts that were repeatedly discussed during the interviews and in class. Because of this emphasis, and my research questions, these are the artifacts/tools I analyzed: the program rubric, the portfolio as a generalized entity, a small sampling of
individual student portfolios, JL’s comments on student papers, and the program-designated handbook.

A Quaternary Contradiction

Educational scholars such as Lisa Yamagata-Lynch and Michael Haudenschild (2009) believe the teacher maintains the original object when confronted with external assessment, creating a tertiary contradiction. I, however, see JL’s situation creating a quaternary contradiction, which is an inner conflict involving the replacement of the object. In other words, the trends in JL’s commenting, the changes in his interview responses over time, and the changes in his classroom activities are the effects of a quaternary contradiction spurred by the substitution of JL’s original object with that of M.W.P. The substitution coincides with rising stakes connected to the students’ need to pass two papers to be eligible for the end-of-term portfolio exchange.

Each of the forms of data suggests a shift at the end of the third paper that becomes concrete in JL’s decisions and activities connected to paper four. There are several patterns that illustrate this shift. The increase in length and tone of the endnotes for the final drafts of paper three illustrate a rising pressure on students and JL. The slight increase in comments and the more detailed nature of the comments coincides with an increase in the amount of time spent lecturing and less using an I.R.E. pattern emphasizing student agency. JL’s use of an outline provided by his mentor for the peer review of paper four also illustrates a more direct approach which continued with the introduction to and comments on the fifth paper and incorporated the perspectives of the portfolio evaluators to enforce or reinforce rhetorical approaches and decisions in paper number five. Other classroom decisions support this perspective as well, such as the
switch in the referent of “them” from other professors to M.W.P. All of this took place against a backdrop of steadily increasing amounts of class time directly connected to the writing assessment practices. JL even spoke of the switch saying that he “toed-the-line” because of time constraints (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). By mapping the classroom system at the end of the term based on the data, the change becomes even more evident.

Subject

Once again, JL’s interview answers play an important role. However, with the observations and the collected writing the students also provide an important perspective.
Motives

As the term progressed the patterns that emerged show that helping the students pass the class became an increasingly important motivational factor for JL. The students need to pass in order to enter and pass 102 to graduate. JL needed students to pass to prove his teaching ability as seen in JL’s quick connection between passing rates and teaching ability, similar to the lines of Forster and Chapin (2008) “Each box that you mark on each test that you take, remember your teachers, their jobs are at stake. Your score is their score, but don’t get all stressed. They’d never teach anything not on the test.”

Changes to Community

The community shrank as the influence of generalized professors lessened over the course of the term though it never fully disappearing. The acknowledged influence became limited to JL’s mentor, Sam, and the generalized portfolio evaluators.

Changes to Rules

The change in “regulations, norms, and conventions” that play a role also comes to light not only through the decreased references to other professors but also in the increased amount of time devoted to the writing assessment practices. The rules were overtly enforced and reinforced through the use of Sam’s outline as well as through the move from using the handbook to program samples to guide rhetorical discussions and decisions. As JL had not been through the portfolio exchange himself, M.W.P. lore and a generalized sense of the portfolio evaluators’ expectations are also a clear indication of M.W.P.’s rules, values, definitions of need, and conventions governing the activity and
fulfilling a worry long-held by many writing assessment scholars (Chapman & Rush, 1917; Eck, 1992; Grant & Murphy, 1996; Habib & Wittek, 2005).

**Division of Labor**

The classroom activities and the assignment of status also illustrate a switch and quaternary contradiction. In early observations JL and the students used a generalized audience as students created examples of different rhetorical features. As the term progressed, student agency decreased as JL adapted to his own decreased sense of agency. Shortly after stating that he “toed-the-line” and used what the program provided him, JL stated, “I think, I was more or less an average [M.W.P.] instructor as [the pedagogy class] taught me to be” (personal communication, December 26, 2008). This decrease in his agency was also evident when he stated:

> There’s a sense that there’s no true delegation. That everything has to be scrutinized at a higher level. That there’s not a lot of autonomy. This would make an insecure person even more insecure, but as for my place in the structure, I’m, I’m a guy that’s playing at being an instructor (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

Status was given by JL and the students to M.W.P. and generalized portfolio evaluators.

**Artifacts**

Over the course of the term fewer tools and artifacts played an important role. In the end program materials and samples became very important in constructing a portfolio to meet program standards, needs, and definitions. This was evident on a number of occasions but particularly through the use of Sam’s outline and the samples for paper number five as checklists of rhetorical features
Object

From my interpretation of the data noted in the previous chapter, I believe the object at the end of the term is the ideological space based on M.W.P.’s definitions of needs, assessment, and values. Though there is a switch in object, JL’s original object was not totally subverted. He stated, “I was able to develop a rapport with the students that helped them to feel like they weren't alone in the universe” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). This statement illustrates a slight change, but does fit with the desire to help students see they can be successful in other classes. Also, with the occasional reference of other professors, JL maintained the slight presence of other audiences and rhetorical situations. The change in object is also evident in JL’s view of teaching at the end of the term as a strictly institutional activity.

Outcomes

The outcomes from this switch were somewhat unexpected. When I asked what he felt the students wanted from the course, JL acknowledged that students know about the placement process and merely want to know what is necessary to pass the class (personal communication, December 26, 2008), a phenomenon also noted by Bazerman (2003, p. 458). As Huot (2002) and White (2007) have noted, what is assessed will affect what is taught, which was evident as JL’s class moved steadily toward the expectations of the portfolio readers. With that being the case, there is a sense of the portfolio evaluators as a real audience, but one that is very local and contradictory to the assignments’ stated audiences. For JL, the passing rate of his students takes on a different feel, particularly in conjunction with the end-of-term portfolio process leading to another outcome of the system. M.W.P. does note that the end-of-term portfolio exchange does prevent different
experiences and standards in the classroom. This function did not escape JL, and not necessarily in a negative way. He stated, “I figured if anything [the portfolio exchange] was just a failsafe, you know, if I was really screwing it up, hopefully the other instructor would correct what I was doing wrong” (personal communication, December 26, 2008). Unfortunately, JL noted that some of the students’ portfolios were deemed “not passing” by the first evaluator but were passed by the second evaluator. His response to this was “what you've got here are two people whose opinion of my teaching, not so much my teaching, but my students work, is very different, but they’re both operating within the parameters of the system” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008). The sense of objectivity was broken for JL.

Finally, JL noted a lack delegation and autonomy that lead to him “playing at being an instructor” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008) that bears a strong undertone of programmatic control whether desired by M.W.P. or not. The sense of being monitored is prevalent in many external writing assessment practices, such as noted by Bazerman (2003), and can bring mistrust toward the program. It also carries a possible outcome connected to money and teaching experience that affect not only the immediate needs but also the possible exchange value in terms of future employment. G.S.T.A.s need the position for things like classroom experience, but can also feel as though they have not been prepared to teach writing in any other situation. This can lead to resentment and, as White (1984) notes, an adversarial relationship (p. 409).

**JL’s Agency**

Once again, JL made conscious decisions in how he reacted to M.W.P.’s object. Specifically, JL adapted to the situation which meant finding a way to work with his busy
schedule, the requirements of his academic program, and the requirements of M.W.P. though its policies, writing assessment practices, and the required pedagogy class. JL did resist the program at times but he also chose to accept the object of the program. This acceptance allowed his students to pass the class, a necessary thing, but also negatively impacted the rhetorical agency he valued in the beginning of the term.

JL did what he felt he needed to do for his needs and the needs of his students. Thus, he maintained agency, as all do whether choosing to resist or be enculturated. The double bind created by the M.W.P.’s activity system limited the choices and made JL feel that his original object was no longer plausible. This is something that needs to be addressed. By creating the contradictions, the M.W.P. system is breaking down the unity originally meant to achieve though a standardized object and practices.

**Additional Experiences**

This study is situated. The previously detailed observations and interview excerpts reflect the experiences of one person but individual experiences of each G.S.T.A. will differ. However, I interviewed the M.W.P. mentors to see if there are correlations with the experiences of other G.S.T.A.s. As with my retelling of JL’s experiences, the mentors can only provide the experiences of other G.S.T.A.s from their perspective. Still, both Sam, JL’s mentor, and Jim, another mentor, provided connections that support JL’s views.

The complicated and layered connection to M.W.P. does not belong solely to JL. The other G.S.T.A.s are also seeking degrees and maintaining lives outside of school. Sam noted that this lessened motivation stating, “Unfortunately for some of our TAs this is just a job and so they’ll do just what they have to do to get by until something else
comes up” (personal communication, December 23, 2008). Sam noted G.S.T.A.s’ frustration with the time required to teach when they are at M.U. to get degrees from other academic programs. She noted that the G.S.T.A.s she mentors have “a lot of resistance and almost hostility” toward M.W.P. policies and teaching requirements, specifically the required course, mentor meetings, and submission of materials and evaluated papers. Sam links this frustration with the time restraints and the split motivations that come from teaching while taking classes (personal communication, December 23, 2008). The programs that bring the G.S.T.A.s to M.U. cannot help but create considerations in their polycontextual motivations and layered identities.

The fact that the G.S.T.A.s bring such different identities, experiences, and motives supports the need for unifying outcomes. Without some sort of discussion of writing assessment most new teachers will fall back on their experiences from the past and the ways in which their writing has been assessed (Eck, 1992; White, 2007). Writing assessment is not simple and commenting on students’ writing can be scary. There is a natural learning curve to writing assessment that M.W.P. addresses via its mentors. Jim noted the tension that this can create among the G.S.T.A.s stating,

There’s a friction between [program/mentor perspectives] and [G.S.T.A.s’] instincts about what they feel they need to be commenting on. That was the most genuine sense of friction early on because they really, really, really insisted that they needed to be focusing more on sentence-level stuff (tapping the desk with the answer) (Jim, personal communication, December 18, 2008)

Jim noted that as the term progressed he and the G.S.T.A.s found “a balance” between the issues “that was more like what they were told to expect from [M.W.P.] in terms of
assessment” (Jim, personal communication, December 18, 2008). Even with this natural evolution and growth in new instructors, there are some very common trends in the experiences of G.S.T.A.s, such as paper four acting as a pivoting point in the class.

JL often spoke of paper four in somewhat mythical terms. He noted that Sam told him that paper four was where things would come together. It was with the end of paper three and the beginning of paper four that JL began to feel pressure and it was at this time that there was the greatest change in his classroom decisions. Sam described the increasing pressure of paper number three and the effects of the writing assessment practices on the new instructors saying:

[G.S.T.A.s] kind of feel like [the portfolio process] undermines their role as a teacher, um . . . or their authority. It made a lot of them very nervous. Um . . . people got especially, especially nervous around paper three. […] And they were grumpy; they were really grumpy, every last one of them—GRUMPY about that whole situation and then everyone came through in the end and it was fine and everybody was like in a good mood again. (personal communication, December 23, 2008)

Jim also spoke to the anxiety that rises over the course of the term. The discussion of anxiety and the need for new instructors to come to terms with that stress was a reoccurring theme in the mentors’ answers.

[The G.S.T.A.s] didn't want to be the person that ended up holding a whole class of students back or something like that. So I had to really kind of put some significant pressure on them to hold to the standards that we talked about in the [pedagogy course] and in [M.W.P.] in general, and they did it reluctantly. And
you know up through maybe even essay four some of them were really getting concerned because they were not having a high number of passes. [...] I think up until that point (paper four), despite our reassurance, that it usually always comes together, that it, um, that it does work, that they had to take it on faith to a certain degree until they actually saw it. (personal communication, December 18, 2008)

The connection that JL briefly alluded to between passing rates and perceived teaching abilities was also addressed by Jim. He noted that throughout the first three-quarters of the course there are few passing papers which worries G.S.T.A.s as “they’re feeling self-conscious that maybe they aren’t teaching it well enough” (personal communication, December 18, 2008). The need for students to pass has effects on what the new instructors do in their classrooms, just as JL’s experiences illustrate. Sam noted the effects that this pressure will have on classroom decisions as well, saying,

I started seeing a whole lot more samples in endnotes, like in the case that I just mentioned where [one person] started cutting and pasting little outlines[...]. I think that they were keeping the portfolio assessment process in mind, and as we were struggling through those first couple of graded papers together, and for folks whose grades I was disagreeing with, and asking them to change and reminding them about the portfolio process, it’s sort of like then the portfolio evaluators become the audience. (personal communication, December 23, 2008)

Sam also stated that G.S.T.A.s taught to the expectations of portfolio evaluators (personal communication, December 23, 2008).

Sam spoke to a use of program materials that was very similar to that described by Durst, Roemer, and Schultz (1994) and in-class norming sessions to help students pass
She acknowledged that mentors provide outlines to show possible organization and suggested the use of examples (Sam, personal communication, December 23, 2008). Similarly Jim spoke of G.S.T.A.s realizing that they needed to get “more concrete”:

They started adhering to [the writing assessment practices] as best that they could in both their classroom stuff, in terms of what they taught, in terms of what they were writing on essays, in terms of what they were talking to students about in conferences, it became more about how do you write an essay that meets this assignments requirements and does what it needs to do in terms of thesis statements, and topic sentences, and transitions, and everything else. (personal communication, December 18, 2008)

Adhering more to the writing assessment practices and getting more concrete can take many forms, but it does illustrate that the writing assessment practices are having an effect on what multiple G.S.T.A.s do in the classroom.

Just as the changes that took place in JL’s classroom around paper four do appear to be somewhat common, JL’s changing views of the rubric are also felt by other G.S.T.A.s. This was emphasized by Jim:

I get the sense that, well, early on I think [G.S.T.A.s] appreciate the rubric. I think it gave them something to go to help them keep their assessment practices, their feedback to students appropriately oriented, uh, but as we went on, it became, I think a lot of them began to feel that it wasn’t as useful to them anymore, that it was just another thing that they had to do[. . . ] That’s just the impression that I got, um, and another thing that I think comes into play with this is the portfolio
assessment. This is something that caused them a great deal of anxiety for my people. (Jim, personal communication, December 18, 2008)

It is also interesting to note that the anxiety felt by the G.S.T.A.s surrounding the passing rates of students is not limited to the G.S.T.A.s:

I felt anxiety for them because I worried for them too. What if something happens and their students don’t make it. You know I mean, I don’t think that that was a rational worry because, rationally, I do believe that the system works [...] until it’s done, it’s not guaranteed, so I felt anxiety too, for them. I never told them that, but I did. (Jim, personal communication, December 18, 2008)

It is this worried feeling that can lead mentors to suggest more prescriptive techniques, such as providing outlines for papers.

**Alternative Hypotheses**

Classrooms are dynamic. Each class is different no matter how similar the curriculum or practices. To claim that the writing assessment practices alone are leading to changes in an instructor’s decision process would be far too simple, particularly for novice instructors.

For M.W.P., the complexity of G.S.T.A.s’ lives is partially dealt with by keeping their teaching load relatively low, which also affects the outcomes of this study. For this study, JL only had one class on which to base his decisions. This allows for several alternative hypotheses that most likely play a role such as changes in the comfort level of JL and the students, the outside pressures on JL and the students from their other activity systems, and any number of contextual influences that were not addressed in the interviews or seen in the observations. The changes in a classroom should not be
attributed to a single factor; however, the patterns that arise can begin to illustrate the relationships.

With a new teacher there will be a natural learning curve. Jim noted this as a part of the differences seen in papers four and five:

The students and the teacher kind of evolved sort of cooperatively in the semester in that way because the writing improved from paper to paper and also so did [G.S.T.A.] comments, I think, from paper to paper, and ultimately by papers four and five [. . .] where the students are better able to receive feedback at that point and the teachers are better able to give it at that point. (personal communication, December 18, 2008)

A lot is learned during the first term teaching. JL noted his personal changes in commenting; specifically he provided more varied and concrete comments as he became more comfortable with the students’ individual writing styles (personal communication, November 4, 2008). With each class session teachers make changes based on what is and is not working. This is a natural part of teaching.

Along with the natural learning curve, there are points in every term that will be busier than others. For any G.S.T.A., this cannot help but affect classroom decisions and commenting practices in multiple ways. JL noted this when he spoke of teaching as his job while his degree is his vocation. This creates a natural split in motivation that is emphasized in the natural ebb and flow of a term. There will be times when G.S.T.A.s, as students, are busier than others, such as the end of the term. Based on the timing of the end-of-term portfolio exchange, which takes place the weekend before finals, it is understandable that there is an increase in anxiety as the time needed to prepare for the
portfolio exchange and evaluate portfolios is juxtaposed with the time needed to complete projects for coursework. JL and the mentors all mentioned the strain that can come from time constraints. This also came through in the observations such as when JL quietly referred to the fact that he would be working on a presentation for a class he was taking while his students worked on their writing. The lack of time both contributes to the effects of the writing assessment practices and affects classroom decisions in its own right. Changes in commenting practices and in classroom decisions can and will be precipitated by the demands on a G.S.T.A.’s time.

It is also important to understand that there is a tradition of G.S.T.A. dissatisfaction that is connected with the M.W.P. JL referred to this tradition in his second interview, saying, “I don't get quite as phased by some of the stuff as most people do. I mean, I still whine about it like everyone else, but really when push comes to shove this is not that complicated. It’s doable.” Part of being enculturated into this system of G.S.T.A.s can involve complaining about program practices. The interaction with other G.S.T.A.s cannot help but play a role in the way JL perceives the program. This interaction can be just as powerful as his interaction with his mentor. JL was very conscientious about his relationship with the program. He also consistently said positive things about the program and noted that he understood why, with the many different G.S.T.A.s, the program uses a required pedagogy course and suggested syllabus. This tradition, though, is something that is very present.

Similar to this tradition, the natural differences in the groups of G.S.T.A.s cannot help but have an effect. Each year a new group of G.S.T.A.s enters the program. The group interaction will influence a situated study such as this one. Groups will react to
time constraints differently. Similarly, some groups will be stronger academically and in personality than others. Some groups will gel more than others. Basically, the individual dynamics will change from year to year. With the amount of time spent together, particularly in the pedagogy course, the dynamics of the group can affect individual perceptions. Wolf-Michael Roth (2007) has argued that collective emotion, in the form of mood, can have an effect on identity and motive. It is hard to pinpoint the strength of any given group as compared to another, but the effect of the group and types of interaction will have an effect on the perception of that group among individual members.

Each of these factors has most likely played some sort of role. Thus to state that it is merely M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices that have led to changes in JL’s classroom is rudimentary. The contextual factors should be kept in mind, particularly in the upcoming discussion of implications. These factors, and the manner in which the patterns came together, illustrate the complexity of writing assessment practices.

Heat-Moon (1999) writes about his fondness for the prairie, but also its ability to seem simple:

I learned a prairie secret: take the numbing distance in small doses and gorge on the details that beckon. Like its moisture, the prairie doesn’t give up anything easily, unless it’s horizon and sky. Search out its variation, its colors, its subtleties. It’s not that I had to learn to think flat—prairies rarely are—but I had to begin thinking open and lean, seeing without points of obvious focus, noticing first the horizon and then drawing my vision back toward the middle distance where so little appears to exist. I came to understand that the prairies are nothing but grass as the sea is nothing but water, that most prairie life is within the place:
under the stems, below the turf, beneath the stones. The prairie is not a
topography that shows its all but rather a vastly exposed place of concealment,
like the geodes so abundant in the county, where the splendid lies within plain
cover. (pp. 27-28)

The changes both in JL’s decisions and seen in the descriptions of other G.S.T.A.s by
their mentors shows that there are effects connected to M.W.P.’s writing assessment
practices, some positive, such as stronger, more concrete commenting practices, and
some less so, such as the decrease in student and instructor agency. In the following
chapter I provide a brief discussion of these patterns as well as the implications these
situated findings have on writing assessment scholarship and the M.W.P. program.
CHAPTER VI.

READING THE MAP: THE FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Heat-Moon (1999) aptly writes, “travel writing is a tour twice taken[. . . .] For me, writing is not a search for explanations but a ramble in a quest for what informs a place” (p. 440). Through the many stages of this study I searched for what informs the Midwest Writing Program (M.W.P.) and writing assessment to see its effects on a novice instructor’s classroom. Seeing the events and even interpreting the data is not enough. With these findings comes responsibility. As Brisolara and Seigart (2007) write, “Within the feminist framework, furthermore, knowledge should be placed in service of those who have generated such knowledge: the people studied or evaluated” (p. 283). It is important to apply the findings to benefit other people and situations, particularly other writing programs, teachers, students, and administrators.

Bazerman (2003) writes that the university system “limits strongly the role of standardized assessment, as universities prize individual contribution and thought” (p. 434), yet Broad (1997) notes the greater university context can cause program administrators to desire standardized assessment practices that encourage consistency (pp. 141-142). Similarly, Cizek and Bunch (2007) note the benefit of standards as a means of encouraging trust among outside stakeholders while Wiley (2005) argues that “standardization means teacher compliance, with compliance managed and enforced through standardized testing” (p. 25). By standardizing the writing assessment practices M.W.P. sought to reinforce a definition of needs and assessment, which, in the end illustrates the assertion of White, Lutz, & Kamusikiri (1996) that “assessment expresses a hierarchy of values and those who control assessment determine the values that prevail”
(p. 1). Through this project I add to these conversation and others by providing the case study of a novice instructor in a program that has developed a set of standardized writing assessment practices in order to provide consistency for its students.

As a researcher I value the history and complexity that is a part of writing assessment but this complexity is often not discussed due to a reliance on tradition and the lack of awareness of the decisions made were made during the design process. Thus, I reanimated the traditional values to show their effects on the practices of a novice teacher. I used methodologies that find history and context significant, specifically feminist research principles and activity theory. These methodologies also value the agency of participants. As Spinuzzi (2003) argues, the perspective of researcher as savior is paternalistic since participants can and do take action on their own. They are innovators adapting to situations and that agency should be accentuated. Similarly, feminism(s) reminds researchers that their participants are people deserving respect for their changing perspectives and lives as well as the idea that research is a situated practice that carries communal values blended with the individual perceptions of the researcher.

Writing assessment is an institutional practice with individual impacts. These methodologies illuminate the values, such as efficiency, objective scoring, and interrater reliability, that are embedded in traditional practices of local settings where theory intermingles. As the activity theory analysis shows, M.W.P.’s practices encouraged JL to adhere to a unified object, but at a cost. The desire to help students create papers that would fulfill the expectations of portfolio evaluators via interrater agreement hindered rhetorical choice and the unity sought by the original creation of the rubric. This
reinforces Peter Elbow’s (1996) perspective that agreement and scoring guides “just hide the problem” (p. 121). There certainly are implications of this study; however, before discussing them, it is necessary to identify some of the limitations.

**Limitations**

All studies have limitations, and this one is no exception. Though I worked to address as many issues as possible, the very act of choosing the scope and research questions leaves other perspectives out. Some of the limitations that affect the implications are this study’s situated perspective, the types of stakeholders I addressed, the limited time frames, and the natural limitations that come from choosing methodologies and their ways of seeing.

The situated nature of this study is a strength and a weakness. My choice of a single instructor allowed time to observe JL regularly during the course of the term and to delve into his and program history. I was able to focus on subtle aspects in JL’s relationship with M.W.P. This singular perspective, though, is limiting in that only his joys and frustrations are the focus. I balanced the limited nature by interviewing the mentors about other G.S.T.A.s, but the other G.S.T.A.s did not speak for themselves. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study with other voices, particularly those of women, people of multiple ages, and people in other academic programs. Also, as this study is a dissertation, I had to limit the time spent collecting data. This study would have benefited from additional interviews with JL to see how he continued to adapt his teaching style with more experience and other students.

The limited perspective is also influential in terms of the number of stakeholders addressed. Though I requested volunteers from JL’s students for interviews, only one
agreed and her finals-week schedule kept us from conducting a follow-up interview. This means that I don’t have the students’ perspective on the changes. Their perspective is crucial; therefore, this is an important limitation. Likewise, a broader study using survey methods, though limiting the personal connections and histories, would provide an additional important perspective.

An area not limited was the type of activities I observed. The observations were arranged based on JL’s schedule, my schedule, and the Midwest University (M.U.) academic calendar. Therefore, while I did observe similar activities, basing a study around a single type of activity, such as peer review or the introduction of assignments, might allow for a more focused view of the effects of the writing assessment practices.

Finally, though I am pleased with the views that activity theory, feminist research principles, autoethnography, and grounded theory bring, they present underlying assumptions and specific ways of seeing. Addressing the data through other lenses, particularly from actor-network theory or complexity theory, would be productive. For instance, actor-network theory tends to study group interaction from the perspective of how things happen while activity theory looks at why things happen (Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 31). Thus, different methodologies could provide even more insights and alternative findings.

This study of the M.W.P. and JL does have limitations, but it presents an interesting case study. In some ways, it fits with narratives that are common in discussions of standardized writing assessment. In other ways, though, the interaction of these mixed histories provides opportunities to develop practices for strong programs, like M.W.P., and to challenge aspects of writing assessment theory.
M.W.P.’s Efforts

Drawing from Chapter Three, “Beyond the Bounds of Any Map: The People and the Place,” it is clear that M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices have a long history. In the late 1960s M.U.’s English Department decided to establish consistency among classes and help its novice instructors. It was this desire which led to the institution of standards that were reinforced through a timed exit examination. In 1972, M.W.P. created its rubric, for “with the right instrument, even the newest instructors could attempt to objectify their readings” (Eck, 1992, p. 59).

Minor revisions were made to the rubric over the years, such as reorganizing it to reflect a hierarchy of values. Even with the revisions and norming activities used to support the writing assessment practices, there was still “considerable disagreement among instructors of what exactly constituted a passing essay” (Eck, 1992, p. 114). This disagreement led to the establishment of an appeal process that evaluated papers students had written for class. In the early 1990s the timed proficiency exam was replaced by an end-of-term portfolio exchange and the rubric was revised again and linked to student reflection.

Throughout this history M.W.P. consistently showed that it values localized assessment which centers on the needs of students. This history connects to the ever-changing assessment theory seen in Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain Unfold: A Literature Review,” particularly through the value of consistency and agreement that flows through M.W.P.’s writing assessment, norming practices, and use of interrater-reliability-based methods. Still the current practices align with many of the tenets identified by two of the major governing bodies for composition programs: the
Conference on College Composition and Communication and the National Council of Teachers of English in conjunction with the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

In 2006 the Conference on College Composition and Communication Committee on Assessment, comprised of many of the top scholars connected with writing assessment, released its Position Statement on Writing Assessment which was revised in 2009. The statement contains several guidelines, best practices, and applications of writing assessment. Specifically, this statement calls for locally created and governed writing assessment practices designed around the goals and needs of students and teachers. The statement also states that best writing assessment practice

- is informed by pedagogical and curricular goals, which are in turn formatively affected by the assessment
- supports and harmonizes with what practice and research have demonstrated to be effective ways of teaching writing
- is direct assessment by human readers
- is continually under review and subject to change by well-informed faculty, administrators, and legislators

M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices fulfill each of these tenets as they are locally developed, use the instructors to evaluate the writing, and are reviewed by an assessment committee made of full-time M.W.P. faculty.

The National Council of Teachers of English and the Council of Writing Program Administrators released a white paper on writing assessment in 2008 that contains several “principles of effective writing assessment” and a discussion of fair use of valid and
reliable writing assessment. Among other principles, the white paper states that writing
assessment should

- be informed by current scholarship and research in assessment.
- encourage and expect teachers to be trusted, knowledgeable, and communicative
- articulate and communicate clearly its values and expectations to all stakeholders, especially students and, if applicable, parents

The white paper also states:

A reliable assessment provides consistent results, no matter who conducts the assessment. Because writing assessment often involves more than one rater scoring student performances, it can also involve interrater reliability, a measure of the degree of consistency from one rater judgment to another.

Once again, M.W.P. practices and history shows a consistent use of current writing assessment theory, provides documents that articulate its values, and uses interrater reliability.

**JL’s Efforts**

MPW sought to account for unevenly trained instructors, and, as Eck (1992) acknowledges, “because most of the [M.W.P.] courses were taught by inexperienced instructors who had little resistance to new methods, the rubric was generally adopted for essay evaluation” (p. 60). Thus, novice instructors have long been a part of the history of these assessment practices. More recently, these practices have been discussed in a positive light to the extent that the director has been asked to guide the development of other programs’ practices (director, personal communication, December 7, 2009).
From JL’s interview responses and the classroom observations, it is clear that he also has a successful history with writing. JL tested out of his first-year writing course, and his enrollment in a graduate program speaks to his scholarly abilities. However, being enrolled in that program and maintaining a life outside of school keeps him very busy. JL cares about his students and wants them to be confident and successful, no matter how they do in his class. He acknowledged that students write for other situations and he would need to account for those values as well.

Early on, especially, JL clearly valued student participation and agency as he helped students realize their rhetorical options. JL also used assignment sheets that were provided by M.W.P., met with his mentor weekly, regularly attended and participated in the required pedagogy course, and cleared the papers he evaluated with his mentor. Whether consciously or not, JL has also been influenced by the history of writing assessment as he too showed a belief in objective writing assessment and agreement both in his comments about M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices and in his comments about the M.U.’s Writing Center. This was evident when he stated, “Hopefully the person at the writing center will give them the same feedback that I gave them anyway; otherwise there is something wrong with my grading process” (personal communication, November 4, 2008).

Even though both parties clearly care about the students and want them to succeed, their differing definitions of what students need from a writing class created tensions. Program mentors noted many of these tensions in other G.S.T.A.s as well. For JL, the difference in definitions of need, his polymotivational nature as a stakeholder, and desire for students to pass the class created a quaternary contradiction. This contradiction, along
with other factors, influenced JL’s commenting and classroom decisions as he gradually changed his perspectives on teaching as seen in Chapter Five “Drawing the Map: An Activity Theory Analysis.” Thus, even though there were strong similarities in the feelings of both parties, the effects of the interaction in this instance were similar to those seen in other discussions of standardized assessment practices. With this being the case, there are several implications derived from this case study.

Implications

The desire for standards connected to a belief in objective writing assessment has been a part of education and writing assessment theory since prior to the turn of the twentieth century. A completely objective means of viewing writing and the quality of the product can be articulated regardless of reader. Similarly, if there is a completely objective way to view writing, then it is possible to designate a specific endpoint for a class. While this is desirable in terms of course design and assessment, it doesn’t fit with many modern conceptions of rhetorical theory or with recent writing assessment theories that call for more contextualized and situated views of writing. Scholars, such as many of those noted in Chapter Two, “Seeing the Terrain Unfold: A Literature Review,” have voiced concerns about the effects of standardized assessment practices which mirror those from nearly a century ago by educational theorists such as Chapman and Rush (1917), who write:

The scales [to objectively score writing] also bring with it the danger that the teacher may sacrifice everything in the classroom to the production of work which can be measured objectively, and, as already pointed out, the scales may fail to give sound relative values to different elements involved in that work. (p. 185)
Based on my findings, I see the following needs.

**Localized Assessment**

Huot and Williamson (1997/2009) write, “Crucial decisions concerning assessment are often made by regulatory agencies and political and educational policymakers based on practical and political concerns of cost, efficiency, and public opinion” (p. 331). However, to help address this issue, Cindy Moore, Peggy O’Neill, and Brian Huot (2009) write, “good assessments are those that are designed locally, for the needs of specific institutions, faculty, and students” (p. W109). While it is true that localized writing assessment is important, this case study calls into question the definition of “localized,” particularly with polycontextual and polymotivational situations and stakeholders in which there are competing needs.

By Moore, O’Neill, and Huot’s (2009) definition, the writing assessment practices developed by M.W.P. are localized. They were developed by M.W.P. faculty based on the needs of M.U. students and faculty. Still, the use of the standardized assessment practices and the reliability measures associated with them led, at least in part, to the quaternary contradiction and the anxiety felt by JL and other G.S.T.A.s. This meant that JL had to decide whether to maintain or relinquish his definition of needs. His acts of resistance show the ways in which he chose to accept the needs of the program while maintaining his identity.

As a field it is important that we continue to work with the concept of localized writing assessment. Localized writing assessment allows for a more contextualized view of the needs of students; however, depending upon the size of the program, as seen with M.W.P., the number of students can necessitate a generalized view of students and
faculty that works against the varied histories and perspectives found in diverse groups. In other words, these localized practices still used generalized definitions.

Particularly when in the form of standardized practices, the generalized perspective can lead to a singular view of writing through which rhetorical decisions fall away. The same can be true, though, when individual teachers have complete control over the courses if they do not challenge their personal definition of good writing. Thus, programmatic outcomes are good, but there needs to be ways to negotiate the definitions of needs and assessment practices to allow for both individual and program definitions to be satisfied. This can empower the teachers and students, which lessens the need for resistance and encourages cooperation among all direct stakeholders and positions.

**Negotiation Between Instructor and Program**

Edward White (2007) writes “An essential part of the writing teacher’s job is to teach and enforce standards of performance that will allow students to succeed in college” (p. 51). Both JL and M.W.P. maintained this desire; however, their specific definitions of what is needed to succeed in college were very different. These differences, and the pressures connected, are what led to JL’s double bind and eventual quaternary contradiction.

Both the rubric and the end-of-term portfolio system are tools embedded with program values that mediate activity in the classroom. Teachers use tools in very different ways, some as intended and some not. Throughout M.W.P.’s history it is clear that the writing assessment practices were meant as a way to enforce program standards across sections. They focus the evaluation of papers and reinforce the program’s definition of good academic writing. M.W.P. sees the rubric as a teaching tool meant to
spur reflection as students compare rubrics over the course of the term. JL saw the writing assessment practices as a means of enforcement, but he used the tools to create a sense of camaraderie with his students. JL also used the writing assessment practices to enforce actions he wanted to see, such as early revision and the use of certain topics.

In their current form the tool’s role of enforcer overtakes other roles. The sense of being monitored is high and the values they convey can and do replace the values and standards of instructors which can decrease their sense of agency, create anxiety, and foster acts of resistance. In JL’s classroom the rubric, samples, and outlines became a checklist that reinforced features and not the functions of those features in the manner that Habib and Wittek (2007) discussed. The accountability to the common standards ensured unity was present on the surface, but the resentment and resistance that was also created fractured the true unity of the program. It also enhanced a sense of deprofessionalization for JL which was similar to that noted by Smith (1991) and powerlessness as noted by McCarthey (2008).

The desire for unity among sections is not only understandable in the current climate of accountability, it is often required. Also, based on the considerable difference in history and perspectives that may be present in the instructors, providing a sense of direction through program-based outcomes is helpful. However, in order to preserve a sense of agency and responsibility among instructors, some negotiation is necessary. JL’s definition of needs differed from those of the program, but they were not completely separate. Through an open articulation of goals and definitions of needs by the instructors and the program, a stronger understanding of the similarities is possible. Also, though the articulation of differences, and the reason for those differences, growth for both the
instructor and program can occur. In the end, through these negotiations, rather than resisting or merely passing responsibility, it can be taken on by all direct stakeholders.

Appreciating Histories and Mixed Nature of Stakeholder Positioning

As part of the negotiation, there is an opportunity to appreciate the complicated histories and positioning of both the program and instructors. In an argument similar to Moore, O’Neill, and Huot’s (2009) claim that programs and teachers have different definitions of needs and assessment, Chris Anson (1999) states that standards will come from very different levels and places (p. 308). This is not the only manner in which stakeholder and their position complicate the situations. Stakeholder positioning is not nearly as clear as implied. The desire to decontextualize stakeholders is similar to the process of abstract objectification noted by Sprague (2005) in the research process.

JL is a prime example of a polymotivational/polycontextual stakeholder and the mixed nature of stakeholder positioning. He is an instructor, student, and also balances many roles outside of school. His motivation is affected by all of these roles. These roles are not distinct layers that can be separated; rather, JL is each of these identities at once. Similarly, M.W.P. is made up of many people with lives and goals that affect their motivation. Furthermore, the program as an entity has several roles, such as an M.U. service program, provider of teacher training, and a program in which students learn to write. Each of these roles is simultaneously served, which creates double binds and contradictions, such as providing a consistent student experience while training individual teachers.

Not only do stakeholders each maintain separate and mixed roles, they have distinct histories that influence their perspectives. Thus, while generalized stakeholder
descriptions are used in discussions of theory and the design of the practice, the reality is that stakeholders are complicated people. An appreciation for the mixed nature of stakeholders is important as it allows different system participants to be more sensitive to the fluid realities, but also as it allows for the breakdown of the blackboxed pasts. Basically, by illuminating the pasts and the perspectives brought by stakeholders, the not-so-common definitions can be discussed and greater understanding established.

JL noted that he didn’t understand why M.W.P. does what it does. The long history of decisions and evolution is not discussed, leaving the complexity out and also minimalizing the care that has gone into the decisions made by the program. The other side of the illumination, though, is that by showing the decisions, the processes are open for discussion and challenge.

**Continued Discussion of Reliability**

Mixed stakeholder positions complicate a long-held tradition in writing assessment, interrater reliability. Reliability serves an important function—without it, in theory, it is the reader, not the writing, that receives the focus. The assumption behind interrater reliability is that the writing can be evaluated consistently and the evaluator doesn’t matter. However, interrater reliability creates a paradox in that it exists to place the emphasis on the writing by stating that the writing can be agreed upon by multiple readers, but in doing so the emphasis of evaluation is on the readers’ agreement and not the writing itself. Thus, as Mabry (1999) notes, rubrics and agreement-based practices create “collective tunnel vision rather than informed consensus about the quality of student writing.” In JL’s case interrater agreement also placed an awkward emphasis on
his ability to guide students to an agreeable paper. This issue was noted among experienced instructors within M.W.P. as well by Thomas (2006).

Interrater reliability creates a focus on the reader and the practices, which in turn placed the pressure on JL as a split stakeholder of reader, evaluator, and teacher. He was a reader, and other readers should agree with his perception of the students’ writing or his evaluation of the writing wasn’t right, meaning he was not a good teacher. This was evident in the previously referenced writing center comment. Similarly, the desire to help students pass the interrater reliability test pushed JL to ensure that his students wrote in ways that were easily agreed upon rather than rhetorically effective. While the audience is a crucial part of writing, agreement in the audiences’ reaction is not, for as White (2007), Durst, Roemer, and Schultz (1994), and Broad (1994) discuss, readers don’t always agree, and discussion about that disagreement can be valuable. The push for interrater agreement reinforces an objective focus often leading to norming practices rather than critical discussion (Huot, 2002, p. 89). Writing assessment theory needs to continue to address definitions of reliability that enable either unrealistic principles or create situational writing disguised as writing.

There are other forms of reliability, such as instrument reliability, that place the emphasis on the tool and not the reader. Instrument reliability can allow the development of the tool to be a teaching opportunity and make the easily matched forms of writing less necessary which places the emphasis back on learning to write and productive assessment. Basically, the writing assessment becomes a form of inquiry into the values of the students, teacher, program, and discipline. Writing assessment scholars need to find ways to theorize instrument validity that account for the subjective nature of reading
and writing and the fact that even a single reader will often change her or his perception of the same piece of writing over time. While this may require scholars to first work with methods connected to traditional definitions of reliability, as was done with interrater reliability and holistic scoring in the 1960s and 1970s, we also need to look for ways to step beyond definitions that don’t account for the reality of the writer/reader relationship.

**Continued Discussion of Validity**

Of equal consideration for both writing assessment scholars and M.W.P. is the balance of reliability and validity. Current theory states that validity needs to be unitary (O’Neill, Moore, & Huot, 2009, p. 29). Basically, while validity can be discussed in terms of content, criterion, and construct validity, for a means of assessment to be valid it must account for all three. In addition, according to Messick (1989), the ethical implication and consequences must be addressed for a means of assessment to be valid.

Content validity states that the content of the assessment must match what is being assessed, for example a history test should contain questions about history and not biology. As direct writing assessment evaluates the student writing, the content validity is generally not in question.

Criterion validity calls for the method of assessment to connect to or predict the student’s ability to use the assessed skill or knowledge in other situations. In this instance, students whose writing has been assessed should be able to write successfully outside of the classroom. By stating that portfolios encourage the mastery of writing for a specific situation and not the appropriation of writing ability which would allow students to make necessary decisions in other rhetorical situations, Habib and Wittek (2007) are essentially questioning the criterion validity of portfolios. If students are taught only to
write in a manner that passes the M.W.P.’s portfolio assessment, criterion validity does become a factor. Thus writing assessment scholars, and those using portfolios, should seek methods that reinforce greater rhetorical dexterity not overly specific genres.

Finally, construct validity tests the link between the method of assessment and the theoretical concept it supports. “Good writing” as a theoretical concept is partially defined by the writing assessment practices (Moore, O’Neill, & Huot, 2009, p. W108). If the underlying theoretical construct is not agreed upon or understood by the instructor, the construct validity cannot help but be questionable not only for authenticity of the construct but also for the ethical dilemma it creates. Writing assessment scholars and programs using programmatic assessment practices need to research the ethical implications of the writing assessment practices as well as the understanding of the theoretical concepts that are often being tacitly defined.

**Ethics of Programmatic Assessment**

Brian Huot (2002) writes that writing assessment is both an “ethical and professional” requirement (p. 59). Teachers need to play a greater role in writing assessment discussions, but writing assessment scholars also need to continue address ethics in writing assessment. The ethics of standardized testing have been called into question, but a similar critical eye needs to be turned on the practices and values traditionally associated with localized writing assessment.

Huot (2002) has also called for greater discussions of ethics connected to validity. He specifically draws on Messick’s (1989) argument unethical decisions made from assessment mean the measure itself is no longer valid. Writing assessment scholars, myself included, need to carry this discussion further. Based on Messick’s definition,
ethically questionable classroom decisions driven by the results of the test invalidate the assessment itself. Basically, the means of assessment should account for the decisions and activities it emphasizes or supports leading to the assessment itself not just the decisions following.

Part of accounting for the decisions leading to the assessment is addressing teacher anxiety. Thomas (2006) researched this issue for M.W.P. specifically, and noted that concerns about ideological conflicts and assessment practices create double binds for teachers (p. 40). Thomas’s findings are supported by Dethier (1999) as well as Marso and Pigge (1998), who also address the anxiety caused from external requirements. Anxiety and worry for teachers, created by writing assessment practices, cannot help but affect the students themselves as well.

**Program Research**

Each of these implications has an underlying requirement that programs actively research their histories and practices. Though this is an assumed step, it is one that needs to be directly acknowledged for its importance. Genre theory and activity theory each discuss the ways in which values are carried through the tools used by groups of people without direct knowledge often for the sake of tradition. Understanding the history of a program and its practices, as stated earlier, allows that history to be both appreciated and, where necessary, challenged. Likewise, programs can live up to the call for continual review by opening the practices to research and demonstrate care for the people involved in that program.

Research into stakeholder histories and practices can be formal, in terms of qualitative and quantitative analysis, or it can be informal via the efforts to maintain an
archive of the history and conversations involving the teachers, students, and administration. A formal approach has the benefit of being a record for program review and future projects while allowing the participants in the program to take ownership of the history and practices which can positively affect faculty buy-in. The use of formal research methods also affords valuable professional development opportunities to celebrate the progress made in more public forums via marketing efforts, conference presentation, and publications as called for by the CCCC position statement.

No matter how it is done, overt research provides the definitions and statements necessary to make strong, conscious decisions regarding the ethical and practical nature of the assessment practices. This is by no means an easy thing to do. Forming a culture that supports research in assessment is necessary which may require release time and financial backing. I believe, though, that this investment can enable strong, ethical writing assessment practices and encourage the respect for the efforts of those involved especially with ongoing research and reciprocal relationships.

As is evident by the projects used for this study and the willingness of the M.W.P. to open itself up to this study, this is an area where the M.W.P. truly excels. When it comes to the inner workings of a program, particularly in regard to its writing assessment practices, it is easy and understandable for that program to close itself off and become defensive. M.W.P. though has a history of welcoming formal research. This is an approach that should be emulated.

**Activity Theory and Writing Assessment**

A consistent theme throughout this dissertation is that research doesn’t just happen. The perspectives and methodologies researchers use affect the outcomes of the
studies. Huot (2002) notes that much of the discussion surrounding writing assessment is procedural (p. 89). A danger in this perspective is the loss of context. Sprague (2005) writes,

Reducing human beings in concrete social relationships down to a set of attributes or a consequence of a genetic pattern makes it hard to see social and environmental conditions that give rise to or exacerbate behavior that we find problematic. It leads to a search for how to change the individual, rather than a consideration of how we might change the situation. Thus, it protects those who benefit from the status quo. (p. 20)

Writing assessment is a tool. Losing the history and context creates a situation that writing assessment scholars argue to be problematic. In order to illuminate the values that are engrained in writing assessment processes, methodologies that make overt use of the history and context of tool use are valuable, such as activity theory, actor-network theory, and complexity theory. Bob Broad (2003) notes that those who first created rubrics “traded in the rhetorical truth confronting them (that readers value texts differently) in exchange for the grail of higher inter-rater agreement” (p. 8). Rather than hiding the complexity for the sake of objective assessment, it should be a part of writing assessment to increase its authenticity.

**G.S.T.A. Training and Development**

Writing program administrators may wish to monitor their G.S.T.A. to avoid problems such as those noted by Meeks and Hult (1999). However, for JL, the sense monitoring from the portfolio exchange supported a quaternary contradiction and fostered acts of resistance. In this situation, the difference in goals and the separation of outcome
and object becomes important. As the object is the “problem space” and possible outcomes of the system, it is probable, at least in the beginning, that the object of the instructor and the program don’t match. Specifically, the polymotivational levels that are hidden in the process won’t align. The quaternary contradiction created by the shift in object enables oppositional tension between the objects that becomes evident through primary contradictions in tasks and roles—specifically in the teacher-as-coach and teacher-as-evaluator roles. This individual reaction to the assessment practices causes a build up of pressure for the instructor. In this case, it was seen in a shift from a rhetorical discussion to a more standards driven approach.

JL’s anxiety and resistance is a part of the experience of other G.S.T.A.s as well. As Jim notes in his interview, G.S.T.A.s generally accept the tension and release it based on the success of their students. The instructor can choose to be enculturated, as Jim articulates in his acceptance of the writing assessment practices, or the instructor can accept that her or his involvement is limited and align with the outcome on a surface level taking the perspective that JL had by saying “this is just a job.” This acceptance can lead to teaching to the rubric as it is easier than resisting the system in which case the instructor accepts the timeframe and aims for teaching tasks required for students to pass the portfolio process—similar to the effect Habib and Wittek (2007) argue that portfolios have on students’ writing. This is a survival technique as the instructor sees her or his role as merely surviving within the system. In this situation, the instructor only seeks to teach in ways that correlates directly with the system. Thus, the quaternary contradiction can create a system in which the novice instructor seeks only the teaching skills necessary for that system—a form of depprofessionalization as noted by JL feeling he became the
mediocre teacher he was taught to be. It is important to note that with the surface agreement, there will often be a sense of guilt that encroaches upon the instructor as was noted by Smith (1991) and McCarthey (2008).

The nature of this relationship creates a false dichotomy for program administrators who must decide if it is more important to garner unity through a standardized object or to develop G.S.T.A. teaching abilities and encourage individual adaptations. Durst, Roemer, and Shultz (1994) argue that assessment is not the starting place for learning to teach, which in the end takes the power away from the instructor as they must rely on the assessment practices of the program, and can result in teaching to the test. However, if the program makes use of practices that empower the instructor and allow smaller more incremental changes to the system, even when it is among temporary instructors, subtle negotiations can be made that allow empowered alignment and shared values to be emphasized. Instructors can then appropriate teaching skills and adapt with the system as it is a shared object and even possibly a shared desired outcome rather than forced object. In other words, the teachers can learn to adapt and negotiate their desires and needs with those of the program, something necessary no matter where a person teaches.

**Implications for M.W.P.**

Beyond the implications for the field, there are some opportunities for M.W.P. to continue is evolution. It is clear that M.W.P. does many things very well. Therefore, the program can build on some of those strengths as well as instituting a few other practices.
G.S.T.A. Representation

One of the easiest changes would be to include a G.S.T.A. member on the writing assessment committee. Adding this voice would show value for the G.S.T.A. experience and provide insight from that experience. Depending upon the G.S.T.A. representative’s academic program, she or he might also be a valuable source of research. Asking other G.S.T.A.s and fulltime instructors for feedback on the writing assessment practices via survey processes would also be helpful. While not every concern can be addressed, it will show that the program values this group of instructors.

Expanded Incorporation of M.W.P. History

JL noted that he didn’t always understand why M.W.P. uses its writing assessment and pedagogical practices. There is a sense of the history incorporated into the pedagogy course, but overtly expanding this discussion could emphasize M.W.P.’s writing assessment practices long and valuable history. The purpose of the expansion is to show that these practices evolved over time to adapt to the changing needs of students and instructors and explaining its reasoning. Addressing it more often increases the history’s visibility and opens it for discussion.

Program Outcomes

Kathleen Yancey (2005) notes that standards have been connected to the desire to unify education on a broader scale, but that they enable situations that can disrupt unity. Outcomes, she argues, act more as frameworks (p. 21). Mark Wiley (2005) contends that the use of standards “undermines [teachers’] confidence in their ability to judge what is appropriate for their students” (p. 25). He also notes the connections between standards, the call for efficiency, and the lack of appreciation for individual learning processes (p.
27). M.W.P. has long sought to allow individual student development without penalization through its grading procedures, but the use of standards is counterproductive to this goal as they inhibit individuality. The use of outcomes allows for greater diversity in how students illustrate the desired rhetorical knowledge. By encouraging the rhetorical knowledge but emphasizing the function behind the features, variation and rhetorical choice in the student writing can be reinforced. M.W.P. does base its ideology off of the W.P.A. Outcomes Statement. This could be reinforced in its language and aided by incorporating genre analysis and rubric adaptations.

**M.W.P. Genre and Function over Feature**

M.W.P. does suggest that G.S.T.A.s conduct rhetorical analyses of examples in class to help students build up a repertoire of options during the writing process. For busy G.S.T.A.s, and quite possibly full-time instructors, there may be a desire to emphasize the features connected to M.W.P. lore that “portfolio evaluators want to see.” Incorporating more genre analysis and discussion of functions behind the features could help students, and sometimes instructors, see why those features are used in specific systems. Furthermore, by designating the features sought and highlighted in M.W.P. samples as a specific M.W.P. genre, it opens the door for its comparison with other genres to discuss the appropriateness of situated features. This can reinforce for students and teachers that there are other forms of the desired rhetorical features, such as implied thesis statements, headings, or alternative citation styles to make room for the sustained discussion of writing practices and styles student and teachers see in other writing.
Portfolio and Rubric

M.W.P. has long shown its willingness to adjust its practices throughout the 40-year evolution of the rubric and the 20-year evolution of the portfolio, which should be emulated. Continuing this evolution will allow the program to stay current and remain as a strong example for other institutions. One possibility for both the portfolio process and the rubric is to incorporate more possibilities for negotiation, for, as C. Beth Burch (1997) notes, the standardization of portfolio contents has a “chilling effect” on student creativity (p. 55). This perspective is supported by Bazerman (2003), who notes that this type of standardization does not focus on individuality (p. 458), and by Huot and Williamson (1997/2009), who note that this removes choice from students and teachers and providing it, instead, to those making assessment decisions (p. 336).

Furthermore, M.W.P. should consider allowing students to decide which papers should be included in the portfolio. Through the process of picking the papers they choose to represent them, students can take greater responsibility. Also, by choosing the papers and order, rather than the standard reverse chronological order of all the papers, the students and teacher can emphasize the individual development they see throughout the process rather than highlighting the final paper. Experimenting with new techniques, such as White’s (2007) phase 2 portfolio assessment, could also alleviate the desire to create specific forms of the desired rhetorical features.

Finally, M.W.P. should continue its history of innovation by experimenting with rubric formats that allow the instructor and students to define terms based on the outcomes of the program. This could be something as simple as class definitions of the terms on the rubric or something more complicated such as the class designed rubrics as
illustrated by Inoue (2007). This act of negotiation can encourage a greater understanding of outcomes.

**G.S.T.A. Development**

Instructor development is a part of many educational programs. When a writing program makes use of G.S.T.A.s, such as M.W.P., program administrators must decide the extent to which its mission involves the development of new teachers for the sake of student writing abilities. This decision is harder when not all G.S.T.A.s see teaching writing as a part of their chosen careers and may resist learning how to teach. As Prior (1998) noted, the level of personal involvement will affect the systemic participation (p. 103). G.S.T.A.s may not want to take an active role in the creation of assignments and assessment practices, particularly with their busy schedules. In the case of M.W.P., G.S.T.A.s are encouraged to create their own assignment sheets based on the models provided, but not all G.S.T.A.s do, which can lead to G.S.T.A.s assessing writing for outcomes they don’t agree with or understand. For M.W.P. the writing assessment practices enable a system in which G.S.T.A.s learn only to teach in a system they may resent, but those same G.S.T.A.s may have no desire to appropriate the skills necessary to teach, making the system necessary.

As this dissertation illustrates, G.S.T.A.s and all other stakeholders have very complex and mixed identities. Acknowledging the layered histories and identities of the people teaching means finding ways to work with the schedules and needs they bring while also encouraging an understanding of the values connected to the assignments and practices. One method that M.W.P. could use is limiting the direct support provided to G.S.T.A.s in the form of sample syllabi and assignment sheets to the first assignment and
then emphasizing the support the mentors to help G.S.T.A.s develop the rest of the course. JL suggested using the required pedagogy course as more of a workshop during which instructors design assignments and syllabi in the presence of the mentors and the director. Doing so, though, would cut into the time devoted to discussion of theory and other aspects of the pedagogy course. The answer is not simple and is greatly based on the mission of the program, but continuing to experiment with the level of responsibility placed with the G.S.T.A.s could encourage a greater sense of agency and less accountability that reinforces the rift between the instructors and the program.

**Implications for the Researcher**

The dissertation process has been an intense learning experience. I found a better balance in my experiences with both loose and directive programs. My experiences, though, are not the experiences of others. I have come to see the need for balance between the needs of the writing programs and teachers. Students and G.S.T.A.s can benefit from seeing that there are multiple ways of viewing and assessing writing. Unity is important for writing programs, but not at the sake of rhetorical choice.

My belief that writing assessment should teach as well as evaluate and that the very real human side of assessment should not be disregarded is stronger than ever. Looking at the history of writing assessment has shown me that, as a field, we have come a long way, and studying JL’s classroom has shown me that, as a field, we have a long way to go.

My approach to the research process has also changed a great deal. Empirical research is not simple, but the effort is worth it. Similarly, the importance of triangulation is not lost on me. I was tempted to draw conclusions based on what I saw in the separate
forms of data. When substantiated patterns emerged, I was sometimes surprised and often relieved. In addition, I appreciate more than ever the risk that research participants take to help others learn. The willingness of JL and M.W.P. to allow me access to their lives is extremely generous and significant. While I tried to give something back to each, I cannot return nearly as much as I received. This is a lesson I will carry forward to future projects and to the manner in which I read the research of others.

While creating his deep map of Chase County, Kansas, Heat-Moon (1999) read about a spring that had played a crucial role in its history and of the people that merely passed through on their way west. When he sought it out, it was nothing like he imagined. He had brought a notebook of quotes and mentions of the spring that he read allowing him to appreciate its significance. He describes this experience writing:

Diamond Spring bears such an accumulation of voices and recorded voices that it carries a traveler farther. To look beyond its barbed wire and plastic conduit and the electric pump rammed down its cold throat is to find a splendid American source, a spring as full of incident as its outflow of watercress. But without its years of encrustings built up slowly like so much travertine, the spring appears a barren place indeed because a traveler now must rely entirely on these depositions to open it to imagination and reveal its deep time. (p. 464)

Both JL and the M.W.P. have layers of history. Sadly, some of the people that pass by see only the horizon they hope to reach and not the complicated nature of this landscape. The people and this place exist in a dance of opposition and concordance that illustrates the very nature of writing assessment.
Heat-Moon (1999) writes, “No place is emptier than the one where someone has been and will not return to” (p. 547). These pages contain the places I have been. By reading these pages I hope you too have come see and understand this landscape and its map. I learned too much not to return. However, the greatest compliment I could receive, and my deepest hope for this project, is that you too have learned. I hope that the questions you ask will cause you to create your own maps, meaning you too have returned.
“In my own work, I have attempted to bridge the gap between educational measurement and composition. . . Educational measurement has been isolated no only from college writing assessment but from the entire field of composition” (Huot, 2002, p. 30)

“Redefining consensus as a matter of conflict suggests, moreover, that consensus does not so much reconcile differences through rational negotiation. Instead, such a redefinition represents consensus as a strategy that structures differences by organizing them in relation so each other” (Trimbur, 2003/1989, p. 468)

“Looking at the way certain scholars configure writing assessment history is an indication not only of the values they hold as a individual members of a specific community but the values of the community itself” (Huot, 2002, p. 30)

“In teaching writing, we are not simply offering training in a useful technical skill that is meant as a simple complement to the more important studies of other areas. We are teaching a way of experiencing the world, a way of ordering and making sense of it” (Berlin, 2003/1982, p. 268)

“Take inspiration but not necessarily orders from the most recent literature on assessment” (Haswell & Wysche-Smith, 1994, p. 223)

“Beyond all the self-conscious lamentation over the passing of rural America, beyond the shallow romancing over a time that never was, lies a real awareness of some unique values of small-town life – certain relationships among people, between man and the land. These values are not better than those of city or suburb, they are simply different. They are values worthy of respect and preservation – values that some people would like to share today” R. Riley (as cited in Heat-Moon, 1999, p. 175)
“To learn from their past actions, communities must be able to investigate, judge, and evaluate what has happened has happened in the past. . . . Communities must look at the present as well” (Spinuzzi, 2003, pp. 219-220)

“Perhaps the blurring of provincial lines and the need for everyone to identify with the human condition in general will have positive results for the future, but preservation and promotion of local, state, and regional traditions will continue to make life more meaningful” L. Oliva (as cited in Heat~Moon, 1999, pp. 175-176)

“The Trapeze Swinger”
(Bean, 2009)
Performed by Iron and Wine

“Certain students are going to perform differently under different sorts of structures. if I sit here and tell you to write me a three page essay in an hour and twenty minutes, you might be the kind of person that can just toss that off without a thought and then there are other people who have certain preparations they are used to making or anxieties that they have to overcome in order to do this. You know, they may be just as proficient in their writing skills, they just have a different process” (JL, personal communication, December 26, 2008)

“By listening to a particular individual pattern of words, catching a tell-tale emphasis, or recognizing that something is being said which the speaker may not have been able to say before, there is a recognition of the infinite possibilities and experiences lying just beneath the surface of things” (Blythe, qtd. in Heat~Moon, 1999, pp. 179-180)

“. . . data in historical studies are made up of these three elements: the historian’s perceptions of the present, her assemblage of claims based on study of materials from the past, and an ongoing internal dialogue about cultural preconceptions and prejudices and the historian’s own” (Connors, 1992, p. 15)
“The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not ‘Eureka!’ (I found it!) but ‘That's funny’” – Isaac Asimov

“No story sits by itself. Sometimes stories meet at corners and sometimes they cover one another completely, like stones beneath a river” (Albom, 2003, p. 10)

“One of the main features of the contemporary passion for ‘performance’ is its distinctive reductionism. The language of performance requires relatively simple, mainly quantitative measures to be created so that evaluation of success or failure can be unambiguously reached. But what if certain, perhaps crucial, aspects of a complex and contingent office-based role are simply not amenable to calculation in these terms?” (du Gay, 2007, p. 122)

“One problem [...] is that a small, vocal and socially distinctive segment of the population can become the reference group for enforcing certain forms of accountability and judging aspects of official performance” (du Gay, 2007, p.113)

“If the purposes, audiences, and implications of external initiated assessments are not made clear, program administrators and faculty may assume that the results will be used in undesirable ways” (Moore, O’Neill, & Huot, 2009, W109)

“There is nothing better than to know that you don’t know” (Tzu, trans. 2005)

“Theories are useful in that way, in that they provide an orienting framework that helps us know the world more intimately, that points us toward particular aspects and events of the world for us to investigate in detail, and that keeps us from getting disoriented in our increasing detail of account. Theories are also useful in another way, in helping us as active social agents orient to novel situations, in helping reveal submerged aspects of our current situations, in providing guides for our actions. In short, theories are applied tools for reflection on our condition and possibilities” (Bazerman, 1997, p. 300).

“The wind blows the echoes along with faded voices, and they sing us a song that the old cowboys sang, and now that I know what the words mean and everything, I am still singing” (Lovett, 2007)
“What we gather in maps is shared information, and what we take from them is, so often, personal. And that is their beauty, whether they are digital and overlaid with information or flat. Sooner or later you drive off the edge of the map you’re using and into your private knowledge of the world around you. The maps that will never be drawn are the ones that live in our own heads” (Klinkenborg, 2008)

“[. . .] all of it was lost on me. Bought and sold like property, sugar on my tongue. I kept falling over, kept looking backwards. I went broke believing the simple should be hard. All we are, we are. All we are, we are. And every day’s a start to something beautiful, something real.” “All We Are” (Nathanson, 2007) Performed by Matt Nathanson
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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE CC 101 SYLLABUS (CC 102 26 pgs)

This is a very detailed syllabus that provides possible activities for each day of a MWF College Composition 101 course. There is a separate example for TTH courses. Incorporated into the activities are suggestions for the instructor and assignments. Some GAs do rely heavily on the sample syllabus. The intent is for instructors to use the sample as a guide and then to design activities to achieve the same goals.

To the instructor: The daily activities in this syllabus have been addressed to the instructor; in contrast, the assignments have been directed to the student. If you choose to use this sample syllabus as a source for all or part of your own syllabus, please remember that you will need to revise the presentation of the daily activities so that they are directed to the student, not to you, the instructor. As well, text boxes have been inserted throughout this sample syllabus to provide instructors with ideas; delete these text boxes from any version of the syllabus that you intend to distribute to students.

Although this syllabus does not incorporate activities associated with journal assignments or the Common Reading, those elements can easily be added, should you wish to do so.

Remember that these sections will focus on using the available technologies, and you should plan to incorporate these technologies into your daily activities and lessons. Because this syllabus asks you to incorporate technology beginning on day one, it is a good idea to send an email to your students introducing yourself and reminding them to bring their charged laptops to the every class meeting. Before the class begins you should decide how you want to use some of the technologies. For example, this sample syllabus suggests that you use Digital Dropbox to collect drafts but you might use email, Google Docs, or some other method. Make sure that you stay pick a method and stay consistent throughout the semester.

Sample Syllabus — Laptop Section
College Composition 101 (MWF)
Section L00
Fall 2008

Instructor:  
Email:  riter@MU.edu
Office:  501 Osten Hall
Office Phone:  (555) 555-5555
Office Hours:  9:30-10:30 a.m. Monday (and by appointment)
Home Phone (optional):  (555) 555-5555 (no calls after 9:00 p.m., please)
Mailbox:  210 Oston Hall (my mailbox is above my name)
Writing Center:  303 Estes Hall
Writing Center Phone:  (555) 555-5555 (you must call to make an appointment)
Writing Center Website:  http://www.MU.edu/offices/acen/writerslab/
## Important Dates and Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 8/25</td>
<td>First day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 8/31</td>
<td>Last day to add classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 9/1</td>
<td>No class – Labor Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 9/7</td>
<td>Last day to drop classes without College permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 9/12</td>
<td>First draft of Essay #1 due (Explaining Opposing Positions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 9/22</td>
<td>Final draft of Essay #1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 9/29 – Fri. 10/3</td>
<td>Fill out online Midterm Feedback Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 10/3</td>
<td>First draft of Essay #2 due (Taking a Position, with Sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 9/7</td>
<td>No class—Fall Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>Final draft of Essay #2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>First draft of Essay #3 due (Speculating about Causes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Final draft of Essay #3 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>First draft of Essay #4 due (Proposing A Solutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Final draft of Essay #4 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 11/26 – Sun. 11/30</td>
<td>No class—Thanksgiving Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>Final draft of Essay #5 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>Complete portfolio due—NO EXCEPTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. (5:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>Deadline for appealing non-submission of a portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Students pick up results of Portfolio Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. (5:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>Deadline for appealing a non-passing portfolio assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Daily Calendar of Activities

### Key:
- SMG = St. Martin's Guide to Writing (short 8th edition)
- SSH = Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers (8 edition)

### To the Instructor:
- It is best not to overwhelm students by giving them the entire detailed syllabus at the start of the semester. Instead, at the beginning of the semester, you should provide students with the first page of general deadlines plus a segment of the upcoming syllabus (such as a few weeks’ worth, or one essay’s worth). Throughout the semester, you should then distribute additional segments when the time arrives. In this way, you can modify the additional segments of the syllabus, if needed, before distributing them.

### To the Instructor:
- Before the first class meeting you might want to:
  - Set up a Facebook Group, class blog, wiki, or discussion board to be used throughout the semester.
  - Send an email to all students registered for your course to remind them to bring their charged laptops to the every class. In this email you may want to invite students to join and/or explore the Facebook group, blog, or wiki – especially if students will need to create a separate account.
  - If you use a technology other than (for example, Google Docs, a blog or wiki, etc) you will want to make sure you spend time on the first day of class helping students learn how to create accounts.
Week 1

Monday  Introductions.  Instructor takes roll.

➢ Instructor guides students through accessing course site. Once there, students pull up on their computers and instructor projects on the screen Achievement Requirements.

➢ Class discusses Achievement Requirements, examining key policies, the laptop requirement, the course grading system, the portfolio process, and other important policies and procedures. Instructor points out where required texts and supplies are listed.

➢ Students pull up and instructor projects partial syllabus. Class examines the partial the syllabus, its purpose, and its organization. Note due dates.

➢ Instructor guides students through an introductory/get-to-know-you activity.

To the Instructor: Consider using the Facebook Group, blog, wiki, or Discussion Board for the get-to-know-you activity. This ensures that all students become members of the group and that they get practice with the technology in addition to getting to know one another. You may ask them to post an interesting fact about themselves to the Facebook group wall or wiki, or ask them to write a description of themselves using only verbs. Whatever you ask them to do for this activity, whether in class or online, make it as engaging as possible.

➢ Class examines the Student Process Questionnaire/Student Information Sheet, to be completed as homework.

To the Instructor: Consider posting the Student Process Questionnaire/Student Information Sheet to the Facebook Group, blog, wiki, or. You might have students post their responses to the same website or through email.

➢ Instructor previews the content of the next class and reminds students to bring their laptops to every class.

Assignments for students:

• Purchase all texts and supplies and bring them to the next class. Make sure to bring your fully charged laptop to every class.

• Spend considerable time re-reading the Achievement Requirements discussed in class. Make a note of any questions you would like to ask and bring your questions to the next class.

• Complete the Student Process Questionnaire/Student Information Sheet discussed in class. Email response before the start of next class.

• In the syllabus, read the descriptions of intended class activities for the remainder of the week so that you have a sense of the plan for the week.

Wednesday

➢ Instructor takes roll.

➢ Students submit their responses to the Student Process Questionnaire/Student Information Sheet.

➢ Instructor explains the purpose of the in-class diagnostic writing sample, clarifying expectations and emphasizing that the writing sample should take the form of an essay written for a college-educated adult, such as their instructor.
To the instructor: Because the course is designed to build students’ skills in writing academic arguments, consider offering prompts for this writing sample that will reveal their current skills at writing a persuasive essay, making sure that your prompts do not require prior knowledge and would be of equal interest to all students in our diverse community. For example, you may ask them to write about an issue in their community, in their school, or their social group. You would not want to ask them to write about issues such as the war in Iraq or college basketball.

- Instructor projects three prompts and directs students to where the prompts can be found on the course site; each student selects one prompt he/she wants to address and begins writing an essay in a Word document.

To the instructor: Because many students will not be used to using laptops to compose in the classroom you mind want to remind them of the following:
  - Because some students may not have Microsoft Word, you might want to suggest that they purchase it. The M.U. bookstore offers Microsoft Office at a reduced rate for students.
  - Introduce students to saving their documents using MyFiles (http://myfiles.MU.edu) or Google Docs to ensure that they don’t lose their work. Most classrooms will not have printers, so students will need to save their in-class work and print it out later.
  - Stress the importance of saving work throughout the class period. Remind students to save multiple times so that they do not lose any changes.
  - At the end of the class you may want to ask students to save their documents using their first and/or last name and “writing sample” or some other format so that you can easily distinguish between the documents.

- While students are writing their in-class diagnostic writing samples, instructor makes a note of the materials each student has yet to purchase.
- Instructor collects students’ in-class diagnostics either via e-mail or through Dropbox, making sure to leave enough time to give directions on how to submit diagnostic writing sample.

To the Instructor: Some students may not have Microsoft Word, and others may have newer versions of Word than you. Having students submit their completed diagnostic writing sample electronically will let you know whether you can open their documents with your computer. If you cannot open their document ask them to paste their finished document in a blank email or adjust their compatibility settings in Word. You will want to suggest that they purchase Word from the M.U. Bookstore at a reduced rate if they do not have it.

- Instructor projects a handout describing how students can access the site for the class and what they will find there.

To the Instructor: Make sure that you have some information posted on. Consider having a welcome message on the Announcements page and have copies of the course achievement requirements and first part of the syllabus available as well. One way to make sure students become more familiar with is to give them a few tasks to complete (including visiting an external link, posting to a discussion forum, and sending an email through).

- Instructor points out where homework assignments and due dates are shown on the syllabus and briefly previews the next class.
Assignments for Students:
- Following the directions on the handout distributed in class, visit the site for this class. Be prepared to discuss what’s posted there.
- Read “Chapter One: Introduction” on pp. 1-14 in SMG
- Read “What is the Current Scene for Writers?”, “What Are Major Purposes of Writing?”, “What Does ‘Audience’ Mean for Writing?”, and “What Is Tone in Writing” on pp. 2-16 in SSH. Type and print your response to Exercise 1.1 on pp. 7-8 in SSH.
- Purchase any remaining texts or supplies.
- Bring your texts, supplies, and 101 portfolio to the next class.

To the Instructor: Although the sample syllabus says that students should print their homework, you may want to collect homework electronically through email, Google Docs, or Dropbox on. In the future, you might also have students post shorter homework assignments to the class Discussion Board. The important thing is to remember to be consistent so set a standard early only and stick with it.

Friday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor introduces the conference sign-up sheet so that each student may attend a required conference to discuss their diagnostic essay and process questionnaire.

To the Instructor: While there are many options for creating a virtual sign-up sheet, one useful website is Doodle (http://doodle.ch). You might also create a word document, wiki page, or discussion board to help students sign up for their conference time.

- Instructor answers students’ questions about the Achievement Requirements and syllabus.
- Class discusses students’ experience accessing the site for the class. Class discusses what they found at the site and what they can anticipate finding in the future.
- Class discusses students’ reading homework from the previous class (pp. 1-14 in SMG and pp. 2-16 in SSH) and their responses to Exercise 1.1 from SSH. Instructor collects responses (if printed copies were required).
- Instructor discusses and demonstrates the writer/reader relationship fully and explores in concrete terms the effects of audience on the choices writers make.

To the Instructor: CC101 students will need explicit help understanding audience and its strong influence on the choices they make in order to become effective writers. Here are some different approaches:
- Find several advertisements on YouTube. As a class watch the ads and talk about the intended audience. Push students to identify specific features (strategy, tone, text, actors, vocabulary, music, etc.) that have been clearly crafted to attract an intended audience. You might have students watch:
  - "Mastercard Priceless Elephant" (apprx. 1:07 min) http://youtube.com/watch?v=WFNXwor69-U
  - "MasterCard Commercial - Homer Simpson" (apprx. 30 min) http://youtube.com/watch?v=6Ccv4dZHRDE
  - Apple iMovie Commercial (apprx. 30 seconds) http://youtube.com/watch?v=E5iHvtwoMfA
After discussing several advertisements and their features, discuss the consequences of designing advertisements with features that ignore the intended audience. Imagine examples with the class.

Apply the lesson learned to a specific writing situation. Using a fictional scenario, present three different pieces of writing, each written to accomplish the same purpose but written for different and very specific audiences (perhaps a very young and casual audience, an informal adult audience, and a formal/professional audience). Identify the features that have been selected to attract and appear credible to the intended audience.

After practicing as a class, have students use their laptops to individually complete the "Thesis Statement" activity at. Circulate to observe student scores and to answer questions.

Extend the lesson to a discussion of the needs and expectations of a college-educated audience, the audience to whom they will be writing their essays. Identify key features and imagine the consequences of not meeting those needs and expectations.

Class reviews “Chapter 5: Explaining Opposing Positions” on pp. 192-94 in SMG. Have the class brainstorm a list of the most common problems writers might have when attempting an argument. Discuss the challenges they identify.

Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and briefly previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Review the beginning of “Chapter 5: Explaining Opposing Positions” on pp. 192-94 in SMG.
- Read “The Perfect Crime?” on pp. 196-99 in SMG. As you read, pay attention to the annotations in the margins. Determine what types of traits are noted and why they are important to the essay.
- Read “Investigating a Mega-Mystery” on pp. 199-201 in SMG. Then reread it, and in the margins, label the spot where the author states his/her main position, label each spot where the author states each new reason in support of the position, label each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
- Read “Commentary” on pp. 203-04 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of a “logical plan” and providing “fair and unbiased presentations.”
- Read "No Child Left Behind: 'Historic Initiative' or 'Just an Empty Promise'?” on pp. 211-16 in SMG. Then reread it, and in the margins, label the spot where the author states his/her main position, label each spot where the author states each new reason in support of the position, label each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
- Read “Commentary” on pp. 217-18 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of “introducing the issue,” and “opposing positions.”
- Be fully prepared to discuss these readings in our next class. Make sure to bring your SMG to our next class.

Week 2        Conference Week

Monday NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)
Assignments for Students:
- Complete homework listed under if you haven’t already done so.

Wednesday
- Instructor takes roll and reminds students about their upcoming conferences.
- Students spend 10 minutes typing a response to at least one of the readings. Based on their responses, discuss one or more of the readings. Consider using ideas from the “Analyzing Writing Strategies” sections after each essay in SMG. Focus on the “Commentary” sections and emphasize the important role audience and purpose play in essays that take a position (refer to “Purpose and Audience” on pp. 218-19 in SMG).

To the Instructor: Some instructors like to begin classes with in-class writing activities. Consider using the “Prompts for Discussion” or “Prompts for Journaling” found under the instructor’s edition of the SMG companion website, for in-class writing ideas to begin classes. You can also find some interesting prompts under “Writing Activities”. Consider having students post their short responses to the class Discussion Board or wiki, for example, and then have them read and respond to the classmate that posted after them. These responses can be a good way to get students to interact with the readings and with each other. These can also be a jumping off point for class discussion or future paper topics.

- Instructor identifies key features of effective arguments (draws students’ attention to “Basic Features: Explaining Opposing Positions” on pp. 220-21 in SMG for a quick overview).

To the Instructor: If you notice that some students are having difficulty understanding what they read and/or identifying key features within the readings, consider making the analytical reading strategies as explicit as possible when discussing the articles. Also, consider offering an optional workshop which provides strategies and critical reading practice. “Chapter 12: A Catalog of Reading Strategies” on pp. 584-608 in SMG or Sections 4a through 4d on pp. 115-29 in SSH might be of use in such a workshop.

- Distribute the assignment sheet for Essay #1: Explaining Opposing Positions. Walk students through the assignment sheet, noting the major points in the assignment sheet, including the purpose and audience specified in the assignment and deadlines.

To the Instructor: Even though you should post your assignment sheet to your site, you will also want to hand out a printed copy in class. Students generally like to see the printed assignment sheet, and this allows you be sure that each of them actually received and reviewed it.

- Introduce the concept of “process” to the class. Examine the chart, “Guide to Writing: Explaining Opposing Positions,” on p. 222 in SMG and walk through the process that students will follow when writing the essay.
- Explain the first step in the process, referring to the first part of the “Invention and Research” section on pp. 223-28 in SMG. Explain to students how they are to use these pages and respond to the prompts in them to begin their writing process for Essay #1 tonight.
- Review the key points of the lesson and preview the next lesson.
Assignments for Students:

- Review the assignment sheet for Essay #1, distributed in class earlier today. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask those questions in the next class.
- Read “A Case for Torture” on pp. 266-68 and “Inhuman Behavior: A Chaplain’s View of Torture” on pp. 268-71 both in SMG. Then reread it, and in the margins, label the spot where the author states his/her main position, label each spot where the author states each new reason in support of the position, label each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
- Also in SMG, read “What is a thesis statement?” on pp. 46-48.
- Following the directions provided in class today, complete these sections of “Invention and Research” from pp. 223-25 in SMG:
  - Choosing a Debate to Write About
  - Getting an Overview of the Debate you Have Chosen
  - Testing Your Choice
- Bring your SSH text, SMG text, and CC101 portfolio to our next class.

Friday

- Instructor takes roll and reminds students about their upcoming conferences.
- Instructor answers questions students might have about the essay assignment at this point.
- Students share their experiences with Wednesday night’s homework with the class. As a class, students discuss reading homework from the previous class (pp. 266-68 and pp.268-71 in SMG).
- Instructor explains the function of a thesis statement and its benefits for readers. Instructor shares guidelines for writing thesis statements and provides sample thesis statements of varying merit and class collaboratively analyzes the merits and demerits of each.

To the Instructor: Because your students each have access to laptops, you should use the technology to help make your points. For example, you might use the following video created by Ed McCorduck to help students understand one approach to writing an argumentative essay

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOXge5d3z5Q

- Using their laptops, students individually complete the "Thesis Statement" activity. Instructor circulates to observe student scores and to answer questions.

To the Instructor: If you use activities like the one above, make sure that you put the link(s) on so that all students can easily access the activities.

- Instructor reminds students of the importance of audience awareness learned earlier in the semester and draws students’ attention to the completed model of the Audience and Values form in their portfolios. Class examines the questions and the focus and depth of answers provided.

To the Instructor: Without guidance, many students may find it difficult to complete the Audience and Values form in a meaningful way. Their identification of audience may be too broad (“people,” “adults,” “teachers, students, and parents,” “the world,” etc.) or inconsistent, in which case they will need help focusing their audience and recognizing the impact a selected audience should have on their crafting of the essay. Their sense of
values may be limited to “because it’s important to me” or something equally vague, so they will need help recognizing specific values at play within issues. M.W.P. considers audience and values analysis crucial to a student’s achievement of the learning outcomes for our courses, so please take the time to help students gain meaningful proficiency in this area.

➤ Explain the next step in the process, referring to the last half of the “Invention and Research” section on pp. 225-30 in _SMG_. Explain to students how they are to use these pages and respond to the prompts in them to continue their writing process for Essay #1 tonight. Show students how to access a blank topics chart on the course site.

_To the Instructor:_ An electronic versions of the topics chart (as seen on p. 228) can be found here:

➤ Review the key points of the lesson. Preview the next lesson.

**Assignments for Students:**

- Following directions provided in class, spend about an hour to complete an Audience and Values sheet for Essay #1 (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).

- Following the directions provided in class today, complete these sections of “Invention and Research” from pp. 225-30 in _SMG_ and bring your work to the next class:
  - Identifying Topics in Your Debate
  - Identifying and Understanding Your Research
  - Selecting Topics to Explain the Debate
  - Trying Out a Topic Comparison or Contrast
  - Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

- Bring your CC101 portfolio and _SMG_ text to our next class.

**Week 3**

**Monday**

- Instructor takes roll.

- Class discusses their experiences with and responses to the Audience and Values sheet.

- Instructor projects a sample Explaining Opposing Positions essay and directs students to where the draft can be found on. While class analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each essay, noting rhetorical features that help the essay achieve its purpose, students electronically annotate the drafts on their laptops.

- Instructor notes the use of in-text citations and works cited.
To the Instructor: You might want to create a sample works cited page for the two articles students are using in their first essay. You will also want to review in-text citations. Using MLA style is covered in the last half of Chapter 22 “Using and Acknowledging Sources” on pp. 747-63 in SMG and in the first half of Chapter 34 “MLA Documentation with Case Study” on pp. 561-71 in SSH. You may also want to check out the material available on the library’s website at: http://www..edu/colleges/library/assistance/page39964.html

There are many useful tutorials available for how to format a page according to MLA style. Below are a few examples:

- “Setting your essay to MLA format in Word 2007” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PRb6557Eml)
- “MLA Formatting and Style Guide” (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/)
- “MLA Manuscript Format”

Instructor briefly explains the Student Process Analysis sheet noting how and when students should complete the form. Class examines a model that has been completed.

If time allows, discuss “Planning and Drafting” on pp. 230-34 in SMG for additional guidance on drafting essay #1.

To the Instructor: It is a good idea to set up specific tasks or goals for students at the beginning of class. The key is to make them show you their work before leaving class so you know they are staying on track.

Assignments for Students:
- Read “Drafting” on p. 234 in SMG for additional guidance on drafting your essay.
- Read “What is an Argument?” through “What Is the Structure of a Written Argument” on pp. 149-54 in SSH.
- For additional help with MLA see pp. 561-71 in SSH.
- Apply what you have learned so far as you spend several hours drafting a complete rough draft of your explaining opposing positions essay. Label it “Essay #1: Draft 1.” Feel free to make changes and create improved drafts after you’ve written your very first draft, and be sure to label and save each new draft with a fresh name (“Essay 1: Draft 2,” “Essay 1: Draft 3,” etc.) so that when you hand all of your writing in, your instructor can see the changes you’ve made from draft to draft. You may handwrite your own revision suggestions on your drafts after you print them, reminding yourself of changes you want to make, but by Wednesday, you should have a clean and complete electronic copy of your most recent draft for class.

Wednesday  Peer Review Essay #1

- Instructor takes roll.
- Class discusses appropriate peer response behaviors, and instructor demonstrates how to use the comment function in Microsoft Word.
- Instructor models appropriate peer response behaviors.

To the instructor: The companion website for SMG includes “Peer Space” which will help
introduce students to appropriate peer review responses.  
For an electronic version of the critical reading guide you can go to:  
Making the electronic copy available on will help students answer the questions.

➢ Students provide electronic peer response for one or more classmates, following the activities described on pp. 235-36 in and using the comment function.

To the Instructor: There are many different ways to complete peer review. Students can use the comment function in Word to review each others’ papers. This is often less intimidating than actually writing comments on a draft. A few suggestions for exchanging papers includes:

➢ Have students open their essays on their screens and then switch computers or seats with a peer.
➢ Create a master email list on before peer review so that students can easily email their drafts to their peer review partner(s) or share their essays with their partners using Google Docs.
➢ Create groups on Discussion Board and have each student attach their paper to their groups’ discussion board.

Consider having students share their drafts with multiple classmates in whatever way you choose.

➢ Instructor reminds students that they are to use the feedback they received from their peers to improve their essay, and they are to submit a copy of Essay #1 to Dropbox (or via your preferred electronic method) at the start of class on Friday, and bring all previous drafts and work, a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to the next class.

Assignments for Students:
• Following directions provided in an earlier class, complete the Student Process Analysis sheet (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
• Apply all that you’ve learned and create your best draft yet of Essay #1. Be prepared to submit your most improved draft to Dropbox at the start of our next class. Bring all previous drafts and a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to our next class.
• Bring your CC101 portfolio and your text.

Friday Drafts of Essay #1 Due

To the Instructor: This syllabus indicates that next Monday, the class as a whole will be examining a few sample drafts submitted today by their peers, noting strengths and areas where revision would improve the essays. Before collecting their essay packets today, ask students to indicate on the cover of their packet whether or not they will permit you to use their essay for discussion of revision strategies in the next class. Assure them you will remove their name before sharing their essay and point out the benefits of having their essay reviewed by the class as a whole.

➢ Instructor takes roll.
➢ Instructor explains how to submit drafts using Dropbox. While students submit their drafts electronically, the instructor collects completed essay packets (all previous drafts and work, a completed Student Process Analysis sheet, and a completed Audience and Values sheet).
Instructor leads lesson on academic dishonesty starting with the plagiarism movies from Rutgers University.

To the instructor: There is a creative approach to opening a discussion of plagiarism available from Rutgers University. If you are teaching in a room with an AV cabinet, consider showing the final three sections of the presentation in class. Whether you have an AV cabinet in your room or not, you can place a link to this presentation in your course shell.

http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/

Part 1: A Message from Rutgers Provost
This section is about the policies and people at Rutgers; therefore, it is not totally applicable to M.U.. You may want to consider explaining M.U.’s policy prior to viewing the other three parts.

Part 2: What is plagiarism? (apprx 2 ½ minutes)
This section uses a cartoon class to discuss the definition of, penalties for, and types of plagiarism. As it refers to Rutgers policies, think about comparing the policies mentioned with those from M.U. in order to reinforce M.U.’s policies and to show that this is a concern at other schools as well.

Part 3: Plagiarism Real Life Examples (apprx 2 ½ minutes)
This section has a fictional student reading her paper and deciding whether or not sections need citations. It appears to use Chicago Style citations. You may want to discuss the choices made by the student in the presentation as well as asking students about the information needed for MLA citations. This will help to reinforce MLA as well as help students see what to watch for in their writing and why.

Part 4: The Cite is Right: The Quiz Show (Intro apprx 2 minutes)
This is the interactive portion of the presentation. It uses a game show format to provide five questions. Consider answering the questions as a class and discussing why they did or didn’t get the question(s) right.

Class examines p. 13 in the CC101 portfolio, which lists six different categories of academic dishonesty.

To the Instructor: Because students may not recognize some of the offenses described (such as “using unauthorized assistance”) as being academically dishonest, it’s wise to discuss each category.

Using pp. 14-15 in the CC101 portfolio, class closely examines the information on plagiarism, one very serious type of academic dishonesty, and how to avoid it.

Instructor distributes an in-class activity designed to provide practice in distinguishing instances of plagiarism from instances of legitimate source use. Class completes assignment; afterwards, class members share their responses.

Instructor refers to the bottom of p. 15 in the CC101 portfolio and notes the potential penalties for plagiarism.

Review the key points of the lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- To learn more about plagiarism, read sections 33a-f on pp. 538-45 in
- Read “How Do I Revise?” on pp. 56-62 in
• Read “How Can I Write Effective Introductory Paragraphs?” on pp. 84-87 and “What Are Effective Concluding Paragraphs?” on pp. 113-14 in SSH.
• Consider how the information in the readings on revision, introductions, and conclusions might be used to strengthen your essay. Although your instructor has collected your draft, feel free to revise your essay on your own, applying all that you have learned to this point.

Week 4

Monday

➢ Instructor takes roll.
➢ Instructor projects, and class examines one or two sample drafts of Essay #1 taken from the class (posted to, with the students’ permission beforehand, after removing authors’ names, and without instructor commentary on them). Instructor leads the class in a discussion of strengths and areas in need of improvement, and class discusses general strategies for strengthening the essays, using what they learned in the readings over the previous weekend.

To the Instructor: Remember to remove the students name not only from the top of the first page but also their last name in the header (if the student has included it). Don’t forget to save the file with a name that won’t identify the writer.

➢ Instructor introduces the students to the Writing Center and the services it does and does not provide. Instructor explains how they may make use of the services of the Center. Students log on to the Writing Center’s website (http://www.MU.edu/offices/acen/writerslab/) and explore what is available for them. Instructor also explains and demonstrates the Writing Center in Second Life.

To the Instructor: If you have an avatar in Second Life you may want to walk your students through how they can visit the SL Writing Center. If your students have accounts themselves they can join your avatar at the Writing Center.

➢ Instructor distributes an academic honesty homework assignment, reviews the key points of the lesson, and previews the next lesson.

To the Instructor: Many institutions offer online MLA and plagiarism exercises. M.U.’s Writing Center has handouts on plagiarism and MLA http://www.MU.edu/offices/acen/writingctr/page29232.html
Another useful site is The University of Indiana’s plagiarism web site http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/item1.html.
It provides an activity that can be used in class or for homework. Even though the examples are not in MLA documentation style, they work well in getting students to understand fundamental concepts about plagiarism. The part of the exercise where the photo of George Washington is introduced as plagiarism (because it isn’t cited) is especially interesting. The quiz is immediately scored, and if you decide to assign this as homework you might have students write a short reflection about what they learned that they can post to Discussion Board. Or, consider having students complete and print their results for this “Test” http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html.
Assignments for Students:
- You will need to have electronic access to the draft you submitted to your instructor so that you may work on it during Wednesday’s class.
- Complete the academic honesty homework assignment distributed in class. It is due at the start of our next class.
- Read and complete “Revising” and “Getting an Overview” on p. 237 in SMG. Consider how the information in the reading on revision might be used to strengthen your essay. Although your instructor has collected your draft, feel free to revise your essay on your own, applying all that you have learned to this point.

Wednesday Drafts of Essay #1 Returned Electronically to Students
- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor collects the academic honesty homework assignment.
- Instructor directs students’ attention to the ePortfolio materials available on the class site and walks them through the steps of establishing an ePortfolio on their own (however, students are not required to maintain an ePortfolio for CC101 and the ePortfolio process is normally not taught in CC101 due to time constraints).
- Instructor explains and demonstrates the types of comments he/she has left on their drafts, what the comments are intended to achieve, and how students can make the most of the comments as they begin to revise.

To the Instructor: Students often conceptualize revision as “correction.” They may expect that you will have edited their papers for them (although they might not describe their expectations that way), and expect that their responsibility is then to “correct” only those elements that were identified by you as needing work. Now would be a good time to explain the difference between editing and instructing. Make clear what they should and should not expect from your comments and what you expect them to do in response, which entails more than simply “correcting” any items you point out.

- Instructor returns draft packets and explains where students can find their papers electronically.

To the Instructor: Because you will be returning drafts electronically with comments you will need to do so before the start of class. Also, you will want to return drafts the same way that students have submitted their drafts. Make sure you establish this from the very beginning of the semester and stay consistent.

- During the bulk of the class session, students work on their computers to revise their essays. As they revise, instructor circulates through the room, answering questions and providing feedback.
- Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next class.

Assignments for students:
- If you have not already done so, read and complete “Revising” and “Getting an Overview” on p. 237 in SMG.
- Read and complete “Carrying Out Revisions” on pp. 238-240 in SMG.
- Begin making revisions to the focus, organization, and development of the ideas in your essay, bearing in mind the comments your instructor made on your paper.
• The final draft of your essay is due on Monday, so consider making a conference appointment with your instructor or the Writing Center before then to get feedback on your revisions.

Friday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor explains the purpose of the online library site located at http://www.MU.edu/colleges/library/infosrv/lue/luhome.html and the 100/101 library site located at ____________________________
- Students access the library online sites.

To the Instructor: An important search engine to point out to students is Academic Search Complete. The College Composition100/101 blog has a link to a video tutorial that may be useful. The video can be found here: http://support.epnet.com/training/flash_videos/basicSearchingAcademic.html

Below is one instructor’s approach to helping students practice searching:
- After introducing students to Academic Search Complete, have each student log onto the database. Give them specific search parameters and ask them to find a specific article that you have previewed. For example, you may provide instructions such as “find me an article on Britney Spears that was written in November of 2003 in Time magazine. What is the article’s title?” The first student to find the article “wins” the round. This can be a fun exercise if you choose silly or irreverent articles. By the end of the class, students can navigate easily through the database.

- Instructor assists students as they work their way through the library materials.
- Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for students:
• After you’ve made whatever revisions were needed to the focus, organization, and development or your essay, read “How Do I Edit?” and “How Do I Proofread?” on pp. 62-64 in [SSH].
• Reread “Revision” on pp. 237-240 in [SMG].
• Read and complete “Editing and Proofreading” on pp. 240-241 in [SMG].
• Continue to revise your essay. Then edit and proofread your essay, using the suggestions found in your readings and your instructor’s comments.
• When you’ve finished proofreading, print a clean copy of your essay and label it “Essay #1: Final Draft.” Bring it plus all previous work on the essay and forms you’ve completed to our next class to submit. Make sure you bring your improved draft and all previous drafts, a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet, and a blank Instructor Evaluation (rubric) sheet to the next class.
• Read the beginning of “Chapter 6: Arguing a Position” on pp. 272-75 in [SMG].

Week 5

Monday Final Draft of Essay #1 Due
Instructor takes roll.

Instructor explains how to organize essay materials for submission. Instructor collects students’ printed final draft packets for Essay #1.

**To the Instructor:** While rough drafts should be submitted electronically, it is important that students submit printed versions of their final essay packets so that they may be evaluated properly during portfolio review at the end of the semester. Remind students that they **MUST** print out the version of their rough drafts that include your comments and that this, and any other intermediate drafts, must be included with their final draft. Portfolio evaluators will want to see the process that the student went through, not just the finished product.

Instructor reminds students of the primary features of effective argument.

Distribute the assignment sheet for **Essay #2: Taking a Position (with Sources).** Walk students through the assignment sheet, noting key deadlines and explaining features of the assignment (note the similarities and differences between the assignments for Essay #1 and Essay #2).

Instructor projects a sample Taking a Position (with Sources) essay and directs students to where the draft can be found on. Students annotate drafts on their laptops while class analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each essay, noting rhetorical features that help the essay achieve its purpose.

Elicit hypothetical focused topics for the paper and have students suggest search strategies. Spend considerable time honing search skills.

Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

**Assignments for Students:**

- Read “Children Need to Play, Not Compete” on pp. 276-79 in SMG. Make sure to pay attention to the annotations in the margins.
- Read “Sticks and Stones and Sports Team Names” on pp. 280-81 in SMG. Then reread it, and in the margins, label the spot where the author states his/her main position, label each spot where the author states each new reason in support of the position, label each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
- Read “Commentary” on pp. 282-83 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of “presenting an issue” and providing “plausible reasons.”
- Be fully prepared to discuss these readings in our next class. Make sure to bring your **SMG** to our next class.
- Following the directions provided in class today, complete the sections of “Invention and Research” pp. 297-301 in SMG:
  - Finding an Issue to Write about
  - Exploring the Issue
  - Analyzing Potential Readers
  - Testing Your Choice

**Wednesday**

Instructor takes roll.

Remind students of key features of effective arguments (draw students’ attention to “Basic Features: Arguing Positions” on pp. 294-95 in SMG for a quick overview.

Discuss one or more of the readings, perhaps using ideas from the “Analyzing Writing Strategies” sections after each essay in SMG. Focus on the “Commentary” sections and
emphasize the important role audience and purpose play in essays that take a position
(refer to “Purpose and Audience” on p. 293 in SMG).
➢ Class examines a sample completed Audience and Values sheet for an arguing a position
eSSay.
➢ Before class, place students in groups of three on the class Discussion Board. Have them
perform the collaborative activity on p. 301 in SMG on the Discussion Board. After,
discuss their results. By the end of the activity, students should know whether their
chosen topic is a viable one; if it is not, they will need to repeat some of the “Invention
and Research” activities from the previous homework in order to identify a viable topic.
➢ If time permits, students spend time in class working on the “Invention and Research” pp.
301-05 in SMG while instructor circulates to offer feedback and assistance.
  ▪ Developing Your Argument
  ▪ Anticipating Readers’ Objections and Questions
  ▪ Anticipating Opposing Positions
  ▪ Considering Document Design
  ▪ Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers
  ▪ Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

Assignments for Students:
• If you have not already done so, complete the following sections of “Invention
  and Research” pp. 301-05 in SMG:
  ▪ Developing Your Argument
  ▪ Anticipating Readers’ Objections and Questions
  ▪ Anticipating Opposing Positions
  ▪ Considering Document Design
  ▪ Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers
  ▪ Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement
• Read “Working at McDonald’s” on pp. 283-86 in SMG. Then reread it, and in
  the margins, label the spot where the author states his/her main position, label
each spot where the author states each new reason in support of the position,
label each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author
anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
• After reading “Working at McDonald’s” write a short response (100-200 words)
to the following prompt: What do you see as Etzioni’s strongest argument in the
essay? Did any of the points he makes surprise you? Bring an electronic copy of
your response to class and submit a copy via email by the start of class.
• Read “Commentary” on p. 287 in SMG, making sure you understand the concept
of “counterargument.”
• Read “Boys Here, Girls There” on pp. 288-91 in SMG. Then reread it, and in the
margins, label the spot where the author states his/her main position, label each
spot where the author states each new reason in support of the position, label
each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author
anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
• Read “Commentary” on pp. 292-93 in SMG, making sure you understand the
concept of “establishing authority by counterarguing.”
• Following directions provided in class, spend about an hour completing an
Audience and Values sheet for Essay #2 (remember, blank forms are included in
your CC101 portfolio).

Friday Instructor Returns Final Drafts of Essay #1
Instructor takes roll.
Discuss one or more of the readings, perhaps using ideas from the “Analyzing Writing Strategies” sections after each essay in SMG, or using student written responses to the readings.
Instructor projects sample taking a position (with sources) paper, paying particular attention to how sources have been used throughout the paper. Instructor directs students to where the sample can be found so that students can annotate drafts on their laptop while class analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the sample.
Instructor discusses and demonstrates in-text citations and Works Cited entries using MLA style. These topics are covered in the last half of Chapter 22 “Using and Acknowledging Sources” on pp. 747-63 in SMG and in the first half of Chapter 34 “MLA Documentation with Case Study” on pp. 561-71 in SSH.
Instructor returns the final drafts of Essay #1 to students and explains how the rubric has been marked.
Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Read “Using and Acknowledging Sources” pp. 738-41 SMG, and “Reading Sources with a Critical Eye” pp. 734-37 in SMG.
- Using what you learned while working with online library sites, use Academic Search Complete and/or other academic search engines (not Google and the like) to locate at least three academic sources with specific information (facts, statistics, examples, scenarios, expert opinion, etc.) related to the points you plan to raise in your essay. Bring print or electronic copies of each source to class on Monday.
- Apply what you have learned so far as you spend several hours drafting a complete First Draft of your taking a position essay (with sources). Label it “Essay #2: Draft 1.” Feel free to make changes and create improved drafts after you’ve written your very first draft, and be sure to label each new draft with a fresh name (“Essay 2: Draft 2,” “Essay 2: Draft 3,” etc.) so that when you hand all of your writing in, your instructor can see the changes you’ve made from draft to draft. You may handwrite your own revision suggestions on your drafts after you print them, reminding yourself of changes you want to make, but by Friday, you should have a completed draft ready for class.
- Bring your SSH text and an electronic copy of your draft to our next class.

Week 6 COMPLETE ONLINE MIDTERM EVALUATIONS THIS WEEK

Monday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Students briefly share their experience searching for on-point support.
- Instructor briefly reviews the format of an MLA-Style Works Cited list using Purdue’s OWL’s example, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/14/; class briefly examines Chapter 34 in SSH. Students spend time in class creating a Works Cited list using their on-point sources while instructor circulates to offer assistance.
- For the remainder of class, students work in small groups to share tentative thesis statements and introductions. Classmates provide recommendations and feedback.

To the Instructor: To make sure that students receive feedback from multiple reviewers, you
might consider using the “musical computers” method of response. Have students pull up their introductions (including thesis statements) in a word document. Then, have all the students move to a different computer. To keep chaos to a minimum, give directions on how students should move (for example, move forward one seat or back one seat). Have each student read through the original introduction and thesis statement and type a response that may include questions, suggestions, or ideas. Repeat this process as many times as desired or as time allows.

**Assignments for Students:**
- Continue working on your draft. Make sure you have an electronic copy of your most recent and complete draft for class on Wednesday.

**Wednesday**
- Instructor takes roll.
- Students work on improving their drafts on computers while instructor circulates to offer feedback and assistance. Point out that when they have finished improving their drafts, they will have arrived at the “Critical Reading” point in the process chart shown on p. 296 in SMG and they should follow the “If You Are the Writer” instructions on pp. 310-11.

**To the Instructor:** When you allow students class time to work on their draft it is important to set up a specific task or goal for them at the beginning of the class. For example, you might ask them to focus on their introduction and show you their work before they leave. Or you might ask them to generate four sources for their paper, etc. The key is to make them show you their work before leaving the lab.
- Students complete online midterm evaluations.
- Instructor previews the next lesson.

**Assignments for Students:**
- Following directions provided in class, complete the Student Process Analysis sheet (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
- Apply all that you’ve learned and create your best draft yet of Essay #2. Be prepared to submit your most improved draft to Dropbox at the start of our next class. Bring all previous drafts and a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to our next class.
- Bring an electronic copy of your best draft yet, and your SMG text to our next class.

**Friday Drafts of Essay #2 Due**
- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor reminds students of appropriate peer response behaviors, and students provide electronic peer response for one or more classmates using the “Critical Reading Guide” available on pp. 310-12 in SMG and online
- While students submit their drafts using Dropbox, the instructor collects Essay #2 packets (all previous drafts and work, a completed Student Process Analysis sheet, and a completed Audience and Values sheet) after having students write on them to indicate whether or not they give permission to the instructor to use the draft (without the student’s name) as a sample to examine in class.
- Instructor reminds students that he/she is available for conferences to discuss their work.
Assignments for Students:
- While you’re waiting for your instructor to return your drafts of Essay #2, you should be improving your draft even further on your own:
  - Write an alternate introduction and an alternate conclusion to your collegiate argument, using a different strategy than you used in your most recent draft. Decide which versions are the more engaging and sophisticated choices for your essay.
  - Read “How Can I Write Coherent Paragraphs?” on pp. 93-99 in and apply that information to improve your draft.

Week 7

Monday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Class examines one or two sample drafts of Essay #2 taken from the class (posted to, with the students’ permission beforehand, after removing authors’ names, and without instructor commentary on them). Instructor leads the class in a discussion of strengths and areas in need of improvement, and class discusses general strategies for strengthening the essays, using what they learned in the readings over last weekend.
- Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Continue improving your draft on your own or in conference with your instructor or a consultant in the Writing Center

Wednesday Drafts of Essay #2 Returned Electronically to Students
- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor returns draft packets and explains where students can find their papers electronically
- During the bulk of the class session, students work on their computers to revise their essays. As they revise, instructor circulates through the room, answering questions and providing feedback.
- Instructor previews the next lesson

Assignments for Students:
- Read and complete “Revising,” “Getting an Overview,” and “Carrying Out Revisions” on pp. 312-17 in
- Begin making revisions to the focus, organization, and development of the ideas in your essay, bearing in mind the comments your instructor made on your paper.
- The final draft of your essay is due on Wednesday (one week from today), so consider making a conference appointment with your instructor or the Writing Center before then to get feedback on your revisions.
- After you revise your draft, print a copy of the new version and bring it to our next class.
Friday NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Assignments for Students:
- Complete homework listed under if you haven’t already done so.

Week 8

Monday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Students share their new draft with classmates electronically, seeking feedback on the revisions they have made and soliciting advice for making the essay even stronger.
- Instructor circulates to provide assistance.
- Instructor reminds students about the importance of revising and proofreading.

To the Instructor: One way to introduce editing and proofreading to students is through Grammar Girl’s Oct. 20, 2006 podcast, “Proofreading” which give some useful tips for students to follow at the end of the revision process.

- Instructor reminds students that the final draft packet of Essay #2 is due at the start of class on Wednesday.
- Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- After you’ve made whatever revisions were needed to the focus, organization, and development of your essay, edit and proofread your essay, paying particular attention to the types of errors that gave you trouble on the first essay.
- When you’ve finished proofreading, print a clean copy of your essay and label it “Essay #2: Final Draft.” Bring it plus all previous work on the essay and forms you’ve completed to our next class (Wednesday) to submit. Make sure you bring your improved draft and all previous drafts, a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet, and a blank Instructor Evaluation (rubric) sheet to the next class.
- Read “Chapter 9: Speculating About Causes” on pp. 454-57 in SMG.

Wednesday Final Draft of Essay #2 Due
- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor collects students’ final draft packets for Essay #2.
- Instructor distributes the assignment sheet for Essay #3: Speculating About Causes. Instructor walks students through the major points in the assignment sheet, emphasizing the purpose and audience specified in the assignment and noting deadlines.
- Demonstrate how prevalent speculations about causes are in real life, identify the key features of effective speculations about causes (draw students’ attention to “Basic Features: Speculating About Causes” on pp. 482-83 in SMG for a quick overview), and have the class collaborate on a brainstormed list of the most common problems writers
might have when attempting to speculate about causes. Discuss the challenges they identify.

➢ Instructor projects a sample Speculating about Causes essay and directs students to where the draft can be found. Students annotate drafts on their laptops while class analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each essay, noting rhetorical features that help the essay achieve its purpose.

To the Instructor: As an alternative to the above activity, consider having students work in small groups with the posted sample. Groups can use the comment function and highlighting function to point out the primary features they find. After groups complete the activity, have them post their documents to. Then use these documents to facilitate whole-class discussion.

➢ Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:

- Read “Fitness Culture: A Growing Trend in America” on pp. 457-60 in SMG. As you read, pay attention to the annotations in the margins. Determine what types of traits were noted and why they are important to the essay.
- Read “Why We Crave Horror Movies” on pp. 461-63 in SMG. Then reread it, and in the margins, label the spot where the author states his main position, label each spot where the author states each new cause of the phenomenon, label each new example as an example, and label the spot(s) where the author anticipates opposing positions and potential objections from others.
- Read “Commentary” on p. 464 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of “plausible causes” and “logical sequence.”
- Read “Why Fans and Players Are Playing so Rough” on pp. 474-78 in SMG. Write a response of at least 100 words to item #1 under “analyzing Writing Strategies” on p. 479 in SMG. Your response will be collected at the start of our next class.
- Read “Commentary” on p. 480 in SMG, making sure you understand the concept of “plausible causes.”
- Review the assignment sheet for Essay #3, distributed in class earlier today. Write down any questions you have.
- Bring your CC101 portfolio, your SMG text, and your completed homework to our next class.

Friday

➢ Instructor takes roll and collects homework.
➢ Class discusses how the rhetorical features of “Fitness Culture: A Growing Trend in America” and “Why We Crave Horror Movies” work to convey a clear speculation about causes. Focus on how the essays work.
➢ Examine the chart, “Guide to Writing: Speculating about Causes,” on p. 484 in SMG and walk through the process that students will follow when writing the essay.
➢ Explain the first step in the process, referring to the first part of the “Invention and Research” section on pp. 485-94 in SMG. Explain to students how they are to use these pages and respond to the prompts in them to begin their writing process for Essay #3 tonight.
➢ Class examines a completed Audience and Values sheet for a “Searching for Causes” essay.
➢ If time allows, have students begin working on the “Invention and Research” homework.
Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Following the directions provided in class today, complete these sections of “Invention and Research” from pp. 485-92 in SMG and bring your work to the next class:
  - Finding a Subject to Write About
  - Exploring What You Know about Your Subject
  - Considering Causes
  - Researching Your Subject
  - Considering Your Readers
  - Testing Your Choice
- Spend about an hour to complete an Audience and Values sheet for Essay #3 (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
- Using what you learned while working with the online library materials, use Academic Search Complete with specific information (facts, statistics, examples, scenarios, expert opinion, etc.) related to the points you plan to raise in your essay. Bring print or electronic copies of each source to class on Monday.
- Draft your tentative thesis and work through several improved versions before Monday. Bring a copy to class to share.
- Bring all of your writing to our next class, as well as your SMG text.

Week 9

Monday Instructor Returns Final Drafts of Essay #2
- Instructor takes roll.
- Students share their experiences with Friday night’s homework with the class.
- Class briefly discusses their experiences searching for on-point support.
- Students work on “Planning and Drafting” pp. 495-97 in SMG while instructor circulates to offer feedback and assistance.
- Instructor returns the final drafts of Essay #2 to students.
- Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Apply what you have learned so far as you spend several hours drafting a complete rough draft of your speculating about causes. Label it “Essay #3: Draft 1.” Feel free to make changes and create improved drafts after you’ve written your very first draft, and be sure to label each new draft with a fresh name (“Essay 3: Draft 2,” “Essay 3: Draft 3,” etc.) so that when you hand all of your writing in, your instructor can see the changes you’ve made from draft to draft. You may handwrite your own revision suggestions on your drafts after you print them, reminding yourself of changes you want to make, but by Friday you should have a completed draft ready for class.
- Bring your SMG text to our next class. You will also need to have electronic access to your rough draft.

Wednesday
- Instructor takes roll.
Instructor reminds student about the writing process on p. 484 in SMG.

Students type responses to the “If You are the Writer” portion on the “Critical Reading Guide” available on p. 500 and online. Students also work on the “Carrying Out Revision” on pp. 504-06 in SMG.

Instructor circulates to offer feedback and assistance.

Instructor previews next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Complete a Student Process Analysis sheet for essay #3 (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
- Be prepared to submit your most improved draft to Dropbox at the start of our next class. Bring all previous drafts and a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to our next class.
- Bring your SSH text and your SMG text to our next class.

Friday Drafts of Essay #3 Due

Instructor takes roll.

Instructor reminds students of appropriate peer response behaviors, and students provide peer response for one or more classmates using the “Critical Reading Guide” available on pp. 500-02 in SMG and online.

While students submit their drafts using Dropbox, the instructor collects Essay #3 packets after having students write on them to indicate whether or not they give permission to the instructor to use the draft (without the student’s name) as a sample to examine in class.

Instructor reminds students that he/she is available for conferences to discuss their work.

Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Although your instructor has collected your draft, feel free to revise your essay on your own, applying all that you have learned to this point.

Week 10

Monday

Instructor takes roll.
Class examines one or two sample drafts of Essay #3 taken from the class with the students’ permission beforehand, after removing authors’ names, and without instructor commentary on them) and that have been posted to. Instructor leads the class in a discussion of strengths and areas in need of improvement, and class discusses general strategies for strengthening the essays.

Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- While you’re waiting for your instructor to return your drafts of Essay #3, you should be improving your draft even further on your own.

Wednesday Drafts of Essay #3 Returned Electronically to Students

Instructor takes roll.
Instructor returns draft packets and explains where students can find their papers electronically.
During the bulk of the class session, students work on their computers to revise their essays. As they revise, instructor circulates through the room, answering questions and providing feedback.

Assignments for Students:
- Read and complete “Revising,” “Getting an Overview,” and “Carrying Out Revisions” on pp. 502-06 in "SMG."
- Begin making revisions to the focus, organization, and development of the ideas in your essay, bearing in mind the comments your instructor made on your paper.
- The final draft of your essay is due on Monday, so consider making a conference appointment with your instructor or the Writing Center before then to get feedback on your revisions.
- After you revise your draft, print a copy of the new version and bring it to our next class.

Friday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Students share their new draft with classmates on Discussion Board seeking feedback on the revisions they have made and soliciting advice for making the essay even stronger.

To the Instructor: Consider having students post three questions or problems they are having with their drafts when they attach their drafts on Discussion Board (or whatever tool you’ve chosen). After they have done that, have each student read and respond to the two posts below theirs offering suggestions and feedback on the three questions or problems as well as the entire draft.

- Students work on papers in class. Instructor reminds students of the “Critical Reading Guide” on pp. 500-02 in "SMG and discusses how the guide will again be useful after significant revisions have been made.
- Instructor reminds students that the final draft packet of Essay #3 is due at the start of class on Monday.
- Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Read and complete “Revising” and “Carrying Out Revisions” on pp. 502-06 in "SMG.
- After you’ve made whatever revisions were needed to the focus, organization, and development of your essay, edit and proofread your essay, paying particular attention to the types of errors that gave you trouble on the first and second essay.
- When you’ve finished proofreading, print a clean copy of your essay and label it “Essay #3: Final Draft.” Bring it plus all previous work on the essay and forms you’ve completed to our next class (Monday) to submit. Make sure you bring your improved draft and all previous drafts, a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet, and a blank Instructor Evaluation (rubric) sheet to the next class.
- Read the introduction to “Chapter 7: Proposing a Solution” pp. 326-29 in "SMG."
Week 11

Monday Final Draft of Essay #3 Due

- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor collects students’ final draft packets for Essay #3.
- Instructor distributes the assignment sheet for Essay #4: Proposing a Solution. Instructor walks students through the major points in the assignment sheet, emphasizing the purpose and audience specified in the assignment and noting deadlines.
- Instructor leads students through an examination of the primary features of effective proposing a solution argument from pp. 360-61 in SMG.
- Instructor projects sample Proposing a Solution essay and directs students to where the draft can be found on. Students annotate drafts on their laptop while class analyzes primary features. Heavy emphasis is given to identifying relevant criteria for this type of evaluation.
- Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:

- Read “Win-Win Flexibility” on pp. 334-38 and “Commentary” on pp. 339-41 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of “defining the problem” and “evaluating the solution” fully.
- Read “A New Deal for Teachers” on pp. 341-46 and “Commentary” on pp. 347-48 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of “anticipating readers’ objections and questions.”
- Read “Making Communities Safe for Bicycles” on pp. 349-56 and “Commentary” on pp. 357-58 in SMG, making sure you understand the concepts of “describing and arguing the proposed solution.”
- Review the assignment sheet for Essay #4, distributed in class earlier today. Write down any questions you have.
- Bring your CC101 portfolio and SMG text to class on Wednesday.

Wednesday

- Instructor takes roll.
- Discuss one or more of the readings, using ideas from the “Analyzing Writing Strategies” sections after each essay in SMG. Focus on how the essay works.
- Class examines a completed Audience and Values form for a “Proposing Solutions” essay.
- In groups of three, students complete collaborative activity on p. 329 in SMG. Ask the note taker to post a brief report of the group’s activities on Discussion Board. As a class, discuss the activity, specifically Part 2.
- Students spend the remainder of class working on the “Invention and Research” pp. 363-69 in SMG while instructor circulates to offer feedback and assistance.
- Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:

- If you haven’t already finished the sections of “Invention and Research” which the class worked on today, complete the following sections of “Invention and Research” from pp. 363-69 in SMG:
  - Finding a Problem to Write About
• Analyzing and Defining the Problem
• Identifying Your Readers
• Finding a Tentative Solution
• Defending Your Solution
• Testing Your Choice
• Offering Reasons for Your Proposal
• Considering Alternative Solutions

• If you haven’t already done so, finish filling out an Audience and Values sheet (found in your CC101 portfolio).
• Use that information to begin drafting a complete rough draft of your “Proposing a solution” essay. Label it “Essay #4: Draft 1.” Feel free to make changes over the next several days and create improved drafts after you’ve written your very first draft, and be sure to label each new draft with a fresh name (“Essay 4: Draft 2,” “Essay 4: Draft 3,” etc.) so that when you hand all of your writing in, your instructor can see the changes you’ve made from draft to draft.
• Make sure you have electronic access to your draft on Friday.

Friday
➢ Instructor takes roll.
➢ Using what they have learned throughout the semester, students use Academic Search Complete and/or other academic search engines (not Google and the like) to locate at least three academic sources with specific information (facts, statistics, examples, scenarios, expert opinion, etc.) related to the points they plan to raise in their essay.

To the Instructor: Remember that it is a good idea to set up specific tasks or goals for students at the beginning of class. The key is to make them show you their work before leaving class so you know they are staying on track.

➢ Students spend the remained of time working on improving their drafts on their computers while instructor circulates to offer feedback and assistance. Point out that when they have finished improving their rough draft, they should follow the “If You Are the Writer” instructions on p. 378.
➢ Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
• Complete the Student Process Analysis sheet (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
• Apply your research from class today and revise your draft of essay #4 to make it the strongest draft yet. Be prepared to submit your most improved draft to Dropbox at the start of our next class. Bring all previous drafts and a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to our next class.
• Bring your text to our next class.

Week 12

Monday Drafts of Essay #4 Due - Instructor Returns Final Drafts of Essay #3
➢ Instructor takes roll.
Instructor reminds students of appropriate peer response behaviors, and students provide electronic peer response for one or more classmates using the “Critical Reading Guide” available on pp. 378-79 in [ ] and online.

While students submit their drafts using Dropbox, the instructor collects Essay #4 packets after having students write on them to indicate whether or not they give permission to the instructor to use the draft (without the student’s name) as a sample to examine in class.

Instructor reminds students that he/she is available for conferences to discuss their work.

Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Although your instructor has collected your draft, feel free to revise your essay on your own, applying all that you have learned to this point.

Wednesday Drafts of Essay #4 Returned Electronically to Students
- Instructor takes roll.
- Class examines one or two sample drafts of Essay #4 taken from the class (posted to, with the students’ permission beforehand, after removing authors’ names, and without instructor commentary on them). Instructor leads the class in a discussion of strengths and areas in need of improvement, and class discusses general strategies for strengthening the essays, using what they learned in the readings over last weekend.
- Instructor reminds students that the final draft of Essay #4 is due at the start of Wednesday’s class. Students who wish to discuss their essay in conference should do so soon.
- Instructor returns draft packets and explains where students can find their papers electronically.
- Instructor previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:
- Read and complete “Revising,” “Getting an Overview,” and “Carrying Out Revisions” on pp. 380-84 in [ ].
- Begin making revisions to the focus, organization, and development of the ideas in your essay, bearing in mind the comments your instructor made on your paper.
- The final draft of your essay is due on Monday so consider making a conference appointment with your instructor or the Writing Center before then to get feedback on your revisions.

Friday
- Instructor takes roll.
- Students work on their essays in class while instructor circulates, offering feedback and assistance.
- Instructor reminds students to finish their revision of Essay #4; the final draft is due at the start of the next class.

Assignments for Students:
- After you’ve made whatever revisions were needed to the focus, organization, and development of Essay #4, edit and proofread your essay, paying particular attention to the types of errors that gave you trouble on the earlier essays.
- When you’ve finished proofreading, print a clean copy of your essay and label it “Essay #4: Final Draft.” Bring it plus all previous work on the essay and forms you’ve completed to our next class (Monday) to submit. Make sure you have
your improved draft and all previous drafts, a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet, and a blank Instructor Evaluation (rubric) sheet.

- Read “Chapter 8: Justifying an Evaluation” pp. 394-96 in SMG.

**Week 13**

**Monday**  
**Final Draft of Essay #4 Due**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the instructor:</th>
<th>In this syllabus, no model essays from the text are assigned for Essay #5, the “Justifying an Evaluation” essay. The assignment for Essay #5 in this syllabus will ask students to evaluate a written text, such as an essay from the book or a website. If you feel that the readings in the text will assist your students as they prepare for Essay #5, then select and assign readings from the text. Further, because Essay #5 is written in less time than previous essays and because students will not be given the opportunity to revise their final draft if it doesn’t pass, you should set up the assignment so that it does not require students to research the topic, identify source material (other than from the text being evaluated), or include source material in their essays.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor collects students’ final draft packets for Essay #4.
- Instructor projects sample Justifying an Evaluation essay and directs students to where the draft can be found on. Students annotate drafts on their laptop while class analyzes primary features. Heavy emphasis is given to identifying relevant criteria for this type of evaluation.
- Instructor distributes the assignment sheet for **Essay #5: Justifying an Evaluation**.
- Instructor walks students through the major points in the assignment sheet, emphasizing the purpose and audience specified in the assignment and noting deadlines.
- Instructor leads discussion of the range of possible topics for Essay #5.
- Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

**Assignments for Students:**

- Select the written text you would like to evaluate for Essay #5.
- Complete the Audience and Values sheet (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
- Read “Chapter 8: Justifying an Evaluation” on pp. 394-396 and “Basic Features: Evaluations” on pp. 422-23 in SMG.
- Complete the following sections of “Invention and Research” from pp. 425-31 in SMG and bring your work to the next class:
  - Developing Your Argument
  - Exploring Your Subject and Possible Readers
  - Becoming an Expert on Your Subject
  - Developing Your Evaluation
  - Defining Your Purpose for Your Readers
  - Formulating a Tentative Thesis Statement

**Wednesday**

- Instructor takes roll.
• Class examines a completed Audience and Values form for an “Evaluating a Written Text” essay.
• Instructor touches on important points from the “Planning and Drafting” on pp. 431-37 in SMG.
• Students work on Essay #5 in class; instructor circulates to answer questions and provide feedback.
• In the last few minutes of class students post their progress to Discussion Board and provide feedback to the two students that posted before them.

**Assignments for Students:**
- Reread “Planning and Drafting” on pp. 431-37 in SMG. Using what you’ve learned, write a complete draft of Essay #5.
- Bring an electronic copy of your draft to our next class.

**Friday**
• Instructor takes roll.
• Instructor reminds students of the primary features of an effective evaluation essay and examines another sample essay. Heavy emphasis is given to identifying relevant criteria for this type of evaluation.
• In small groups, students share the criteria they are using to justify their evaluation; instructor circulates to provide feedback.
• Students continue work on Essay #5 in class while instructor circulates to answer questions and provide additional feedback.
• Instructor reminds students that they are to bring an electronic copy of their improved draft to class on Monday. Instructor also reminds students that they are to bring all previous drafts and work, and a Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to the next class.

**Assignments for Students:**
- Apply all that you’ve learned and create your best draft yet of Essay #5.
- Complete the Student process Analysis sheet (remember, blank forms are included in your CC101 portfolio).
- Be prepared to submit your most improved draft of essay #5 to Dropbox at the start of our next class. Bring all previous drafts, and a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet to the next class.
- Bring your SMG text to our next class.

**Week 14**

**Monday**

**Drafts of Essay #5 Due - Final drafts of Essay #4 Returned - Peer Review Essay #5.**

• Instructor takes roll.
• While students submit their drafts using Dropbox, the instructor collects Essay #5 packets after having students write on them to indicate whether or not they give permission to the instructor to use the draft (without the student’s name) as a sample to examine in class.
• Students provide peer response for one or more classmates, following the “Critical Reading Guide” available on pp. 437-439 in SMG and online.
Assignments for Students:

- While you’re waiting for your instructor to return your drafts of Essay #5, you should be improving your draft even further on your own.
- Bring your [text] text to our next class.

Wednesday NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Friday NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15

Monday Drafts of Essay #5 Returned Electronically to Students

- Instructor takes roll.
- Class examines one or two sample drafts of Essay #5 taken from the class (posted to, with the students’ permission beforehand, after removing authors’ names, and without instructor commentary on them). Instructor leads the class in a discussion of strengths and areas in need of improvement, and class discusses general strategies for strengthening the essays.
- Instructor returns draft packets and explains where students can find their papers electronically.
- If time allows, students begin working on “Revising” on pp. 439-44 in [text]
- Instructor reviews the key points of the lesson and previews the next lesson.

Assignments for Students:

- Read and complete “Revising,” “Getting an Overview,” and “Carrying Out Revisions” on pp. 439-44 in [text]
- Begin making revisions to the focus, organization, and development of the ideas in your essay, bearing in mind the comments your instructor made on your paper.
- The final draft of your essay is due at the start of class on Friday.
- After you revise your draft, print a copy of the new version and bring it to our next class.

Wednesday

- Instructor takes roll.
- During the bulk of the class session, students revise their essays. As they revise, instructor circulates through the room, answering questions and providing feedback.

Assignments for Students:

- After you’ve made whatever revisions were needed to the focus, organization, and development of your essay, edit and proofread your essay, paying particular attention to the types of errors that gave you trouble on the first and second essay.
- When you’ve finished proofreading, print a clean copy of your essay and label it “Essay #5: Final Draft.” Bring it plus all previous work on the essay and forms you’ve completed to our next class (Friday) to submit. Make sure you bring your improved draft and all previous drafts, a completed Student Process Analysis/Audience and Values sheet, and a blank Instructor Evaluation (rubric) sheet to the next class.
- Bring your CC101 Portfolio to class on Friday.
**Friday  Final Draft of Essay #5 Due**

- Instructor takes roll.
- Instructor collects essay packets for Essay #5.
- Instructor leads students through pp. 17-23 in the CC101 Portfolio.
- Instructor collects the “Portfolio Assessment: Instructor” form (pp. 25-6 in the CC101 portfolio) from each student.
- Instructor directs students’ attention to the completed sample “Student Self Reflection” document on pp. 27-29 in the CC101 Portfolio. Class discusses the purpose and importance of the “Self Reflection.” Instructor explains the “Borderline Passing” category and reminds students of the learning outcomes in the portfolio, pp. 5-8, so they have a base of material to draw from in writing their own “Self-Reflection.”
- If time permits, students begin drafting their Self Reflection.

**Assignments for Students:**

- Organize your portfolio according to the guidelines on pp. 20-21 in your CC101 portfolio.
- Review pp. 17-23 in your CC101 Portfolio and note any questions that come to mind. You can ask them in your next class.
- Begin writing your “Self Reflection,” responding to the prompts on pp. 31-32 in your CC101 portfolio. Bring an electronic copy to our next class.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 16</th>
<th>End-of-Term Instructor Evaluations Must Be Administered This Week</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Monday  Instructor Returns Final Drafts of Essay #5**

- Instructor returns final drafts of Essay #5.
- Instructor returns a completed version of each student’s “Portfolio Assessment: Instructor” form with comments on the student’s portfolio eligibility and makes sure that each student is aware of the strength of the instructor's portfolio recommendation.
- Students complete End-of-Term Instructor Evaluation.
- Students spend the remainder of class working on their Self Reflection.

**Assignments for students:**

- Begin organizing your portfolio and bring it to our next class.
- Continue writing your Self Reflection.

**Wednesday**

- Instructor encourages students to complete the “Copy Permission for Student Portfolio” form.
- Students finish writing their Self Reflection in class.
- Instructor reminds students of upcoming deadlines:

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**Monday**
Today at 5 p.m. is the deadline for students to appeal an instructor’s decision not to submit a portfolio. Students may do so in the M.W.P. office.

Thursday

Students **must** pick up their portfolios during the instructor’s designated time period (after 2 p.m.) or by prior arrangement. If students are absolutely unable to retrieve their portfolios and evaluation results at the designated time, it is their obligation to make alternate arrangements well in advance of this date. The best way to do this is for students to provide the instructor with a large, self-addressed envelope with appropriate postage.

Thursday

Today at 5 p.m. is the deadline for students to appeal a non-passing portfolio result. Appeals forms are available in the M.W.P. office.

**Assignments for students:**
- Finish organizing your portfolio and bring it to our next class. Portfolios will be collected at the start of class.
- Finish writing your Self Reflection and print a copy for your portfolio.

Friday **PORTFOLIOS DUE AT CLASS TIME – NO EXCEPTIONS**

- Instructor makes sure students fill out the label on the front of the folder before the portfolios are turned in.
- Instructor arranges meeting times for students to pick up the results of their Portfolio Assessment.
- Instructor reminds students of important deadlines, shown above.
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ACHIEVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The intent is for instructors to have similar standards and to share those standards with the students in writing. While some of the portions are shared throughout the program, other specific policies, such as attendance, can be set by the instructor.

SAMPLE ACHIEVEMENT REQUIREMENTS
College Composition 101
Section L00
Fall 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:riter@MU.edu">riter@MU.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>501 Osten Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Phone:</td>
<td>(555) 555-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>9:30-10:30 a.m. Monday (and by appointment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Phone (optional):</td>
<td>(555) 555-5555 (no calls after 9:00 p.m., please)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailbox:</td>
<td>210 Oston Hall (my mailbox is above my name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center:</td>
<td>303 Estes Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center Phone:</td>
<td>(555) 555-5555 (you must call to make an appointment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.MU.edu/offices/acent/writerslab/">http://www.MU.edu/offices/acent/writerslab/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Portfolio of College Composition100/101 materials (available at the M.U. Bookstore and SBX Bookstore).
- A laptop with a word processing program (e.g., Microsoft Word, Open Office, Google Docs, etc.) that you must bring to every class.
- Two data storage devices (e.g., flash sticks, zip disks, CDs, 3.5” computer disks or zip disks, etc).
- An M.U. e-mail address and a MYMU account.

RECOMMENDED COURSE TEXT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

College Composition101 has been designed to provide first-year college students with an introduction to academic writing—the kind of writing students are asked to do throughout college and often beyond. Most students who are new to college have had little experience with academic writing and sometimes find learning to write in new ways challenging. To this end, College Composition101 has been designed to provide the kinds of assistance which will help students more easily make the necessary transition from high school writing to college-level writing.

College Composition101 is a highly interactive “workshop” class in which you, your classmates, and I will read, write, and discuss together. You will encounter a wide variety of activities in this class: among them, you will be introduced to various invention strategies which have been designed to generate and deepen your ideas; you will be provided with ample feedback on your drafts by your classmates and me; you will be helped to critically evaluate your own writing in order to revise effectively; you will gain experience with analyzing the reading audience and purpose of your papers in order to write your papers persuasively; and you will be given assistance with presenting your ideas clearly and supporting them with academically credible sources.

To achieve these various goals you will write five well-developed essays, the majority of which will be documented with sources. Throughout the course you will assemble all of the drafts you write for each essay in a portfolio in order to demonstrate your progress as a writer over the semester.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Essays

Each of the five major essays you will write will be based on chapters from The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing short 8th ed. You will also work with Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers for assistance with writing and revising the multiple drafts you will be required to write for each essay. At the end of the semester your entire writing portfolio will be judged by other members of the M.W.P. staff (following my evaluation of your work). Ultimately, this portfolio evaluation will determine whether or not you will pass College Composition 101.

To ensure that you are ready for the portfolio evaluation process at the end of the semester, you will need to keep your prewriting, various drafts, and peer review comments for every paper you write. Though evaluators primarily will examine your final drafts, they will also assess the steps that you took to reach those final drafts, looking for improvement and progress in your writing.

Please follow these format requirements for submitting your work:

- Papers should follow MLA format. Examples and information on MLA can be found in Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers. As well, we will discuss MLA format in class.
- Essays must be word processed, double-spaced, and have standard 1” margins on the right and left sides, top, and bottom of the page.
- The font used for your final drafts should be 12-point Times New Roman or another similarly proportioned and sized font.
Pages must be numbered with your last name and page number in the upper right-hand corner.

Your essays must have a title, but please don’t include a separate title page with your papers.

When you submit a final draft of an essay to me for evaluation, you will need to include a number of other materials along with it, arranged in the following order:
- A M.W.P. Rubric should be on top (goldenrod color).
- The assignment sheet should be included next.
- The final (or most recent) draft of your essay should be included next.
- The various drafts of your paper should be included next, in reverse chronological order. Only drafts which contain substantial revisions or which I have commented upon should be included, however.
- On the bottom of the stack should be a completed Audience and Values /Student Process Analysis Sheet (peach color) and all other prewriting you have done for the assignment.

Please be sure to secure these various documents together with a staple or large paper clip. Do not use a binder clip.

Laptop Sections
All students enrolled in this section are required to have a laptop which they will bring to each class. Because computers are changing how we write, research, and communicate, this course will use technology to help introduce student writers to academic writing. Since we will use the laptops for research, writing, revising, and peer review, your laptop must have a word processing program on it, and it should be fully charged and ready to use for each class.

While we may use the internet throughout the semester, you will be expected to remain on task during class time. Because we only meet for a few hours a week, it is important that you stay focused on the tasks at hand rather than surfing the internet or checking your email at inappropriate times.

Your Writer’s Journal
This semester we will be reading a variety of sample essays along with various other selections from our course texts. Subsequently, in addition to your regular essay work, I will often ask you to prepare reading-response assignments. I also will periodically ask you to write written reflections on other parts of the course—on peer work or on your prewriting or revision processes, for example. These assignments are designed to reinforce what you are learning in class and to help you better understand your own reading and writing processes. When you get in the habit of reflecting upon your work in this way, you may find that you better recall and better understand what you read, and you may discover ways of improving your own writing habits.

All of these “Writer’s Journal” assignments are to be typed and saved on your laptop in a file labeled your last name and journal. The assignments should be dated and completed on time and ready to use in class. Sometimes I will ask for volunteers to share their writer’s journal entries with the class as a way to start discussion, and sometimes I will ask you to use your entries for small-group discussions. I will collect your responses periodically via email to monitor your efforts.
Writing Conferences
Because college-level writing can be frustrating at times, it is important to get encouraging and specific feedback from not only other members of the class, but also from me. To ensure that you are getting the encouragement and feedback you need in your writing, it is important that you schedule at least two conferences in my office so that I can give you personalized help and assistance.

College Composition 100/101 Library Exercise
To help familiarize you with academic library research skills, you will be required to work with online materials which have been provided by the staff of the Jerome Library. The materials—which you are encouraged to use on your own as well for this class—are located at the following site:

By using these materials, you will feel more comfortable and knowledgeable when you physically enter M.U.’s libraries.

Attendance
Attendance in this class is mandatory. Class time will be devoted to actively building writing skills by writing and revising, discussing, and critiquing your own writing and the writing of others. Such activities simply cannot be “made up” satisfactorily by getting the notes from a peer or by meeting with me. I realize, however, that sickness or emergencies can occur; should you need to miss class, please be sure to contact me, preferably beforehand, to discuss what might be done to assist you with getting on track. I would hope that such absences would not occur more than a couple of times this semester, however. Students with excessive absences will not pass this course.

Late Work
All work must be handed in when I request it in class. I will not accept late work unless you have made previous arrangements with me. Similarly, I will not accept late work in my department mailbox or via e-mail unless you have made previous arrangements with me.

Lost Essays
You are responsible for maintaining a copy of each draft of your essays. Your essays will be returned to you no later than a week after they have been submitted to me, and all essays must be present in the portfolio at the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to compile these essays in your portfolio folder so that a portfolio assessor can further review them. Since occasionally essays, backpacks, or computers are stolen, lost, or destroyed, you should keep an additional hard copy of each essay and a back-up disk in a safe place. I strongly suggest that you use your M.U. My Files account to save your work (https://myfiles.MU.edu/). Ultimately, it is your responsibility to submit a complete portfolio. Incomplete portfolios will not be evaluated; students without portfolios will not pass the course.

Revision Policy
Knowing how to revise your writing is an important aspect of being a successful writer; therefore, you will be required to write multiple drafts of your papers, and we will work hard on the development of your personal revision and editing skills. One goal of this class is for you to learn
to determine when a paper has been revised to the point where you can submit it as a “final draft” which will earn a “passing” evaluation. Taking advantage of our class time, your own homework time, my office hours, the Writing Center, and other available services and tools will provide you with the support you need for submitting final drafts that are at the “passing” level.

Sometimes, though, even with hard work students submit final drafts that are not passing. If you encounter this situation you may revise two of your essays (you may choose from essays #2, #3, or #4) once more after their original final evaluation—but only if you first schedule a conference with me to discuss your revision strategy. Note that a revised essay is due within one week after I return the original essay, and it should be turned in with the original graded essay and rubric, as well as with a new rubric.

**Academic Honesty**
Please refer to M.U.’s current *Student Affairs Handbook* and to your M.W.P. portfolio materials for information regarding M.U.’s academic honesty policies. These policies and penalties apply to our class, as well as to all other classes at M.U.. We will discuss plagiarism and academic honesty in depth this semester.

**ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE WITH COLLEGE COMPOSITION101**

In addition to the work you will do in class sessions and in conferences with me, there are a variety of services and tools which you can use to obtain additional assistance with this course. I suggest that you make use of the following:

**Writing Center Services**
The University Writing Center is a valuable resource which provides students with individual assistance with writing their papers—free of charge. The Writing Center is located in 303 Estes Hall. Because the Writing Center is ordinarily very busy, it is a good idea to call ahead to make an appointment well in advance of when you would like to meet with a writing consultant.

In addition, if you want a writing consultant to respond to your writing online, you should go to the Writers Center website: [http://www.MU.edu/offices/acen/writingctr/page29898.html](http://www.MU.edu/offices/acen/writingctr/page29898.html)

There, you will be given directions for submitting your questions or your entire draft. Once again, though, plan ahead. An email response will take up to 72 hours, and staff are not available on weekends or evenings to give immediate feedback.

**Online Information About M.U.’s Library Resources**
The M.U. Library Services has created a web page to help familiarize students with what M.U.’s library has to offer. Several links are available from the main web page to help you learn more about the library and about effective research strategies. I encourage you to visit the “Library Instruction” main page at the following URL address:

[http://www.MU.edu/colleges/library/infosrv/lue/luehome.html](http://www.MU.edu/colleges/library/infosrv/lue/luehome.html)

Once at the “Library Instruction” main page, turn your attention to the section titled “Student Services.” Under this heading are tutorials that can be helpful as you familiarize yourself with the library’s online catalog.
Another great source of information is the Undergraduate Circulation Survival Guide, which explains the ins and outs of using the Jerome Library. I suggest that you use this site for basic information on library use, including how to check out materials and how to renew materials online. The URL address below will take you there:

http://www.MU.edu/colleges/library/services/page42583.html

The library site also offers a clickable map of its first floor. Before ever stepping foot in the library, you can figure out exactly where you need to go by using the following online map:

http://www.MU.edu/colleges/library/clickablemap.html

Finally, library personnel are always ready to help with any questions you might have about library use. Feel free to stop by the Information/Reference Desk with your questions or concerns.

Contacting Me By Email

Email is a wonderful communications tool and I welcome the chance of using it to help you with questions about your writing or about my assignments. Please note, however, that email can be unreliable. Servers may be down, computers may malfunction, etc. As a result, I cannot be responsible for any email messages that are lost or addressed incorrectly. If you email me something, I will email you back, ordinarily within 24 hours, to tell you that I have received your message. However, if you don’t receive my email reply, this means that I did not receive your message and that you should discuss the content of your email with me personally. Similarly, if you email me right before class, I probably will not be able to read your message until after class.

M.W.P.’S GRADING SYSTEM AND THE PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Essay Grades

Throughout the term, I will collect and comment upon first drafts (and perhaps on some intermediate drafts) of every essay you write, and I will give them back to you within a week’s time so that you can use my comments as guidelines for revision. Your first drafts will not receive a grade.

However, when you submit final drafts of your essays I will provide you with both written comments and a grade. As well, I will fill out an evaluation chart (called a “rubric”) for each final draft to indicate the paper’s strengths and weaknesses; like commentary on early drafts, your evaluated final drafts will be returned to you within a week’s time. The grade for each essay will be a Pass, Almost-Pass, or No-Pass.

- A **Passing (P)** essay shows good control in all of the categories of the rubric. Although there may be a few minor problems, the entire essay is generally well-written and clearly and effectively communicates its ideas.
- An **Almost-Passing (AP)** essay shows a combination of strengths and weaknesses on the rubric. There is room for improvement in some rubric categories of the essay and the essay does not consistently communicate its ideas clearly and effectively. An Almost-Pass means the essay is **not passing**, but it is getting close to being a passing essay.
• A No-Passing (NP) essay shows a serious weakness in at least one category of the rubric, and other categories may need attention, too. The overall quality of the essay is significantly hindered because of these weaknesses.

**College Composition101 Course Grades**

If your work passes the portfolio assessment at the end of the term, you will receive an S (Satisfactory) grade for the course. An S will appear on your transcript, but it will not be calculated into your grade point average.

Since College Composition102 is a challenging course which focuses exclusively upon research-supported, argumentative academic writing, it is extremely necessary for students to enter into College Composition102 with a solid grasp of the writing skills taught in College Composition101. However, the M.W.P. acknowledges that writing is a skill which takes some people longer than others to master. For both of these reasons, if your work is not eligible for the Portfolio Assessment, or if you have met all of my requirements but your work does not pass the Portfolio Assessment, you will receive an NR (No Record) for College Composition101. A “No Record” grade means that no notation of the course will appear on your grade report. An NR grade allows a student to repeat College Composition101 without any negative effect upon his or her grade point average.

It is possible to receive a WF (Withdraw Fail) in this course, however. If you should stop attending this class for any reason without going through the University's official procedure for dropping the class, you will receive a WF, the grade will appear on your grade report, and an F will be calculated into your grade point average.

**Portfolio Assessment Process**

During the last week or two of class, I will let you know whether your essays are eligible for a portfolio assessment. If your writing has not reached a minimal level of proficiency in College Composition 101 or if you have not satisfied my achievement requirements for this class, your work will not be eligible for a portfolio assessment. This means that I will not be able to submit your portfolio and that you will be required to re-enroll in College Composition 101.

If I make the judgment that your portfolio is eligible for a portfolio assessment, during the last week of the semester your essays will be judged by one or more College Composition 101 instructors in addition to me. These portfolio evaluators will determine whether or not your writing has reached proficiency at the 101-level. Please note that unlike other courses where one or two weak assignments can ensure failure, M.W.P.’s portfolio assessment allows you to make improvements in your writing and to grow as a writer. Even if you struggle with an essay or two, as long as your portfolio shows that you can write proficiently at the 101 level by the end of the term, you can pass the class.

If your portfolio is passed by a first evaluator, you will receive the grade of “S” (Satisfactory) and will be eligible to take College Composition 102. If the first evaluator determines that your writing, overall, does not demonstrate proficiency at the 101 level, however, he or she will not pass your portfolio. Subsequently, a second evaluator—often a member of the M.W.P. staff—will evaluate your work, again looking at your writing as a whole, and will make a final
determination regarding whether your writing is proficient enough for you to enroll in College Composition 102 or whether you will need to take College Composition 101 again.

Policy for M.W.P. Portfolio Appeals: Students may appeal an instructor's decision not to submit their portfolios for evaluation if they have evidence that they have met their instructor's achievement requirements and that they have fulfilled the minimum criteria for passing the course. Likewise, students may appeal no-passing portfolio assessments if they have reason to believe that the two evaluators (both of whom are trained, experienced M.W.P. instructors) have overlooked important evidence that their portfolio, in fact, successfully meets the established criteria for passing the course. Students should not, however, routinely appeal no-passing portfolios simply because they are unhappy with their instructor's or the portfolio evaluators' decisions.

Following is the timetable for retrieving portfolio results and for appealing a portfolio decision; please note that any students wishing to appeal a portfolio decision must adhere to this timetable.

- **Monday, December 15, 5:00 PM**
  Deadline for students to appeal an instructor’s decision not to submit a portfolio for assessment.

- **Thursday, December 18**
  Students must pick up their evaluated portfolios during the time period which is designated by their instructor; this time period is ordinarily after 2:30 PM; near the end of the term I will let you know exactly when I will be available in my office on this day to return your portfolio to you.

  [NOTE: If you will be absolutely unable to retrieve your portfolio and your evaluation results from me at the designated time, it is your obligation to provide me with a large self-addressed, stamped envelope so I can mail the evaluated portfolio to you. To determine the proper postage, before submitting your portfolio to me at the end of the course, please take your portfolio to a post office (such as Stampers on the second floor of the Student Union) where a postal employee can determine the proper postage to affix to your envelope. You should provide me with the envelope—with proper postage already on it—when you submit your portfolio to me.]

- **Thursday, December 29, 5:00 PM**
  Deadline for appealing a non-passing portfolio result.

**SUMMARY: REQUIREMENTS FOR PASSING COLLEGE COMPOSITION 101**

In summary, to pass College Composition 101 and go on to College Composition 102, you must meet the following requirements:

- Write at least two clearly **Passing** (not **Almost Passing**) expository essays.
- Turn in all five fully-developed and revised essays, including all drafts and prewriting, on time.
- Turn in all other written assignments (daily homework, Audience and Values sheets, and Student Process Analysis sheets) on time.
- Attend classes. (Excessive absences will result in your portfolio’s ineligibility for the assessment process.)
- Actively participate in class discussion and group work.
- Attend a minimum of two required conferences.
- Pass the portfolio assessment at the College Composition101 level.

If you have not satisfied the Achievement Requirements for this class, your work will not be eligible for a portfolio assessment. This means that I will not be able to submit your portfolio for assessment, and you will be required to re-enroll in College Composition101.

A Final Word

I hope that you will find our class to be a place where you can receive good help with developing your academic writing skills. Though many students are uncomfortable with academic writing (which is a new kind of writing for most first-year students), understanding how to go through various writing processes will help you achieve your writing goals. To make this course as successful as possible for yourself, I encourage you to take advantage of the resources around you and to keep in touch with me as we go through the semester.

If you have any questions about these achievement requirements or other class matters, please be sure to talk to me.
APPENDIX C. M.W.P. RUBRIC

Instructor Evaluation

Student: ___________________________ Instructor: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________ Evaluation: ___________________________

Type of paper: ___________________________ Paper #: ___________________________

Instructor, please check one: This paper was submitted as ______ a first draft ______ a final draft ______ a revision of a final draft

Notes: As parentheses refer to chapters and sections in the Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers, 8th ed.

I. Audience: This essay clearly demonstrates an awareness of its intended readers.
- Appropriateness of audience addressed (10)
- Strategy toward audience (1b-3, 4c-j)
- Appeal
- Information
- Argument (5)
- Tone (1d, 5k)

II. Organization/Theme/Structure: This essay has a clear structure appropriate to its thesis and subject — and to instructor's assignment.
- Thesis (1a)
- Logical organizational pattern (5b)
- Thesis (2a: 5g)
- Thesis (3a-j)
- Other:

III. Development: The various phases of the essay are fully developed.
- Introduction (15)
- Body paragraphs (3): unity (45:13)
- Topic sentences (3c)
- Support (3g: 1f-g)
- Rhetorical strategy (5a)
- Thesis
- Conclusion (3k)

IV. Reasoning/logical fallacies: (16:1-j)
- Logical fallacies (5c)
- Rhetorical fallacies (5f)
- Logical fallacies (6)

V. Metadiscourse: The various phases of the essay are fully developed.
- Caliber of supporting research (9g)
- Range of sources (4g: 32–33)
- Relevance of sources (4g: 33)
- Currency of sources (4g: 1)
- Credibility of sources (4g: 3)
- Synthesis of sources (4g: 5)
- Clarity/logic of relationships (4e)
- Integration (3g: 39:1)/
- Use of verbs of attribution (39:5)

VI. Syntax: The sentences of this essay are generally free of errors and appropriately varied.
- CSL difficulties (49:5)
- Unintentional fragments (12)
- Run-on sentences (13)
- Comma splices (13)
- Lack of variety in length/style (19)
- Other:

VII. Word Choice: The words in this essay are chosen with accuracy and with attention to style.
- Vague/unclear words (21:1–1)
- Unclear references (19:2)
- Jargon/bureaucratic language (21b, 21:1, 21:2, 21:3, 21:7)
- Euphemisms (21:1)

VIII. Usage/Mechanics: This essay demonstrates a sound control of conventional usage and mechanics.
- Errors in grammar/usage:
  - verb/auxiliary forms (8)
  - noun–adjective forms (22d: 27b: 27f)
  - pronoun forms (9, 27f: 27g)
  - adjective/adverb forms (11)
  - subject/verb agreement (10b–n)
  - pronoun agreement (10b–n)
  - shifts in person/number (158)
  - shifts in tense/mood/voice (15c–d)
  - errors in spelling/homonyms (22)
  - accidental word omission/omission
- Errors in mechanics:
  - end punctuation (23)
  - en dashes (24)
  - hyphenation (27)
  - semicolons (25, 26)
  - contractions (27)
  - numbers (300–30)
  - hyphens/dashes (29f–29a, 29b)
  - abbreviations (36–1)
  - parentheses/brackets (29f, 29k)
  - ellipses (41:1)
- Errors in MLA manuscript form:
  - quotation conventions (28)
  - parenthetical citations (34b–c)
  - works cited (34b)
  - general page format (34a:2)
  - margins
  - indentation
  - line spacing
APPENDIX D. DESCRIPTION OF M.W.P. DOCUMENTS

The following describes the support documents that play a role in the M.W.P. program. This is not a complete listing of all the documents provided to first term GAs by the program, these are, however, those discussed used by new GAs.

**Assignment Sheets (instructor)**
As seen in most composition classrooms, these sheets are created by the instructors as means of providing information about the type of paper and the assignment requirements. At M.U., the first term GAs all use the same types of essays, but the specific details are left to the instructor. The assignment sheets will vary greatly by the instructor, though many new GAs will make use of the samples provided by the M.W.P. program in the M.W.P. Sample Assignments Manuals.

This manual details the M.W.P. program and its expectations of instructors and students. It is broken into the following sections:

*Important Dates (pp. 7-8):* lists the holidays and portfolio dates for both fall and spring

*Overview of the General Studies Writing Program (pp. 9-12):* details components and learning outcomes

*Policies and Requirements for M.W.P. Teaching Staff (pp. 13-23):* discusses graduate students, course loads, enrollment levels, textual obligations for achievement requirements, dealing with student complaints, attendance policy for instructors, FERPA, student portfolio folders, lost essays, record-keeping, both mid-term and final student evaluations, concerns and complaints policies, and summer employment.

*Policies Concerning Students (pp. 24-28):* details add/drop procedures, portfolio folders, attendance policy for students, HSRB regulations for students, M.U. academic honesty, and M.W.P. academic honesty.

*The Placement Process (pp. 29-32):* describes the placement process, M.W.P.’s placement philosophy, criteria for placement, features suggesting placement levels.

*M.W.P. Core Courses (pp. 33-37):* details College Composition 100, College Composition 101 with description of skills taught in 100 and 101, College Composition 102 with description of skills taught in 102, variants of M.W.P. courses

*Audience/Values and Student Process Analysis (pp. 36-41):* this section discusses the student forms for audience and values in M.W.P. classes, both completed and blank samples of the “Audience and Values Exploration Sheet”

*Guidelines for Evaluating Student Writing: The Holistic/Rubric Approach (pp. 42-56):* details specific M.W.P. methods of evaluation, holistic reading, the M.W.P. rubric, the
rubric approach, indicating effectiveness using the rubric, rubric grading in CC 100 and 101, rubric grading in CC 102, the M.W.P. rubric, both completed and blank sample rubrics

*Grading System/Portfolio Assessment (pp. 57-58):* CC 100/101 grading system, CC 102 grading system, distinguishing between a “no record” and “withdrawal fail,” course exemptions, and portfolio assessment

*The Writing Center (pp. 59-60):* describes M.U.’s writing center services and structure

*Appendices (pp. 61-71):* Model placement essays and auxiliary services

This manual details the M.W.P. program’s reasons for and use of the portfolio system. It is broken into the following sections:

*Welcome Letters and important dates for fall and spring (pp. 3-5)*

*Introduction to Portfolio Assessment (pp. 6-7)*

*Rational for Portfolio Assessment (pp. 8-9)*

*Introducing the Portfolio to Students (pp. 10-11)*

*Portfolios as Pedagogical Tools (pp. 12-21):* describes sample lesson plans, sample “Student Narrative Self-reflection” Forms and narrative and samples

*Determination of Eligibility (pp. 22-26):* details the instructor’s responsibility, behaviors to avoid (discusses issues of fairness toward the student), and portfolio assessment categories, such as regular, staff, and exemplary.

*Final Preparation of the Portfolio (pp. 29-35):* discusses the student’s responsibilities, the instructor responsibilities, and provides sample completed forms

*Completion and Results Sheets (pp. 36-41):* provides a discussion and examples of College Composition100/101 and College Composition102 result sheets

*Submitting Portfolios for Assessment (p. 42)*

*The Portfolio Evaluation Process (pp. 43-49):* details the following aspects: practice sessions, details regarding the schedule, a first evaluators checklist, first evaluator forms, second evaluator forms, appropriate comments, samples of comments, a first evaluator form for a “not passing” portfolio, and first evaluator form for a “passing” portfolio

*Returning Portfolios and Notifying Students of Results (pp. 50-51)*

*Appeal Procedures (p. 52)*
M.W.P. Sample Assignments Manual 100/101 (138 pgs)
This manual provides example assignment sheets from past and current instructors and is broken down by essay type. Each essay type has an introduction discussing the essay type with things that consistently create difficulties for students and troubleshooting tips. It is broken into the following sections:

100/101 Assignment Guidelines (p. 4): The introduction provides a brief discussion of the types of essays seen in M.W.P. (see Student Papers)

Creating Effective Assignment Sheets (pp. 5-6): details and discusses the parts that an assignment sheet should, “ideally include” (p. 5), specifically, instructor and class information, the assignment title, greeting, review of preparation for the assignment, assignment, stipulations (limitations placed on the assignment), problem areas (common student problems), where to go for help, and a conclusion

The “Explaining Opposing Positions” Essay (pp. 7-13) contains three samples

The “Arguing a Position/Writing to Convince” (without sources) Essay (pp. 14-21) contains three samples

“Arguing a Position/Making arguments” (with sources) Essay (pp. 22-27) contains three samples

The “Speculating About/ Writing to Explain Causes” Essay (pp. 28-35) contains four samples

The “Proposing a Solution/ Writing to Solve Problems” Essay (pp. 36-48) contains six samples

The “Justifying an Evaluation/Writing to Evaluate” Essay (pp. 49-67) contains eight samples

The “Analyzing Texts” Essay (pp. 68-77) contains five samples

The “Remembering an Event/Writing to Share Experiences” Essay (pp. 78-82) contains two samples

The “Writing Profiles” Essay (pp. 83-86) contains two samples

The “Observing” Essay (pp. 87-95) contains four samples

The “Explaining a Concept” Essay (pp. 96-100) contains two samples

Appendices (pp. 101-138) contains support materials such as a peer evaluation sheet, a revision sheet, topic proposal, prewriting worksheet, possible outlines, possible criteria
for justifying evaluations, reflections sheets, description sheets, concept discussions, counterargument help, plagiarism help, and logical fallacy help

**Sample Essays and M.W.P. 100/101 Sample Evaluated Essays Manual (84 pgs)**

This manual provides examples of student work for each type of essay. Following the introduction and assignment descriptions, examples of papers with “No Pass,” “Almost Pass,” and “Pass” distinctions are provided with a “General Evaluation” of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses. The papers are included in their entirety, double-spaced, and without identifying information. Instructors are encouraged by the introduction to read the essays and compare their evaluations with those provided.

*Introduction to the 100/101 Sample Evaluated Essays Manual (pp. 4-5)* contains a general description of the class and the assignments to be used by new GAs

**SECTION II—Explaining Opposing Viewpoints (pp. 6-20)**

**SECTION III—Arguing a Position (pp. 21-35)**

**SECTION IV—Speculating About Causes (pp. 36-54)**

**SECTION V—Proposing A Solution (pp. 55-70)**

**SECTION VI—Evaluating A Written Text (pp. 71-84)**

**M.W.P. Sample Assignments Manual 102 (119 pgs.)**

This manual provides example assignment sheets form past and current instructors and is broken down be essay type. Each essay type has an introduction discussing the essay type with things that consistently create difficulties for students and troubleshooting tips. It is broken into the following sections:

**SECTION I – 102 ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES (p. 4):** The introduction provides a brief discussion of the types of essays used in M.W.P.’s 102 classes

**SECTION II – CREATING EFFECTIVE ASSIGNMENT SHEET (pp. 5-6):** details and discusses the parts that an assignment sheet should, “ideally include”(p. 5), specifically, instructor and class information, the assignment title, greeting, review of preparation for the assignment, assignment, stipulations (limitations placed on the assignment), problem areas (common student problems), where to go for help, and a conclusion

**SECTION III – THE CRITIQUE (pp. 7-20):** contains six samples

**SECTION IV – THE MULTIPLE SOURCE ESSAY (MSE) (pp. 21-44):** contains ten examples

**SECTION V – THE RESEARCHED ESSAY (RE) (pp. 45-67):** contains eight examples
APPENDICES – (pp. 68-119): contains support materials for the various papers such as finding criteria, tips for critical reading, essay proposals peer review guides, and synthesis assignments

Sample Essays and M.W.P. 102 Sample Evaluated Essays Manual (62 pgs.)
This manual provides examples of student work for each type of essay. Following the introduction and assignment descriptions, examples of papers with “No Pass,” “C,” “B” and “A” distinctions are provided with a “General Evaluation” of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses. The papers are included in their entirety, single-spaced, and without identifying information. Instructors are encouraged by the introduction to read the essays and compare their evaluations with those provided. It is broken into the following sections:

College Composition102 Sample Evaluated Essays Manual (p. 3): contains a brief introduction to the manual and details permissions and distribution requirements

General Course and Assignment Descriptions (pp. 4-5): contains a general description of the class and the assignments to be used in College Composition102

Critique Samples (pp. 6-24): contains six samples (two NP papers and as well as an “A-” paper

Multiple Source Essay Samples (pp. 25-39)

Researched Essay Samples (pp. 44-62): contains five samples (two “NP” papers)

Students’ Papers
Referring to the actual drafts and papers submitted for evaluation, those interviewed discussed many different and varying roles for the students’ papers ranging from the product showing ability, to a teaching/community building tool. The following are the “brief description[s]” and “basic guidelines for evaluation” found Sample Evaluated Essays Manual (2008). This list helps to place desired objectives for the papers in context:

Explaining Opposing Positions: The College Composition 100/101 Explaining Opposing Positions essay is designed to introduce students to thinking and writing about controversial issues. These essays should inform and educate readers and should help readers understand complex public arguments. A successful “Explaining Opposing Positions” essay should clearly introduce the issue and opposing positions on it, ideally presenting the debate topic by topic while comparing and contrasting each viewpoint, and should strive to provide a fair and unbiased explanation of the debate.
Arguing a Position: The College Composition 100/101 Arguing a Position essay introduces students to argumentation. These essays concentrate on the organization of arguments and the elements of argumentation, such as counterargument, rebuttal, and research. Essays are evaluated upon these elements, as well as on the focus of the argument, the writer’s logical structure, and finally the writer’s ability to persuade the audience by using an appropriate tone and other components of audience awareness.

Proposing a Solution: The College Composition 100/101 Proposing a Solution assignment asks students to define a problem and attempt to solve it in a number of ways, eventually isolating and arguing for a best possible solution. This essay should display sound organization and thorough development, as well as evidence of critical thinking skills. The writer must address the counterarguments to the solutions presented and ideally should systematically eliminate solutions until the best possible solution is found.

Speculating About Causes: The College Composition 100/101 Speculating About Causes assignment explores the possible causes behind a trend or a phenomenon, choosing one cause as the most plausible. The essay is evaluated on its description and illustration of the trend or phenomenon’s existence, clear organization of the possible causes for the trend or phenomenon, logical “ruling out” of “lesser” causes, the assertion of a most plausible cause, and acknowledgment of and response to objections to that assertion.

Justifying an Evaluation: The College Composition 100/101 Justifying an Evaluation assignment asks students to evaluate a written text (typically a website, advertisement, or brochure, but not an academic article) based upon relevant criteria. The essay is evaluated based on the organization and definition of the criteria, the use of counterargument and rebuttal, and evidence from the text to support the evaluation. Clarity, focus, and effective logic also make up a part of the grade.
APPENDIX E. INFORMED CONSENT FOR NOVICE INSTRUCTOR

August 18, 2008

Thank you for considering participating in a research study on M.U. M.W.P. assessment. As part of my work on “Placing M.W.P. Assessment and Its Effects on the Teacher” in the Department of English, I am conducting a research study on the effects of a program wide assessment practices on a teacher new to the program. This study is, currently, being conducted as a dissertation. The purpose of this study is to look at the effects of assessment practices on the views of a new instructor. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment practices and stakeholders.

This study will ask that you be observed as you go through the normal M.W.P. Graduate Assistant training and teaching processes. The study also asks that your classroom be observed approximately once every two weeks. Finally, you will be asked to participate in three recorded interviews—one at the beginning of the term, another after you have used the assessment practices, and a final interview after you have completed the end of term portfolio assessment processes. I estimate that your participation beyond normal activity will take approximately three hours—one hour per interview. While your class will be observed and your answers will discuss program level practices, the information shall be dealt with fairly and the anticipated risks to you should be no greater than those normally encountered in English --- participation, --- observations, and conversations with others in the M.W.P. program. Please note that this is not an evaluation of your effectiveness as a teacher. Rather, it is an observation of your relationship with the assessment practices. You will not be asked to write anything or create any thing beyond normal M.W.P. requirements.

This study may benefit all participants of M.W.P. courses through a deeper understanding of the relationships created by assessment practices. However, due to the small size of the M.W.P. program, I cannot guarantee that your identity as a participant will not be discovered. I will do my best, though, to protect your anonymity. M.W.P. administration will not be informed as to which instructor is being observed and a pseudonym will be used in all public reporting practices when I need to quote you specifically. Once again, as the M.W.P. program is small, there is a possibility that your participation may become known to others in the program, but I will do my best to ensure that this will not occur.

To further protect the confidentiality of your responses throughout the study, and any subsequent publication of study results, the answers you provide to the interview will be maintained on a password protected computer away from M.U.. Only my dissertation chair and I will have access to the data/information you provide. Face-to-face interviews will be recorded digitally. All data obtained will be retained in case needed for future analysis or for future studies. Neither your name nor any specifically identifying information will be used in the report of the studies findings unless explicit permission is granted.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can refrain from answering any questions without penalty or explanation. Specifically, though you will need to complete the M.W.P. training processes as part of your assistantship, additional participation will not affect your ability to maintain your assistantship. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time. If you decide
to participate and change your mind later, you may withdraw your consent and stop your participation at any time without penalty or explanation. This means that should you choose to withdraw from the study, neither your grade for --- nor your assistantship/position with the program will be affected. If you have any questions or comments about this study, you can contact me at ---------, or via email at jschnie@M.W.P..edu. You may also contact the study advisor, Dr. __________, at ------@.M.W.P..edu. Should you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the HSRB chair at -------- or via email at hsrb@.M.W.P..edu. Should you agree to participate, a copy of this letter of consent will be provided for you to keep for your records.

Thank you!

My signature below indicates my agreement to participate in this study.

Signature: ________________________________________________

Date: __________

Print: ___________________________________________________
APPENDIX F. INFORMED CONSENT FOR STUDENTS

August 21, 2008

Thank you for participating in a research study on M.U. M.W.P. assessment. As part of my work on “Placing M.W.P. Assessment and Its Effects on the Teacher” in the Department of English, I am conducting a research study on the effects of a program wide assessment practices on a teacher new to the program. This study is, currently, being conducted as a dissertation. The purpose of this study is to look at the effects of assessment practices on the views of a new instructor. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment practices and stakeholders.

This study will ask you to go through the Composition 101 process as normal with two additional interviews—one in the middle of the course and one at the end. I estimate that your participation beyond normal class activity will take approximately two hours—one hour per interview. It also asks that your evaluated essays be copied. The anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in regular interaction with your teacher, discussion with your classmates, or providing feedback via regular course evaluations. Please note that this is not an evaluation of your effectiveness as a writer or student. Rather, it is an observation of your relationship with the assessment practices. You will not be asked to write anything or create any thing beyond normal M.W.P. requirements.

This study is important as it may benefit all participants of M.W.P. courses through a deeper understanding of the relationships created by assessment practices. Furthermore, I will do my best to protect your anonymity. Your instructor will not be informed as to which students are interviewed and a pseudonym will be used in all public reporting practices when and if I may need to quote you specifically.

I will protect the confidentiality of your responses throughout the study, and any subsequent publication of study results. The answers you provide to the interview will be maintained on a password protected computer away from M.U.. Only my dissertation chair and I will have access to the data/information you provide. Face-to-face interviews will be recorded digitally. All data obtained will be retained in case needed for future analysis or for future studies. Neither your name nor any specifically identifying information will be used in the report of the studies findings unless explicit permission is granted.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can refrain from answering any questions without penalty or explanation. Specifically, though you will need to complete the M.W.P. course as part of your graduation requirements, additional participation will not affect your ability to pass the class. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time. If you decide to participate and change your mind later, you may withdraw your consent and stop your participation at any time without penalty or explanation. This means that should you choose to withdraw from the study, your grade will not be affected. Please note that you must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. If you have any questions or comments about this study, you can contact me at ---------, or via email at Jschnie@MU.edu. You may also contact the study advisor, Dr. _____, at @.M.W.P..edu. Should you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the HSRB chair at -------- or via email at hsrb@.M.W.P..edu. Should you agree to
participate, a copy of this letter of consent will be provided for you to keep for your records.

Thank you!

My signature below indicates my agreement to participate in this study.

Signature: _____________________________________________________

Date: ___________

Print: ________________________________
APPENDIX G. INFORMED CONSENT PROGRAM MENTOR

August 18, 2008

Thank you for considering participating in a research study on M.U. M.W.P. assessment. As part of my work on “Placing M.W.P. Assessment and Its Effects on the Teacher” in the Department of English, I am conducting a research study on the effects of a program wide assessment practices on a teacher new to the program. This study is, currently, being conducted as a dissertation. The purpose of this study is to look at the effects of assessment practices on the views of a new instructor. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment practices and stakeholders.

This study will ask that you be observed as you go through the normal M.W.P. Graduate Assistant training and Program Mentor processes. Finally, you will be asked to participate in two recorded interviews—one at the beginning of the term and a final interview at the end of term. I estimate that your participation beyond normal activity will take approximately two hours—one hour per interview. While you answers will concern what you and your group member discuss, the anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in regular M.W.P. mentor duties and discussions in administrative meetings. Please note that this is not an evaluation of your effectiveness as a mentor. Rather, it is an observation of one of your group member’s relationship with the assessment practices.

This study may benefit all participants of M.W.P. courses through a deeper understanding of the relationships created by assessment practices. However, due to the small size of the M.W.P. program, I cannot guarantee that your identity as a participant will not be discovered. I will do my best, though, to protect your anonymity. M.W.P. administration will not be informed as to which instructor is being observed, or which mentor is involved, and a pseudonym will be used in all public reporting practices when and if I need to quote you specifically. Once again, as the M.W.P. program is small, there is a possibility that your participation may become known to others in the program, but I will do my best to ensure that this will not occur.

To further protect the confidentiality of your responses throughout the study, and any subsequent publication of study results, the answers you provide to the interview will be maintained on a password protected computer away from M.U.. Only my dissertation chair and I will have access to the data/information you provide. Face-to-face interviews will be recorded digitally. All data obtained will be retained in case needed for future analysis or for future studies. Neither your name nor any specifically identifying information will be used in the report of the studies findings unless explicit permission is granted.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can refrain from answering any questions without penalty or explanation. Specifically, though you will need to complete the M.W.P. program mentoring requirements as part of your assistantship, additional participation will not affect your ability to maintain your assistantship. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time. If you decide to participate and change your mind later, you may withdraw your consent and stop your participation at any time without penalty or explanation. This means that should you choose to withdraw from the study, your assistantship/position with the program will not be affected. If you have any questions or
comments about this study, you can contact me at --------, or via email at jschnie@M.W.P..edu. You may also contact the study advisor, ____________, at -@.M.W.P..edu. Should you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the HSRB chair at ------- or via email at hsrb@M.W.P..edu. Should you agree to participate, a copy of this letter of consent will be provided for you to keep for your records.

Thank you!

My signature below indicates my agreement to participate in this study.

Signature: _____________________________________________________
Date: ___________
Print: ________________________________
APPENDIX H. QUESTIONS FOR INITIAL INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW

► What was/were your composition course(s) like as a student?
► What experiences have you had teaching composition courses?
► In what ways do you think your past experiences with composition will affect your current teaching practices?
► What courses have you taken about teaching composition?
► Where did you learn to teach composition courses?
► In what ways do you think these experiences will affect your current teaching practices?
► What do you want your compositions class to accomplish? What should the students come away with?
► What do the students want from this class?
► What is the most important aspect of writing?
► How do you think you evaluate the writing of your students? What is important to comment on in the writing of students? What format will you use?
► Why will you use these methods?
► Where did you learn this style?
► How do you think your students will react to this style?
► How does or doesn’t this style fit with the M.W.P. program practices?
► How does or doesn’t this style fit with your goals for the class?
► In a perfect world, how would you assess writing?
► What is your role in the M.W.P. program? Please describe that role.
► How will your experiences affect your role in the M.W.P. program?
► Why are you attending M.U.?
► Why are you teaching for M.W.P.?
► What are your goals after graduating from M.U.?
► Will these goals affect how you teach? Why or why not?
APPENDIX I. QUESTIONS FOR SECOND INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW

► Describe the required pedagogy course for me? What do you see its role to be?
► Where have you learned from this course?
► In what ways does this course affect your teaching and evaluation of student writing?
► In what ways do you think your past experiences are affecting your current teaching practices?
► What do you want your compositions class to accomplish? What should the students come away with?
► What do the students want from this class?
► What is the most important aspect of writing?
► How do you think you evaluate the writing of your students? What is important to comment on in the writing of students? What format do you use?
► Why do you use these methods?
► Where did you learn this style?
► How do your students react to this style?
► How does or doesn’t this style fit with the M.W.P. program practices?
► How does or doesn’t this style fit with your goals for the class?
► In a perfect world, how would you assess writing?
► Describe the M.W.P. rubric for me. What is its role?
► Does the M.W.P. rubric affect how you teach your classes? If so, how?
► Is the M.W.P. rubric effective? Why or why not?
► What is your role in the M.W.P. program? Please describe that role.
► How will your experiences affect your role in the M.W.P. program?
► Why are you teaching for M.W.P.?
► What are your goals after graduating from M.U.?
► Do these goals affect how you teach? Why or why not?
APPENDIX J. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THIRD INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW

► How are things going in general with the classes you are taking? What is the workload like?
► How have things been going in your class? What successes have you had? What worries do you have?
► What do you want your compositions class to accomplish? What should the students come away with?
► What is the most important aspect of effective writing?
► How do you evaluate the writing of your students? What is important to comment on in the writing of students? What format do you use?
► Why do you use these methods? Where did you learn this style?
► How do your students react to this style?
► What changes have there been in your writing assessment style since the beginning of the term?
► What changes have you seen in the writing of your students since the beginning of the term?
► How does or doesn’t this style fit with the M.W.P. practices?
► In a perfect world, how would you assess writing?
► How do your workload and the classes you are taking influence what you do in your Composition 101 class?
► In our previous interview, you talked about the ways in which your past experiences affect your teaching style, such as selling advertising and the years you have spent working with teenagers. Do you think your past experiences are still affecting your current teaching practices? What other outside experience are playing a role in your teaching?
► Describe the required pedagogy course for me? What do you see its role to be?
► What have you learned from this course?
► In what ways does this course affect your teaching and evaluation of student writing?
► Tell me, please, about your interaction with your mentor. What role do you see mentor playing?
► How have your interactions with your mentor affected your teaching and assessment of writing?
► Describe the M.W.P. rubric for me. What is its role? Does the M.W.P. rubric affect how you teach your classes? If so, how?
► In what ways is the M.W.P. rubric effective? Why?
► In what ways is it in effective? Why?
► How do the ways strengths and drawbacks of the rubric affect what you do in class?
► What is your role in the M.W.P.? Please describe that role.
► How do your experiences affect your role in the M.W.P.?
► During our last interview, you said that you don’t really have any defined goals after your graduate from M.U. Has that changed?
► Do these goals affect how you teach? Why or why not?
► Is there anything I haven’t asked about that you would like to discuss?
APPENDIX K. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INITIAL PROGRAM MENTOR INTERVIEW

► What experiences have you had taking composition courses?
► What experiences have you had teaching composition courses?
► What courses have you taken about teaching composition?
► Where do you learn to teach composition courses?
► What was/were your composition course(s) like?
► How do you evaluate writing?
► Where did you learn this style?
► What is the most important aspect of writing?
► In a perfect world, how would you assess writing?
► How will your experiences affect the manner in which work with your group members?
► What do you want your group member’s compositions classes to accomplish?
► What influence do you see the M.W.P. assessment practices having on the way your group members evaluate writing?
► What influence should the M.W.P. assessment practices having on the way your mentees evaluate writing?
► How will your mentees reacted to the M.W.P. assessment practices?
► How will your mentees be affected by the M.W.P. assessment practices?
► What is your role in the M.W.P. program?
► Why are you attending M.U.?
► Why are you mentoring for M.W.P.?
► What are your goals after graduating from M.U.?
► Will these goals affect how you work with your mentees, in particular with how you work with their feedback on student papers? Why or why not?
APPENDIX L. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INITIAL STUDENT INTERVIEW

► What is the most important aspect of writing?
► Describe your 101 class.
► What did you gain from this class?
► How was your writing evaluated now?
► What was the relationship between the evaluation and your papers? How did it affect your writing?
► Tell me why this form of evaluation did or didn’t help your writing?
► Did you see any changes in how your writing was evaluated during the term? If so, what were they?
► Did you see any changes in how writing was taught during the term? If so, what were they?
► In a perfect world, how would your writing be evaluated?
► How would you teach this class?
► Why are you attending M.U.?
► What are your goals after graduating from M.U.?
► Did these goals affect how you wrote for Composition 101? Why or why not?