CONCEPTUALIZING WAC, WRITING, ADVOCACY, AND FEEDBACK: INVESTIGATING MULTIFACETED PERSPECTIVES AT A MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

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Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs are an educational initiative that aim to support faculty in implementing writing into their classrooms and engaging students in their learning through writing. WAC courses are typically those outside standard English and Literature courses at postsecondary institutions. This project investigates perspectives at a Midwestern University to explore practices and definitions of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback. Specifically, the research focuses on two questions: 1. What are the current understandings and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback at Midwestern University? 2. How do WAC programs benefit from collaboration with Writing Centers and community connections from a sustainability standpoint?

Using humanistic approaches, this study focuses on the shared experiences of a History WAC faculty member, History WAC student, and the Writing Center Coordinator at Midwestern University. Data was collected through a series of interviews with each participant and coded according to a Grounded Theory approach. The findings from each participant's interviews are represented as an individual chapter sharing their stories as perspectives important to ongoing conversations regarding how WAC is understood, writing is defined and experienced, and advocacy is identified, as well as practices of WAC instructor written feedback on student writing.

The project draws connections between WAC, writing, feedback practices, and advocacy discourse as important concepts to WAC sustainability and concludes with potential implications for WAC programs, WAC scholars, and writing instructors. Focusing on inclusionary practices,

this study pulls from the experiences at Midwestern University to provide frameworks of race for WAC and self-reflective inclusive sentence-level training for faculty, students, and writing consultants. Furthermore, the study indicates that feedback practices in the WAC classroom should consider students' entire identity. The implications of this study aim to transform understandings of WAC and sustain a community of writers.

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I started at BGSU in 2017 to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing not knowing where exactly it would lead me and how my love for writing would only continue to grow. I am so grateful for my community of professors, friends, family, and colleagues that supported the leap I took to follow my passion for writing.

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CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, WRITING ASSESSMENT, AND ADVOCACY DISCOURSE LITERATURE

In August 2012 I attended a Midwestern University[1] as a first-year undergraduate student studying Law and Social Thought. After taking my English Composition II course in the second semester of my first year, I was encouraged by my instructor to study and pursue writing. My instructor found my writing enjoyable and expressed excitement to read my work in class. I always loved writing and decided to study Writing as a minor for the remainder of my undergraduate career. One of my biggest motivations for selecting writing as an area of study was that Midwestern University offered poetry classes and I wanted to improve my poetry writing skills. The reason I wanted to study Law is because Law has always been an area of interest for me. I viewed Law and Social Thought as a direct path into law school to achieve my desired career goal as an attorney. Both Law and Social Thought and Writing are housed in the College of Arts and Letters at Midwestern University which led me to take numerous writing courses.

As I moved into the second and third years of my undergraduate career, I enrolled in creative writing classes, such as poetry and creative nonfiction workshops and screenwriting, as well as American and British literature courses. A lot of my courses included writing assignments as the main projects and mode of learning. I wrote reflection papers, reading responses, research essays, analytical essays, and journalism pieces. Even though I loved writing, I felt that I wasn't necessarily an experienced writer. This meant that some genres I encountered were challenging and I received poor grades, especially in my literature courses.

[1] To protect the identities of the participants in this study, the research site will not be specifically named and is referred to as Midwestern University.

I remained persistent with my work in my courses. There were times I certainly felt defeated, but it didn't dampen my spirit and I continued to write and focus on poetry because that was my strength. I'd never been taught to think or write critically, so when I had to write a literary critical analysis, I kept asking questions and sought additional help from my instructor until I was able to earn a 'B' on one of the last essays in my literature class after receiving an 'F' on my first essay. Even after this challenging experience, I wasn't intimidated by writing and I was excited to learn that my program required students to take Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) courses during my third and fourth years as an undergraduate student.

When I scheduled an advising appointment, I asked what a Writing Across the Curriculum course was and learned that it was a class where you write a lot. So, that's how I understood WAC during my time at Midwestern University: you just write a lot. I thought, "Awesome! I love writing, so I know I'll find these classes enjoyable." And I did enjoy my WAC courses without really understanding what WAC was and why we were writing. To me, WAC meant that I would write a lot of research essays on a wide range of topics. I remember doing well in my WAC courses and I remember writing a lot. After struggling with certain genres in my literature courses, it was a relief to do well on my essays in my WAC courses.

I thought I was doing well because I often received 'A' and 'B' letter grades at the top of my papers when they were returned to me. Sometimes the comments themselves were limited and the type of feedback varied between assignments, courses, and instructors. The most vivid image of feedback is the red ink check mark at the top of my paper, and I knew that meant I did well. There often weren't any corresponding comments, so I wasn't sure what I was doing right. I also remember receiving one long end comment on my papers.

Although I remember only a few WAC courses were required for my major, I was in seven WAC courses: Law and Social Thought, Literature of the Old Testament, Screenwriting, Economics of Crime, Foundations of Literary Study, Cultural Geography, and Special Topics: Research and Methods. The College offered many WAC courses and fulfilling the WAC requirement was not difficult since I had so many options. Now, nearly 10 years later, I've kept my passion for writing, and I also found passion in teaching and feedback methods. Studying writing more closely since 2017 at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) during my Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Creative Writing program drastically changed my understanding of writing as a field. It took many conversations, hours, readings, and questions to lead me to my research interest in Writing Studies. I knew I wanted to focus on instructor feedback methods on writing assignments, and I wanted to analyze feedback on all kinds of writing in different disciplines, so I thought back to my connection with WAC and how I was genuinely curious to know more about WAC programs where writing often happens. My research interests in the areas of WAC, advocacy, and feedback sparked many conversations about definitions and sustainability of WAC, building connections, feedback practices, advocacy practices in WAC, writing center pedagogy, and definitions of writing.

Directly following this brief introduction to the project is a review of the relevant literature, including an overview of the topics such as the different definitions of WAC over the years, the history of WAC, basic principles and designs of WAC, goals and practices of WAC, pedagogies of WAC, the definition of writing and its place in WAC, writing assessment history, writing assessment in relation to WAC, and the importance of connections and sustainability in WAC. The literature will also present a brief overview of advocacy and define it in the context of this study. Most of this chapter focuses on providing information and knowledge to readers so

that they gain a better understanding of WAC, writing, writing assessment, and the importance of building connections in WAC for program sustainability that anyone involved with WAC efforts might benefit from. This chapter also calls attention to where further research is needed.

Overview of the Literature

Exploring Definitions of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

The earliest definitions of WAC found in the literature are from the 1980s, and the most current definition I use is from 2020 that I found during my initial research into WAC. WAC continues to be defined throughout the years in different contexts by different scholars. A 2014 statement composed by the International Network of WAC Programs (INWAC) defines WAC as referring "to the notion that writing should be an integral part of the learning process throughout a student's education not merely in required courses but across the entire curriculum" (Cox et al., 2014, p. 1). In a more general sense, WAC is the incorporation of writing in classes outside of standard first-year writing classes in post-secondary universities.

The literature also defines WAC as a transformative initiative in areas of learning, teaching, and research. WAC encourages student engagement, critical and thoughtful pedagogies, and cross-disciplinary scholarship. This cross-disciplinary scholarship allows different learners, whether that is faculty or administration from different fields, to discover the values of writing and how written communication is being used in other disciplines across the university.

In the fourth edition of *Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum* (2011), Art Young begins with a definition of WAC that states, WAC is where "students use written language to develop and communicate knowledge in every discipline and across disciplines" (p. 3). Similar

to the 2014 definition from the INWAC, Young highlights the use of written language and its inclusion in classes in every discipline at the college level.

In *WAC for the New Millennium: Strategies for Continuing Programs* (2001), Susan H. McLeod defines WAC by first very briefly connecting it to the term *general education* in postsecondary universities, which are required courses that serve as foundational knowledge outside of a student's major for their undergraduate degree. McLeod states, "Like the term 'general education', 'writing across the curriculum' has come to have a vaguely positive aura, seen as something that is good for students even if faculty and administrators aren't sure what it is, precisely" (p. 4). McLeod also notes that WAC is uniquely defined by its outcomes and pedagogies focusing on transformative teaching practices more than any other recent educational reform movement.

The *Reference Guide to WAC* by Charles Bazerman and colleagues defines WAC as referring "specifically to the pedagogical and curricular attention to writing occurring in university subject matter classes other than those offered by composition or writing programs" (2005, p. 9). This definition is closest to what I've used in the context of my study to introduce WAC to various audiences in its simplest form. WAC can be defined in numerous complex ways, all of which keep written communication and writing pedagogy at the heart. But what is also at the heart of WAC is student engagement, faculty, professional development, prior knowledge and areas of expertise, administration and leadership, and many more transformative practices that WAC works to improve and incorporate. While my study is contextualized by this definition of WAC, it also presents different perspectives of WAC by foregrounding the voices of a WAC History Lecturer, Writing Center Coordinator, and WAC History student all from Midwestern University who offer their own definitions of WAC.

The most recent definition of WAC presented in this overview of the literature is from Mya Poe's Foreword, "WAC Today: Diversity and Resilience" in the book *Diverse Approaches to Teaching, Learning, and Writing Across the Curriculum: IWAC at 25* (2020). Poe frames WAC as a historical development, suggesting multiple origins of WAC. She states that "WAC is about people making texts together, not studying texts in isolation and forming meaningful collaboration has long been central to successful WAC programs" (Poe, 2020, p. xiii). Over the last several years, WAC was thought to be unchangeable in terms of incorporating critical theory, second language learner research and pedagogy, and a culturally sustainable pedagogy. These limitations point to the need for increased coverage and discussion on the issue of inclusivity of and in WAC.

That said, I acknowledge a current gap exists in WAC regarding inclusivity, diversity, English as a second language, accessibility, and disability. WAC holds a strong interdisciplinary nature and I believe that allows WAC to learn from other areas and apply and adapt the changes necessary to the inclusivity and sustainability of WAC. But for those areas to improve, efforts from all areas of WAC, including leadership and potential connections, which will be discussed later, is required.

History of WAC

In the 1980s, the Modern Language Association conducted a survey and found that one-third of universities in the United States (U.S.) had a WAC program. As WAC became more established in the U.S., scholars of WAC determined it to have a *staying power*, meaning WAC had the power to remain active in universities. The *WAC Critical Sourcebook* (2011) states, "WAC programs with a staying power had more curricular elements, engaged in more assessment, and enjoyed faculty support, and strong consistent leadership" (Zawacki & Rogers,

p. 1). WAC was viewed as an educational reform movement, and still is to this present day. The movement was more of an attempt to reform pedagogy than curriculum, focusing on writing as an essential component.

WAC traces "back to holistic approaches to language and learning in England at the London Institute of Education in the early 1970s, where James Britton, Nancy Martin, and their colleagues conducted intensive cross-sectional research on writing in secondary schools" (Bazerman et al., 2005, p. 3). WAC was then realized to be a powerful vehicle for pedagogical reform, especially after finding that writing was barely used in schools for very few limited purposes and audiences. A need for greater access and equity in postsecondary education was realized and the response was to create cross-curricular programs.

As stated earlier, WAC has multiple starting points and can be traced back to numerous sources. The Language Across the Curriculum movement in Britain during the 1960s is one. But another one is the Communication Movement that followed the Second World War, as well as the 1966 Dartmouth Conference on English during the late 1960s. The Communication Movement did not specifically reform writing pedagogy, but it "laid the groundwork for a revival in rhetoric in the 1960s, which in turn led to the WAC movement in the 1970s" (Bazerman et al., 2005, p. 19). Four-year college education was primarily rhetorical prior to the late 19th century. Education focused on preparing and creating leaders to be public orators. The renewed interest in communication, writing, and rhetoric manifested the rise of Rhetoric and Composition as an academic area of study and it called attention to the interdisciplinary nature of the English Department, which opened the doors for WAC. Before WAC was able to reach its peak, it suffered major setbacks and challenges at the beginning of its creation.

The 1960s in the U.S. saw a massive increase in enrollment in higher education universities. While more students were pursuing an education, massive cutbacks in general composition courses occurred in the 1960s. Within the collection *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Critical Sourcebook,* David R. Russell notes, "Almost one-third of all four-year colleges abolished first-year writing" (2011, p. 17), and with this, a literacy crisis began.

The birth of WAC in the U.S. was due to Americans learning that poor student writing in universities was a serious problem and many early WAC efforts emerged from smaller colleges who focused on student learning and high-quality pedagogy. Writing skills were declining as most tests were designed as multiple choice or true/false questions. As a result, a faculty task force called for workshops and seminars to help faculty learn to use writing as a tool of teaching so that writing was no longer an isolated act. WAC was viewed as a solution that would increase specialization in education and it would demand students to write in new situations to new audiences. This was important to literacy, or in other words, the practices and development of writing and reading skills. It was the publishing of two new British books that "gave researchers and reformers in composition a name and theory to catalyze disparate experiments into a full-fledged educational movement" (Russell, 2011, p. 19). Reform efforts and the birth of WAC in the American higher education landscape were both inspired by British educational reform.

WAC projects in Britain were focused on elementary and secondary education with James Britton as the lead scholar in WAC research. Early WAC scholarship focused on advocacy for WAC, creating a program description, and recommendations for implementation. American followers of Britton's research were secondary-school reformers; therefore, their efforts focused on incorporating a cross-curricular program in higher education.

Early WAC programs held the ideas of "writing as problem-solving, writing as critical thinking, writing within pragmatic contexts rather than in a five-paragraph theme, writing as a way to individualize instruction for a multicultural and multilingual student body" (McLeod et al., 2001, pp. ix-x). WAC always focused on writing as an essential component and a key element in liberal education, but the staying power of WAC faded. As I read more recent scholarship, it was like watching a land of possibilities become nothing but a desert mirage.

The earliest WAC faculty seminar in the U.S. was led by Barbara Walvoord in 1969 at Central College, a liberal arts school in Pella, Iowa. Years later in 1996, Walvoord spoke again and cautioned WAC program leaders that WAC must "dive in or die" (Russell, 2011, p. 2), a directive that is still relevant today. Presently, it is difficult to determine how many WAC programs are active in the U.S. since WAC takes on many forms. Additionally, WAC might not be a defined program at a university but can still be implemented across courses. The International WAC/WID Mapping Project aims to identify activity of WAC in higher education in the U.S. and around the world. In 1987, a national survey received 1,113 results where 418 institutions in the U.S. reported having a WAC program and 695 institutions did not have a WAC program. A survey from 2006-2008 by Chris Thaiss and Tara Porter found that 51% of American universities had a WAC program. The survey received 1,126 responses and 568 institutions reported having a WAC program. The most recent survey through the International WAC/WID Mapping Project began in 2015, but it was disseminated for a limited period of time in 2019 and 2020 to receive additional results. In 2020, the survey received 498 responses where 261 institutions reported having a WAC program and 237 institutions reported not having a WAC program. For many decades, WAC programs have sought out conversations with disciplinary faculty across the curriculum about teaching with writing. It is more important than

ever that WAC collaborates with campus groups, leadership, communities—anyone that is involved in new WAC initiatives.

Figure 1

WAC Mapping Project: WAC Programs in the United States from 1987–2020

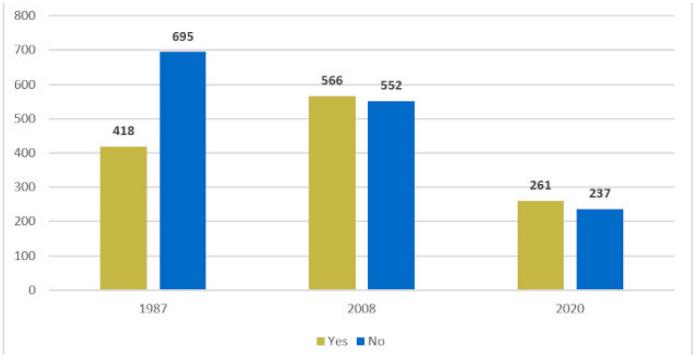

Figure 2

Reported WAC Programs/Initiatives in the United States (2015–2020)

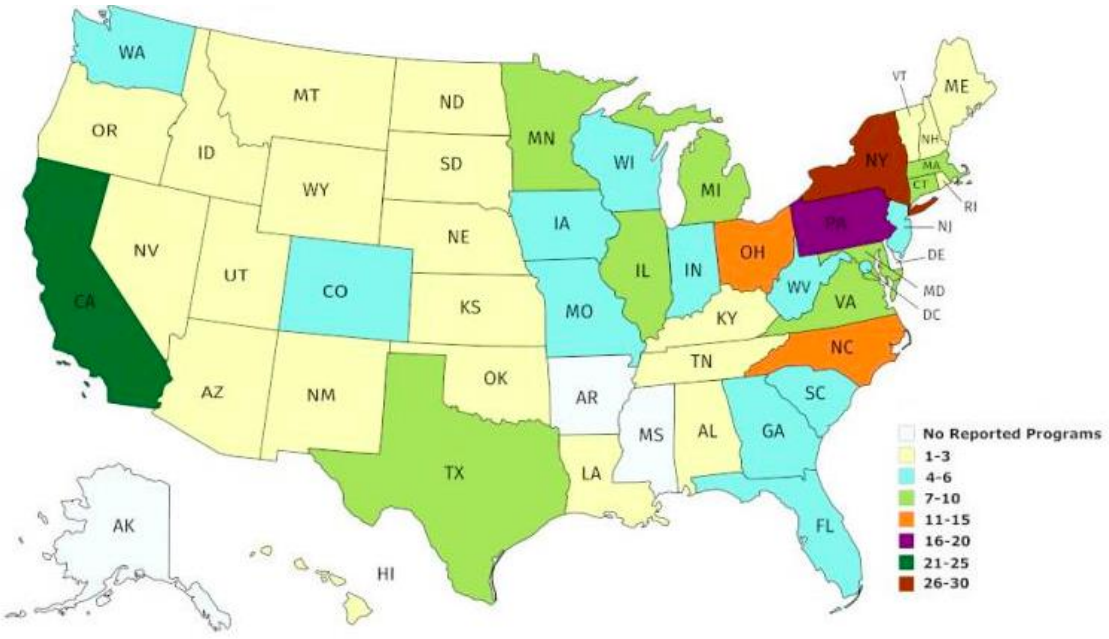

Figure 3

Number of Years WAC Programs Have Existed in the United States

	Number	Percentage
Just Starting	44	15.4%
1-5 Years	59	20.7%
6-10 Years	46	16.1%
11-15 Years	43	15.1%
16-20 Years	34	11.9%
Over 20 Years	58	20.7%

WAC Pedagogies

WAC programs recognize and support the use of writing in any and every way and in any course offered at the university level. To support the use of writing for student growth, WAC pedagogies encourage the use of Writing to Learn (WTL), Writing in the Disciplines (WID), and Writing to Engage (WTE). The WAC Clearinghouse website—an open-access publishing collaborative—includes a guide titled "An Introduction to Writing Across the Curriculum" written and updated collaboratively by Kate Kiefer and colleagues (2000–2021). One section in this guide notes that "using writing in thoughtful ways, with a clear understanding of how the activity assigned will help students meet course goals" is what matters most to WAC programs (Kiefer et al., 2000–2021, What is a WAC Program? section, para. 3). In WAC courses, writing assignments will generally fall between WTL and WID, with WTE falling in between these two more commonly used types of writing assignments.

Writing to Learn (WTL) is one of the major contributions to the WAC movement. WTL allows individuals to represent an experience in writing for their own understanding. Kiefer and colleagues state, "In this sense language provides us with a unique way of knowing and becomes a tool for discovering, for shaping meaning, and for reaching understanding" (Kiefer et al., 2000–2021, What is Writing to Learn? section, para. 6). The goal of WTL is to help students

learn foundational concepts to check their understanding of material related to the course. It is using writing as a tool for learning instead of a test of learning. WTL is also viewed as an opportunity for the student writer to explain the matter to themselves versus explaining the matter to others. The WAC movement encourages adding WTL to most courses for two purposes: students will learn the course material better, and as a result, they will improve their written communication.

Writing in the Disciplines (WID) is another example of a WAC pedagogy approach, and it is also commonly called writing to communicate. WID assignments are "designed to introduce or give students practice with the writing conventions of a discipline and to help them gain familiarity and fluency with specific genres and formats typical of a given discipline" (Kiefer et al., 2000–2021, What is Writing in the Disciplines? section, para. 1). The goal of WID is to practice writing conventions of a specific discipline and to gain familiarity with genre and design within that same discipline. Writing assignments in a WID course focus on introducing students to the overall thinking and writing of a discipline.

Writing to Engage (WTE) stands between WTL and WID. WTE "relies on viewing writing as a means of engaging students in critical thinking" (Kiefer et al., 2000–2021, What is Writing to Engage? section, para. 2). Some common and long-standing views of writing situate writing as a useful means of demonstrating critical thinking and a discovery tool that transforms knowledge. WTE takes these views of writing and applies them to a WAC course. The goal of WTE is to practice and engage in critical thinking, specifically in reading and writing. Linking writing and critical thinking became a problem-solving approach for students. For example, in WTE courses, "students can benefit from engaging in writing activities that help students work with and develop greater control of the concepts, conceptual frameworks, skills, processes, and

issues addressed in a course" (Kiefer et al., 2000–2021, What is Writing to Engage? section, para. 5). Based on Bloom's Taxonomy, a classification system outlining different levels of human cognition, these common ways of thinking that engage students in a WTE WAC course include remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Below is a spectrum characterizing WTL, WTE, and WID as focusing on different parts of Bloom's Taxonomy, aligning them with different critical thinking skills.

Figure 4

WAC Pedagogies Spectrum Based on Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowing when to choose WTL, WID, or WTE is a crucial and necessary choice instructors make depending on which goals are most important for them and their students. Below is a grid created by The WAC Clearinghouse to help instructors choose which WAC pedagogy they should use in their courses.

Figure 5

What Kinds of Writing May Be Most Appropriate for Courses

Use this grid to suggest which kinds of writing might be most appropriate in your classes:

	WTL	WTE	WID
Goals	to help students learn foundational concepts to check students' understanding of material	to practice in critical thinking, reading and writing; to engage students in critical thinking	to practice writing conventions of the discipline; to gain familiarity with genres and design conventions
Students	mostly freshmen and sophomores	all students	mostly senior majors
Typical enrollment	can be used in the largest classes	varies depending on goals	fewer than 35
Possible assignments	• writing-to-learn prompts	• *reading journals* • *lab or field notebooks* • *response papers*	• real writing tasks for audiences students will *write to as professionals* in field • *academic papers* based on journals in the field • library or other *source-based writing*

Along with WTL, WID, and WTE pedagogies, scholars in WAC, such as Linda Adler-Kassner, encourage epistemologically inclusive teaching pedagogies. This pedagogy can mean making practices more explicit so that students can access the knowledge and associated practices within a discipline more easily and providing more opportunities for students to dismantle some of the structures of their discipline. But as WAC becomes more institutionalized, the place of writing is questioned and the state of WAC is “bland”, meaning that the focus is merely adding writing to courses rather than leveraging writing’s role in teaching and learning.

Understanding the Place of Writing in WAC

The question of why writing should be included in courses across the university curriculum is commonly asked and brought to attention in WAC. This section seeks to answer that question and describes the possibilities and definitions of writing while also pointing to the challenges WAC programs face when incorporating writing into courses outside standard first-year composition. According to Kiefer et al. (2000–2021), “Writing is the responsibility of the

entire academic community, and it must be integrated across departmental boundaries during all four years of undergraduate education," (Why Include Writing in My Courses? section, para. 3), hence the existence of WAC efforts and programs. Some of the grounding principles and practices for WAC pedagogies and programs include viewing writing as highly situated, writing as rhetorical, writing as a process, writing as a mode of learning, and learning to write.

What's important to acknowledge about writing and WAC is that WAC programs do not simply involve more writing than other courses. WAC courses are designed to move away from a pedagogical delivery model and move towards engaging students more actively in their own learning through writing. A few of the biggest challenges in WAC involve how instructors rethink pedagogies as they sought to involve students in their own learning. Institutional attitudes towards writing are deeply held. This means that institutions hold on to the century-old notion of writing that writing is "a generalizable mechanical skill, learned once and for all at an early age" (Russell, 2011, p. 30). Writing has also been generally defined as the use of graphic characters and in the context of WAC programs, many thought the goal was to produce *good writing*, which always remained vague. Along with this notion of writing being valued at the institutional level, faculty might be accustomed to complete autonomy and authority in their classrooms, making it more difficult for them to move towards an inclusive pedagogy where students make decisions in their own learning.

Another challenge with writing and WAC is time and labor. Simply put, faculty might recognize the importance of writing, but they may not have the time or extrinsic motivation to "restructure their courses and pedagogies to incorporate writing more effectively" (Russell, 2011, p. 32). Sometimes it is viewed that there is no external purpose, growth incentive, or additional pay to do this type of labor.

Despite these challenges, exploring and incorporating writing as a vital knowledge-making tool is central to WAC. Writing is never just writing, and we don't just write in general. In the article, "Designing for 'More': Writing's Knowledge and Epistemologically Inclusive Teaching" (2019), Linda Adler-Kassner states, "Writing is the representation of knowledge-making in specific contexts, what we might think of as writing as a noun, and a process that can be used to explore contexts and practices, writing as a verb" (2019, p. 35). In simpler terms, writing is an action, and it is a *thing*. Writing is an ongoing activity utilized in courses where it becomes a quantitative value by being the measurement of a grade through assessment.

Writing Assessment and WAC

Introduction to Assessment

Writing assessment is identified as an important area of study in composition studies. Brian Huot, author of *(Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning* (2002), states, "Writing assessment has evolved into an intellectual and public site in which scholarship is conceived and implemented by people from various disciplines and subdisciplines" (2002, p. 21) and rhetoric and composition is a field which welcomes the interdisciplinary nature of writing assessment. Assessment is an umbrella term for the numerous practices we use to evaluate students. It is often used interchangeably with the term *grading*. Assessment methods are often associated with the instructor's personal values and belief systems which function in the power dynamics of their classroom. Writing assessment is viewed as something where "people pursue their own agenda, asking different questions and using different methods to achieve it" (Huot, 2002, p. 29). In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice to Freedom* (1994), bell hooks calls attention to how scholars, specifically white scholars, try to "formulate and impose standards of critical evaluation that [are] used to define what is

theoretical and what is not. These standards often [lead] to the appropriation and/or devaluation of work that [does] not 'fit" (1994, p. 63) according to their own theoretical hierarchy. In *(Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning,* assessment was identified as something that existed "as a means for gatekeeping and upholding standards" (Huot, 2002, p. 61). It was a tool for teachers to sort students and demand certain skills. Writing assessment and writing classroom pedagogies began to clash because this way of assessing did not acknowledge students as socially positioned or as language users with individual experiences. Huot emphasizes there is much more work to be done in the field of writing assessment. Tension exists between the importance of including students in teacher feedback. With the recent scholarship presented in this literature review, it is still apparent that new and relevant research needs to emerge and shift to focus more on the student, their agency, and their role in the review process of writing assessment.

Assessment Practices

In the writing classroom, writing a paper and receiving written or verbal feedback is a common exchange between the student and the instructor. In that exchange a gap exists between the student and the review process of their writing. Most often in the review process stage, instructors will focus solely on extending their voice through written feedback and take authority over a student's writing, which ultimately results in limiting student learning and advocacy practices. An important idea Nancy Sommers discusses is the way instructors give feedback. In "Responding to Student Writing" (1982), Sommers provides a lot of functions instructors' comments need to exemplify. Sommers says our comments need to be an appropriate level of response, regarding what stage the paper is at, but not where the student might be in their writing process. It is this idea to have comments suited for the draft, but not the student and who they are

as a writer. Sommers also states, “Comments should point to breaks in logic, disruptions in meaning, or missing information,” (1982, p. 155). It is common that assessment practices focus on writing as a product versus writing as a process and our feedback teaches the writing, but not the writer. Sommers also talks about the view that writing is just a matter of following the rules. The rules also come off as a list of commands for students to follow in their writing, but these rules take away student opportunity and ideas to develop any thoughts. Furthermore, instructor feedback is generalized or full of generalities. This means that the feedback provided on one student’s paper could be directly copied and pasted onto a different student’s paper and it would still apply. For example, the comment, “This is an extremely awkward statement” without pointing to what is awkward, why it is awkward, and a suggestion for revision is something that can be copied and pasted anywhere on any student’s paper. Sometimes these generalities come off as commands for change. In other words, generalizing feedback and commanding students to do something one way does not promote advocacy or student agency. One example is when the acronym AWK, meaning awkward, is written on a student’s paper without any explanation or feedback for the student to apply and revise. Providing general comments does not show genuine engagement with the student’s writing and the student may not learn from the writing experience. It does not supply the student with specific information or shows them how to achieve change.

The appropriation of text by instructors during the review process is another problematic practice. In Richard Straub’s article, “The Concept of Control in Teacher Response: Defining the Varieties of ‘Directive’ and ‘Facilitative’ Commentary” (1996), Straub states, “We should not ‘appropriate’ student texts by overlooking their purposes for writing and emphasizing our purposes for commenting,” (1996, p. 223). Straub also encourages instructors to be supportive in

their feedback and not dictate the path for revision. Straub's article discusses the ongoing issue of control in teacher commentary. Although Straub's article is over 20 years old, Anthony Edward Edgington's article, "Split Personalities: Understanding the Responder Identity in College Composition" states, "As teachers, we often approach student texts from an authoritative identity," (2017, p. 85). During assessment, student texts are almost solely in the hands of the instructor, and how we approach feedback using our identities is something that needs to be further studied. We are called to teach our students how our comments can lead them to positive changes and discovery in revision. My study highlights assessment practices on student writing from the perspectives of a History WAC faculty member, History WAC student, and Writing Center Coordinator. Each offers their own dispositions towards feedback, experiences with feedback, and practices of feedback. In this study, feedback and writing assessment are interchangeably used, but they mean the written or verbal cues and comments on student writing.

As my study attempts to highlight feedback practices, it also looks for moments of advocacy in current feedback practices in WAC. My research asks participants to distinguish the difference between teaching the writing versus teaching the writer. Teaching the writer means guiding our lessons, our feedback, and our support, to develop the individual writer rather than helping the piece of writing at stake. It is a practice that I use in my own feedback, and it is an applicable practice for my research. Oftentimes, instructors don't concern themselves with the whole individual their student embodies. Instead, instructors teach the writing and not the individual writer. Instructors might also find themselves occupied with teaching the content and introducing an assignment without ever trying to place the student at the center of the classroom and teach them. In "The Listening Eye: Reflections on the Writing Conference" (1979) Donald Murray states, "I teach the student, not the paper" (p. 15) which is an important stance to take in

the classroom. Murray also supports conferencing with students, so they are included in the review process of their work. With the listening approach that Murray takes, he states, "I hear voices from my students they have never heard from themselves. I find they are authorities on subjects they think ordinary" (1979, p. 16). Following the article and the story Murray shares, it seems the students lead the way, and he follows, and Murray is able to recognize that questions he might ask them in conferences are questions the students are already asking themselves.

Advocacy and Assessment

In "Multimodal Pedagogical Approaches to Public Writing: Digital Media Advocacy and Mundane Texts" (2017), authors Sarah Warren-Riley and Elise Verzosa Hurley define *advocacy* as "championing or supporting a particular viewpoint, cause, or policy, advocacy is an inherently rhetorical activity that seeks to constitute and engage publics through discursive processes" (para. 4). They further explore advocacy work as something that is not always consciously recognizable or a choice. With this discovery, I began to realize why there is a lack of scholarship on advocacy. It is because of the way advocacy exists in the everyday mundane actions and texts– almost as if it is not recognizable unless you go looking for it, and that advocacy is simply support with no action. But because of this, we've underestimated the work and have not identified it as complex or multidirectional, or as something that responds to the dynamics of a system where one group benefits and another does not. The more advocacy work is uncovered, the more I realize its connection to rhetoric. In *Regulatory Fit and Persuasion Through Advocacy Messages and Narratives* by Leigh Ann Vaughn (2010), persuasion and advocacy are intimately linked. Vaughn's book further identifies the existence of rhetoric in advocacy, from the way arguments are presented to the important role of metacognition. Vaughn states, "Advocacy messages present logical arguments, evidence, and claims supporting a

position" (2010, p. 7). This is something Vaughn identifies from a psychological standpoint, but its relation to academic writing is strong. Vaughn further discusses the cognitive effort that is experienced when engaging and responding to a message. Messages with careful thought and elaboration are more likely to persuade people and create positive thoughts from readers. Advocacy begins to happen on an audience's end because of the deliberate choices an orator/writer makes.

When we teach writing, we often focus on the obvious features of writing, but Lee Carroll, author of *Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop as Writers* (2002), emphasizes that students need more practice and knowledge to write and to apply this knowledge in discipline-specific concepts. Also, the practices of writers are influenced by historical, political, and economic forces. Writing as a social practice is ever evolving because it is heavily involved in ongoing interactions between communities. Writing as highly situated, writing as rhetorical, writing as a process, and writing as a mode of learning are features of writing we don't always teach our students and is also knowledge that WAC programs do not always provide to WAC faculty from interdisciplinary backgrounds, which my study identifies and discusses.

WAC and Assessing Writing

The WAC Clearinghouse's teaching resource "How Can I Handle Responding to Student Writing" (Kiefer et al., 2000–2021) provides numerous suggestions to instructors on responding to student writing in WAC courses. Some of these suggestions include where to focus commenting energies and to consider using a grading sheet, or a rubric. The rubric should be designed to match the criteria outlined on an assignment sheet. The rubric is designed to be a supplemental material that can be relied on to respond to less crucial areas of writing. It is still

encouraged that the instructor at some length provide comments on just one to two points, typically a major strength or a major weakness.

Assessing writing is a complicated task because teachers have a desire to provide assessment that supports instruction and course objectives, while on the other hand of the spectrum, the institution must meet a public demand to prove effective instruction. When assessment is a public measurement, it becomes a measurement of accountability, meaning that it becomes a tool to document a program and evaluate its program's effectiveness.

Through my teaching and evaluations of my teaching, I find that most students value feedback. When they get a notification that they received a grade on their assignment, students usually check right away and read the reasoning as to why they received the grade they did. They put their work into our hands and trust us to read it. Sometimes, to the student, this exchange feels like they hand over authorship to us, but it is important to include students in this process and that they remain to have authorship over their writing. Feedback is important to the classroom ecology, and that is why my research pursues to discover how those involved with WAC efforts understand assessment, and provide assessment, especially highlighting practices that involve student identity and negotiation of power. My study seeks to situate feedback as a powerful writing practice in the WAC classroom while presenting current understandings and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and WAC initiatives for program sustainability using voices from three different perspectives connected to WAC at Midwestern University.

Building Connections: WAC and the Writing Center

Writing center pedagogy can offer more effective and inclusive assessment practices that WAC programs can implement. Writing center specialists have the ability to reach students beyond one department and they also have more regular interactions with Teaching Assistants (TAs) and faculty. Donna LeCourt and Victor Villanueva, two major critics of WAC, emphasize that WAC is not inclusive because of its inattention to race and racialized assessment and identified a need for assessment practices that take into account students' complex individual identities. Juan Guerra, an American Ethnic Studies scholar, has advocated the writing-across-communities approach, which develops students' existing literacies and anticipates their writing lives beyond the academy. Writing center pedagogy can support diversity and inclusion work on university campuses.

In early practices, writing centers taught writing through worksheets, known as drill and skill sites, which is a type of instruction that is a systematic repetition of concepts, examples, and practice problems. The writing center eventually moved to teach writing as a process and stepped towards *non-directive tutoring strategies*. A non-directive strategy is when a student is in charge of their tutoring session and works towards goals they want to achieve by the end of the session. The writing specialist asks open-ended questions and provides space for students to generate ideas and have freedom of expression. In "Inclusion Takes Effort: What Writing Center Pedagogy Can Bring to Writing in the Disciplines" (2018), Sarah Peterson Pittock states, "Writing centers work in equal measures to strengthen individuals' communication skills to remove structural assumptions that interfere with student learning and thriving" (p. 92). The 21st-century writing center has been conceived as a site of advocacy for diverse students. Finding and defining advocacy proved to be challenging in the context of this study, but my research builds

upon the idea of the writing center as a site of advocacy where students are supported and included, especially during the writing process, taking into account their individual identities.

The writing center has helped students in numerous ways. Pittock states, “Writing centers can give students as many language tools as possible and develop a curriculum that helps them make choices about their language that reflect their critical thinking, not the instructor’s personal biases” (2018, pp. 92–93). This means we should be trusting students to think about their grammar and language rhetorically, which enables students to gain a deeper understanding of language and writing. The writing center helps students no longer think of writing as a discrete skill that they master in one course, but as an ongoing process that is complex and beyond the limited area of grammar. When students learn this about writing, disciplines are no longer a closed, static domain that “require privileged knowledge to participate. Instead, they are dynamic communities of practice” (Pittock, 2018, p. 93). The way we teach writing also allows for “identities, languages, and backgrounds to be welcomed and explored as assets that will contribute to new understanding” (Pittock, 2018, p. 93). What we understand and teach about writing heavily influences how students participate across the curriculum and the robust nature of communities of practice.

Every person will have a different reason for being in the writing center. Writing specialist tutoring considers cultural and social contexts, as well as demystifies writing conventions. The student’s full humanity matters and is welcomed. Pittock found when WAC worked more directly with the writing center and incorporated inclusive pedagogy, “assignment sheets and syllabi improved, assignments were more strategically scaffolded, writing expectations were made more explicit, and student success became more accessible” (2018, p.103). If there are faculty who cherish a narrow view of writing as a surface-level style and

matter of correctness, the writing center is a place "where advocacy is contained" (Pittock, 2018, p. 104), or where writing specialists still engage with grammar challenges, but never reduce a student to a comma error.

As this study expanded to a participant pool beyond WAC students and faculty, I was able to incorporate the voice of a Writing Center Coordinator who discusses writing center practices, pedagogies, advocacy, and the importance of its connection to WAC, as well as the challenges. Furthermore, growth opportunities and strategies for WAC to begin working with the writing center are included in this study as suggestions that anyone involved in WAC initiatives can apply to their writing programs.

Investigating Perspectives of WAC and Writing Assessment

Overall, current conversations about WAC and writing assessment point to the complex nature of both. When considering the low response rate from the International WAC/WID Mapping Project's 2020 survey, and Barbara Walvoord's applicable directive that WAC must "dive in or die" from the late 1990s, I have chosen to investigate the intersections of WAC, the Writing Center, Writing Studies, advocacy, and feedback methods in order to discover how and where feedback is happening, definitions of writing, and the importance of building connections with an eye towards WAC program sustainability.

While I read WAC scholarship focused on faculty development and expertise, I found an article titled "WAC Seminar Participants as Surrogate WAC Consultants: Disciplinary Faculty Developing and Deploying WAC Expertise" by Bradley Hughes and Elisabeth Miller who recall six threshold or foundational concepts identified by Chris Anson for WAC knowledge and practice (2018):

1. Define writing as a disciplinary activity.

2. Reconceptualize the social and rhetorical nature of writing.
3. Distinguish between WTL and WID.
4. Establish shared goals and responsibilities for improvement.
5. Understand the situated nature of writing and the problem of transfer.
6. View student writing developmentally.

I knew that I couldn't hurdle straight into analyzing feedback methods when the first steps of WAC training and overcoming threshold concepts might not have been done with faculty members at my research site. My research first needed to understand what WAC means from different perspectives, locations, and sources.

I've remained genuinely curious about where writing happens in WAC and how I never actually understood WAC until I did this research. I see a need for continued conversations surrounding WAC efforts and sustainability. Based on the current research and the gaps it presents, this project investigates two related research questions:

1. What are the current understandings and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback at Midwestern University?
2. How do WAC programs benefit from collaboration with Writing Centers and community connections from a sustainability standpoint?

Each concept of WAC, writing, advocacy, and assessment are explored through the perspectives of a History Associate Lecturer from Midwestern University, a History WAC student from Midwestern University, and a prior Writing Center Coordinator from Midwestern University. Once we better understand how these key terms are defined and explored in WAC programs, classes, and writing centers, we can determine strategies to sustain WAC programs, which involve building campus and community connections, leadership efforts, labor issues, writing

knowledge, WAC consulting and seminars, and sites of advocacy. Therefore, I view the research goal of gathering information about the current practices and understandings of WAC, writing, and advocacy as an essential and deeply important first step that will ultimately inform the development of additional research to take place in the upcoming years.

Overview of the Upcoming Chapters

Following the introduction and the review of relevant WAC literature is Chapter 2, "Research Methods and Methodologies." This chapter explores in-depth the methods chosen for implementing the research and highlights their methodological underpinnings and inspirations. This chapter also elaborates upon the data collection techniques, coding processes, and subsequent data analysis. Next, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 present the perspectives and profiles of my participants with key findings developed after the completion of data coding and analysis. In each chapter, I focus on my participants' definitions, experiences, and practices with the study's key terms: *WAC*, *writing*, *advocacy*, and *feedback* represented in both their initial interview and member-check interview. At the end of each perspective chapter, I work to identify key takeaways that answer the study's research questions. Chapter 3, "'My Writing is Not That Beautiful': A Writing Across the Curriculum Lecturer's Perspective," tells the story of Lilian. Lilian shares her experience as a WAC Lecturer at Midwestern University and the various influences that shape her definitions and teaching practices. Chapter 4, "'Where's the Feedback?': A Writing Across the Curriculum Student's Perspective" is Jay's story as a WAC student at Midwestern University in Lilian's History WAC course. Jay shares his understandings of the concepts presented in this study. Additionally, Jay's story is uniquely shaped by his workplace experience where he writes and receives feedback. Chapter 5, "'Creating a Better Writer, Not Just a Better Paper': A Writing Center Coordinator's Perspective" is Maeve's story

as the Writing Center Coordinator at Midwestern University. Maeve provides an overview of the responsibilities of the Writing Center Coordinator role. She shares practices of writing center pedagogy and the benefits of the writing center for students and instructors. Furthermore, Maeve briefly discusses Midwestern University's WAC Program and its connection to the writing center. Chapter 6 concludes the project by synthesizing each participant's definitions and experiences to formulate a discussion of findings surrounding the topics of rhetorical slippages, WAC sustainability, collaboration in WAC, labor, and inclusivity. This chapter provides larger implications of the research, including future directions and expansions, as well as the impact of the findings on various stakeholders, such as postsecondary institutions, Writing Centers, WAC Programs, and WAC instructors.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

When I proposed this project in November 2021, I expected that my research goals, motivations, and questions would evolve due to various factors that I didn't know at the time. My initial timeline greatly shifted as the individuals in my targeted participant pool were all impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, budget cuts, and labor inequality. I faced numerous obstacles during my initial recruitment of participants that I will describe in further detail in the upcoming discussions. In this chapter, I highlight the components associated with my research methods and methodologies that provide the context and background information necessary to foreground my upcoming discussions on the results and implications of instructor feedback practices in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) courses, student experiences with feedback and WAC, writing dispositions and knowledge, advocacy discourse, and the importance of collaboration for WAC programs to remain sustainable and inform faculty and students of the possibilities of writing.

I begin this chapter with a review of my research questions, followed by an overview of the context of the research exploring all aspects relating to data collection, including location, timing, targeted and actual participants, timeline, recruitment, and data sources. This exploration into my methods and methodologies covers the research process from my initial Institutional Review Board (IRB) submission all the way to the final member-check interviews with my participants. The chapter closes with an analysis of my data and provides a glimpse into the upcoming chapters.

Research Questions

My project investigates two questions that were initially developed based on my interests in feedback methods and advocacy discourse. After an extensive review of the literature and

interviews with participants from different perspectives of WAC, my research questions evolved and were informed by the data I collected. My research questions are as follows:

1. What are the current understandings and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback at Midwestern University?
2. How do WAC programs benefit from collaboration with Writing Centers and community connections from a sustainability standpoint?

Research Context

After three years of an ongoing pandemic, English Departments, Writing Centers, and Writing Programs are facing more budget cuts and various voices from these communities acknowledge labor inequalities. Every participant I interviewed was affected differently by the above circumstances. This shaped the way that I approached data coding, formulated research questions, and drew conclusions. I realized their personal and academic lives were undeniably intertwined in their answers, so I considered these factors when I collected data and interpreted the data. Throughout the entire timeline of this project, I've wanted the voices of my participants to be prioritized because of the methodologies that informed my study and my participants are the center of how this study came to exist and evolve. It was a goal of mine from the very beginning of this project to include student voices, especially in relation to feedback practices and experiences in the WAC classroom. What motivated this goal is my teaching philosophy, which is inspired by Asao B. Inoue, bell hooks, Brian Huot, Tialitha Macklin, and Nancy Sommers. In it, I pay attention to how our feedback can impact student voices. By positioning feedback as an ongoing conversation between myself and my students, it encourages us to view feedback as a meaning-making practice. I approach feedback with the value of writing as a process and promoting student learner agency. Essentially, I believe in deep collaboration with

my students, and I wanted to represent that in my research by dedicating a chapter to a student voice and emphasizing the student experience and their role in WAC and the university.

Participant Profiles

Each participant either selected their own pseudonym or requested that I assign one to them using a random name generator.

Lilian

Lilian was an Associate Lecturer at Midwestern University at the time of this study. Lilian taught numerous History courses at Midwestern University since 2012, including WAC courses.

Jay

Jay was a nontraditional upperclassman undergraduate student at Midwestern University at the time of this study. Jay studied History as his major and took a History WAC course with Lilian as the instructor. He was in his last year. Jay earned an associate degree at a community college, then began at Midwestern University five years after completing his associate degree. During the five-year gap, Jay gained work experience in sales and retail.

Maeve

Maeve was the Writing Center Coordinator at Midwestern University at the time of this study. Maeve was involved with WAC faculty outreach efforts. Her educational background was in Literary and Textual Studies, as well as Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

Research Site

The study's research site is the WAC program at Midwestern University. Midwestern University is a midsize, public university with student enrollment in spring semester of 2022 at 15,569 students. The WAC program is housed in Midwestern University's College of Arts and

Letters, one of the colleges that require their students to take WAC courses. Two other colleges at Midwestern University—Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Business and Innovation—also require their students to take WAC courses. Midwestern University's WAC program is supervised by faculty from all three colleges. Midwestern University described their WAC program as writing courses outside standard composition courses. The WAC courses are meant to encourage students to use writing to acquire new knowledge on a subject and express ideas in writing. Undergraduate students are required to take two WAC courses in order to graduate. Other requirements include students passing both Composition I and Composition II before enrolling in required WAC courses. Midwestern University recommends that the first writing-intensive courses be completed by students within the first 65 hours of coursework, and the second be completed within the first 90 hours of coursework. One of the courses must be within the student's major. The WAC program at Midwestern University also encourages all upper-division courses to incorporate a writing-intensive component. The program provides faculty syllabi requirements and a Rubric for Review to help them develop their syllabi. The WAC Director provided me the Rubric for Review which I have included in Appendix F.[2]

Methods Narrative Overview

The recruitment process began with obtaining a point of contact at Midwestern University. I wanted to establish a connection at Midwestern University as early as possible, so I began sending e-mails and networking in October 2021. After e-mailing a previous Director affiliated with the WAC program, they gave me updated contacts and roles in the WAC program. I worked with the current Director as of 2022. I sent an e-mail to the Director of WAC, introducing myself, my research topic, and my goals, and I requested more information about the

[2] Although they had an important role in my research, I do not specifically name the WAC Director at Midwestern University because they were not a participant, and their identity must be protected.

WAC program, if available. I met virtually over Zoom—a videotelephony software program—with the Director shortly after I submitted my IRB application in October 2021 to learn more about the WAC program and the goals for the program moving forward. Through that conversation, I discovered there is an enrollment indicator for WAC courses, which could help me recruit participants more easily. I was put in touch with the Student Services Director at the College of Arts and Letters. They provided me with the steps I would take to submit my IRB approval form from Bowling Green State University (BGSU) to Midwestern University. I received a lot of helpful information about WAC. These steps helped me establish connections so that I could contact and move forward with my study as soon as I received IRB approval. I started working on my IRB application in March 2021 to seek approval for this project. The IRB process alone was 10 months, with a break I took in the summer to complete my preliminary examinations. I completed my IRB application in October 2021 and submitted it to BGSU's IRB. I completed my first and only round of application revisions at the end of November 2021 and received full IRB approval on January 4th, 2022.

In early January 2022, I contacted Midwestern University's Registrar's office to obtain a list of the names and e-mail addresses of all instructors and students who taught or took WAC courses at Midwestern University between fall 2019 and fall 2021. I chose this timeframe because I wanted the courses and feedback practices to be as current as possible, but I also wanted the student participants to have already completed the WAC course so they knew their grade in that course would not be impacted by participating in the study. In the e-mail to the Registrar's Office, I included the focus of my study, which, at the time, was a deep investigation into WAC instructor feedback on student writing as advocacy. I identified my research site as the WAC Program at Midwestern University, and it was known that BGSU and Midwestern

University have reciprocity, which meant I'd only have to complete one IRB application as Midwestern University can accept BGSU's IRB approval records to conduct research at their institution.

After a one-week follow-up to my original e-mail sent earlier in January 2022, I received an e-mail from Midwestern University's Public Records Request on January 24th, 2022. The e-mail served as an acknowledgment, and they stated they were going to contact any appropriate department to collect the records I requested. Once the records were collected, their office had to conduct a legal review of the records.

While I waited to receive the records, I e-mailed Midwestern University's IRB late January 2022. They requested to see my initial proposal and my record of approval from BGSU's IRB. I sent both to Midwestern University's IRB the same day, and the information was forwarded to public records to help assist them in the process of retrieving the public records I requested at the beginning of the month.

During the first week of February 2022, I received an e-mail from the Director of WAC. It was an update concerning the two pieces of information I was requesting for my research study. The list of Midwestern University WAC instructors from 2019 could be sent to me with no violations, but my second set of data—Midwestern University WAC students—would be difficult to produce. After the Director had a conversation with Midwestern University's Legal Affairs Office, it was identified that asking for a list of students in connection to a specific course is in violation of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws. I was offered alternative methods of accessing the information without being in violation. The following two methods of data collection were presented to me:

1. The university could provide me with a list of all students who took classes at Midwestern University during 2019-2022.

However, it wasn't clear if this would be a list of *all* students or if they could send a list of juniors and seniors—the students who typically take WAC courses. I could then survey that population of students, asking them to self-identify if they had taken a WAC course during the 2019-2022 semesters and if they would be willing to participate in my study. This would give me the most information, but it was pointed out that this method would be time and effort-consuming on my part.

2. The second method would be to first select the instructors whom I would like to plan to work with for my study, then work with them to identify students who would be able to participate.

For this approach, it was suggested that I could create an e-mail invitation that the instructors would send out to the past students from 2019-2022 on my behalf. I would need to go through the instructors for this and receive their approval, and then students could contact me directly if they wished to participate.

I chose the second option because it saved a lot of time since I would be working with a list that was narrowed versus a list where there would be thousands of names. The second option also aligned with a goal that I had for this study, which was to interview students and instructors from the same WAC course, or in other words, if I were interviewing an instructor who taught ART 3000, then I would want to interview students who were in that class. This would help me achieve the highest benefit from this study of analyzing instructors' value systems and students' experiences in the class based on those systems. I believe this was the best course of action since it created a sense of cohesion.

Once I decided to begin recruiting Midwestern University WAC instructors first, I waited to receive a list from Legal Affairs. In late February 2022, I was notified that they would not be able to provide a list of Midwestern University WAC instructors with contact information for me. The Director of WAC decided to move forward and compile the list themselves. I received it the same day. In the e-mail, it was requested that I identify which instructors I wanted to work with first, then send the list to him, then he would provide the Midwestern University e-mails to me for the faculty that I chose. On the original spreadsheet, there were 70–80 names of instructors who taught a WAC course between fall 2018 and spring 2022. Alongside the names were the WAC course they taught, including the subject and section number. Table 3 provides a list of WAC courses offered at Midwestern University between 2018 and 2022.

I had to decide how I would choose instructors from the spreadsheet. I considered how my workflow would impact other people and their workflows, so this meant being aware of the amount of free labor this would require from the WAC Director. I went in with a couple of goals since I could not choose every single instructor to send the recruitment survey to. First, I wanted to choose courses outside the standard composition classes, which is what most WAC courses are, but I especially wanted classes in different subjects other than English. I was also interested in courses that covered topics that focus on minority populations, which is why I ended up choosing and prioritizing instructors who taught women's studies, disability studies, and autism and culture.[3] I also chose instructors from other areas of study, like Math, Chemistry, and History since I am not familiar with writing in those fields and WAC is greatly focused on writing exposure across disciplines. And although I received names from 2018, I only had

[3] I want to call attention to myself and all three participants in this study. It is important to address that I am a white woman, and this study represents the experiences of white scholars with WAC. Due to a low response rate and general demographics in the Midwest, the study is not fully representative of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and races.

approval to conduct research with participants who taught a WAC course between 2019-2022, so I did eliminate the 2018 listings at the start of my selection process.

Table 1

WAC Courses Offered at Midwestern University Between 2018 and 2022

Course Section	Course Subject
ART 3850	Gallery Practices
ART 4850	Professional Practices
CHEM 3360	Analytical Chemistry Lab
CHEM 3860	Advanced Laboratory
CHEM 4560	Biophysical Chemistry Lab
COMM 3270	Multimedia Newswriting
COMM 3820	Persuasion Theory
COMM 4090	Mass Communication Ethics
COMM 4100	Television Journalism
COMM 4100	Multimedia Journalism
COMM 4250	Mass Communication History
COMM 4640	PR Case Studies
COMM 4820	Family Communication
COMM 4830	Gender, Culture, and Communication
DST 3090	Disability in American Literature
DST 3250	Disability and Life Narratives
DST 3980	Special Topics in Disability Studies
DST 4200	Crip Arts, Crip Culture
DST 4800	Autism and Culture
ECON 3080	Economics of Crime
ECON 3300	Benefit-Cost Analysis
ENGL 2800	Writing about Literature
ENGL 3010	Creative Writing
ENGL 3650	Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature
ENGL 3730	Folklore
ENGL 3850	LGBTQ Literature
ENGL 4070	Writing Workshop in Poetry

Table 1 (Continued)

WAC Courses Offered at Midwestern University Between 2018 and 2022

Course Section	Course Subject
ENGL 4080	Writing Workshop in Fiction
ENGL 4090	Current Writing Theory
ENGL 4210	Issues in ESL Writing
FILM 2320	Digital Cinema Production I
GEPL 2030	Cultural Geography
GEPL 3300	Geography, Latin American Caribbean
GEPL 3610	Conservation and Resources
GEPL 4310	Gypsies, Romanies, and Travelers
HIST 1300	Introduction to Historical Thinking
HIST 2000	Methods Seminar
MATH 2190	Foundations of Mathematics
MATH 3190	Introduction to Mathematical Analysis
MUS 3410	Music History and Literature II
MUS 3420	Music History and Literature III
PHIL 3180	Environmental Ethics
PHIL 3210	Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
PHIL 3230	Modern Philosophy
PHIL 3570	Philosophy of Religion
PHYS 3310	Modern Physics
PHYS 4580	Molecular and Condensed Matter
PHYS 4780	Atomic and Nuclear Physics Lab
SOC 2410	Communities
WGST 3010	Global Issues: Women's Studies
WGST 3700	Women's Studies Topics in Literature
WGST 4100	Women's Studies Topics in Film
WGST 4350	Women's Studies Topics in Communication
WGST 4890	Research and Methods in Women's and Gender Studies
WGST 3010	Global Issues in Women's Studies
WGST 3980	Topics in Women's and Gender Studies
WGST 4350	Topics in Women's and Gender Studies

While I focused on choosing instructors from a range of fields and especially wanted to work closely with those who teach courses such as women's studies, disability studies, and autism and culture, I took a few days to learn about the instructors based on whatever I could find on their Midwestern University Faculty webpage and by looking up the course. I wanted to make sure I was choosing participants that would fit the goal of this study—not really knowing exactly what this looked like at that moment or what I would find. I looked up each instructor and got to read about their research, but I also saw ratings on these professors. I didn't let a positive rating or negative rating impact if I chose to contact those professors because I am aware of how biased, unreliable, and subjective these evaluations can be. But I was interested in those ratings that specifically mentioned grading, feedback, or writing, whether it was positive or negative. By doing this initial search, I discovered that some professors I was interested in interviewing were not affiliated with Midwestern University anymore, which I believe saved time for myself and the Director of WAC.

I chose 18 instructors and listed their names on a spreadsheet, and then designated a column for their e-mail addresses. I e-mailed the list back to the Director on February 28th, 2022, and on March 3rd, 2022, the spreadsheet was e-mailed back to me with contact information for 16 out of the 18 names because two of them could not be found in Midwestern University's Microsoft Outlook database. I decided to move forward with the 16 instructors.

I used BGSU's Qualtrics software to create a recruitment survey that included a brief description of the study, an informed consent section, and eight short-answer questions. The full recruitment survey can be found in Appendix D, and the short-answer questions are listed below.

1. What is your current job title?

2. What Writing Across the Curriculum courses have you taught at Midwestern University? Please provide the course number, course title, when you taught the course, and a brief overview of the course description.
3. How do you evaluate student writing in your Writing Across the Curriculum courses? Please describe your feedback methods and goals and what influences your practices.
4. Were you taught how to give feedback to students?
5. Have your feedback methods changed over time?
6. Does the way you give feedback change between course discipline? How?
7. Do you save or have access to the feedback you've provided for students in your WAC class?
8. Are you interested in further participation in this study through a follow-up interview? By clicking "YES", you will be prompted to share your name and e-mail. By clicking "NO" the survey will be completed, and you can exit the survey.

I circulated the survey via e-mail from my BGSU e-mail to the instructors' Midwestern University e-mails on March 23rd, 2022, using the blind carbon copy feature in Microsoft Outlook. I chose to send the e-mail with the survey at the end of March because Midwestern University went on spring break shortly after I received the contact information for recruitment. I sent my e-mail recruitment script to my advisor for feedback as well. I also decided to wait a little while after spring break, so instructors had time to settle in after the break and go through their e-mails. This ensured that my e-mail wouldn't get lost in anyone's inbox. The survey appeared as a hyperlink in the e-mail. If the participant selected "YES" to the final question, then there was space on the survey to provide their contact information.

After receiving no responses during the first week, I sent a follow-up e-mail to the potential participants on April 5th, 2022, and a final reminder on the day the survey was set to close, which was April 15th, 2022. The survey remained open between March 23rd and April 15th—a total of 24 days. After the survey was live for one week and I did not receive any responses, I panicked, and I reached out to the Director of WAC with a list of 11 additional WAC instructors at the end of March 2022. I received their contact information in mid-April and immediately sent out another recruitment e-mail the same day to the 11 new potential participants since I only received a couple of responses on my first round of recruitment with the 16 WAC instructors. I sent a follow-up and final reminder as I did with the first round of recruitment. I used the same survey on Qualtrics. During the second round of recruitment, the survey stayed open between April 12th and May 4th, which was 23 days. Between the two rounds of initial recruitment, I received five responses. Two out of the five were interested in participating further in my research project and provided their contact information on the survey. One was from the first round of recruitment and the other was from the second round.

In April 2022, I sent an e-mail to the first potential participant. I sent a follow-up e-mail in May, but I never received a response. I sent an e-mail to the second potential participant, Lillian, and received a response two days later with meeting times available the following week. I conducted the first interview with Lilian in May 2022 over Zoom. I originally planned on the interview being 45–60 minutes, but Lilian and I talked for nearly two hours, and we engaged deeply in the topics of WAC, writing, writing in history, advocacy, and feedback.

I was excited about how the first interview went with Lilian. I learned a lot and felt that I had enough information just from this one interview to write this entire project. I tried to prepare for the possibility that I would write my dissertation using one perspective, but I thought back to

my prospectus presentation from November 2021. In my presentation, I expressed how much it means to me to include perspectives that are often left out, especially a crucial voice to the feedback process, which is the student's voice. It had been six months since my prospectus, and I worried that I wasn't staying committed to my original research goals. I knew I wanted to include other voices and various perspectives.

With that thought relentlessly on my mind, I reached out to a couple of my colleagues and my advisor. I began to network with multiple people with the potential to work with WAC instructors from Ashland and Cincinnati. A lot of my efforts to keep pushing for more were out of pure panic that I wouldn't have enough participants or data, but I truly deep down wanted to stick as closely as possible to my original proposed study to find and highlight various perspectives. I learned a lot about myself and how research goals will shift. It taught me to be flexible and open; there is a world of WAC beyond Northwest Ohio.

I eventually contacted two other WAC scholars from different universities in the United States. I also started looking more closely at the connection between WAC Programs and Writing Centers. As I connected with new colleagues throughout the summer of 2022 over e-mail, I gauged their interest in participating in my study. I met briefly and informally with two potential participants to describe my study and introduce myself. Once they confirmed they were interested in participating in my study through a Zoom interview, I submitted an IRB amendment in July 2022. In the amendment, I requested to interview outside of my original participant pool of instructors and students in the WAC program at Midwestern University. I added three new potential participants. At this time, it did not seem that I would have student participants because it was incredibly difficult to obtain any contact information. During this time, I also moved away from working with Midwestern University and my focus shifted to WAC scholars and those who

work in writing programs, whether as director of a program or director of a writing center. I did not use a recruitment survey for these new potential participants since I'd already connected with them and knew who they were, and instead, sent them an e-mail request for participation in one interview. Additionally, the focus of my study shifted slightly by wanting to learn more about how writing exists in WAC programs, what kinds of professional development opportunities are planned for faculty who teach a writing class but do not have a background in Writing Studies, how writing is defined, and what these new potential participants experience in WAC programs, especially in regard to sustainability and campus and community connections.

I completed one round of IRB revisions to change the title of my project, and then I received IRB approval for my amendment requests in the middle of August 2022. I conducted two interviews in September 2022. One was with a WAC scholar and the other was with Maeve, the Writing Center Coordinator from Midwestern University. I felt reinvigorated and motivated again with my research. I started to rethink a new structure for my dissertation chapters, and I wrote out many, many versions of what this would look like. I decided I would present my research as three perspectives from scholars who are connected to WAC. I began to focus more on the sustainability of WAC, labor inequality in academia, Writing Center pedagogy, and the importance of campus and community connections for WAC. I was excited about this structure and the new knowledge I gained from all three interviews that I conducted throughout 2022, but in fall 2022, I still had a previous goal in mind, and I did not want to give it up.

At the beginning of September 2022, once the summer ended and faculty and students were adjusting and settling into the start of a new semester, I contacted Lilian through e-mail. I sent Lilian the transcript of our interview for her to review. I also requested two additional pieces of information, which I was hesitant about since labor inequality was heavy on my mind. I asked

Lilian if she could share any of her grading rubrics from the History WAC course that she teaches (see Appendices G and H). The second piece of information that I requested asked for 10–15 e-mail addresses of past students that took Lilian's WAC course between 2019–2022. Lilian agreed to reach out to former students to get their permission to receive a survey from me to their Midwestern University e-mail addresses.

In late October 2022, I followed up with Lilian to schedule a member-check interview with her and I asked if she contacted or heard back from any of her former students. On the same day, I received a response from Lilian. Only four students responded to her e-mail, but they all expressed interest in participating in my study and wanted to take the survey. Lilian and I scheduled the member-check interview for November 16th. In the member check-interview, I shared the final revised audio transcript, my notes, and my findings, and I asked follow-up questions. We also went over how she would like to be identified in the research study. I learned a lot during our interviews, and I felt that I solidified my findings and notes so I could confidently include Lilian and all her insights in my research study.

In late fall, I sent a recruitment survey to four Midwestern University WAC students once Lilian provided their e-mail addresses to me with their written consent. Similar to my recruitment process with Midwestern University WAC instructors, I used the list of four students to circulate a Qualtrics recruitment survey via e-mail from my BGSU e-mail to their Midwestern University e-mails that included a brief description of the study, an informed consent section, and the following six short-answer questions:

1. What is your affiliation with Midwestern University?
2. What Writing Across the Curriculum courses have you been enrolled in and when were you enrolled in those courses?

3. Do you receive feedback on your writing? Please describe your positive and/or negative experiences with feedback from your instructor(s).
4. How important is feedback to you?
5. How do you use the feedback your instructor gives you?
6. Are you interested in further participation in this study through a follow-up interview? By clicking "YES", you will be prompted to share your name and e-mail. By clicking "NO" the survey will be completed, and you can exit the survey.

I sent the survey via e-mail using the blind carbon copy feature in Microsoft Outlook, and the survey itself appeared as a hyperlink in that e-mail. If the participant selected "YES" to the final survey question, a space to provide their contact information appeared. Three out of the four potential student participants replied to the survey and all three expressed their interest in further participation and provided their contact information. The survey remained open for one more week with it being open for a total of 15 days.

I e-mailed all three potential participants. I received one response from Jay, one of the participants. I did not follow up with the other potential student participants because I was considering how much data I already had, and how much more I would need or have time for. Jay and I scheduled a virtual interview over Zoom for November 10th, 2022. I followed a script for this interview and planned for the interview to be 45–60 minutes. The interview was about 51 minutes and we engaged deeply in the topics of WAC, writing, writing in history, writing in the workplace, faculty labor, advocacy, and feedback.

By the middle of December 2022, I conducted four interviews. Three out of the four interviews were transcribed and coded. I typed up a Word document with notes, findings, and follow-up questions for each interview that I transcribed and coded. This document was different

for each interview, but typically, it was two to three pages and categorized into different topics that I discovered through coding. In the document, I followed a bullet point list structure and listed my initial findings. I sent this document to each participant before their member-check interviews so they could review the document to ensure their answers were represented accurately and no identifying information was included. The final two member-check interviews with Jay and Maeve were conducted in March and May of 2023.

The topics in the document for Lilian included WAC Course, WAC, Peer Review, Writing, Feedback, and Advocacy. The topics in the document for Maeve included Writing Center Role, Writing Center Services, Feedback (experiences at Midwestern University Writing Center that the participant would see on student writing), Feedback (how consultants give feedback), Writing Center and Campus and Community Connections, Benefits of the Writing Center, Writing Center Pedagogy, Writing, WAC, Transferable Skills, Midwestern University Writing Center and WAC, and Advocacy. The topics in the document for Jay included Student Profile, WAC, Writing, Advocacy, Unfamiliar Writing Situations/Workplace Writing, and Feedback. The topics served as headings. Under each heading, I included information that was only directly said by the participant in their interview as a bullet point list that related back to the heading. Each follow-up question asked for expansion, further articulation, or more contextual information only on the topics that were initially discussed and identified.

Methodologies

My dissertation is largely qualitative in nature utilizing humanistic approaches, especially when I conducted all interviews and data coding. The humanistic approaches I used were influenced by Catherine Daniel's work, "A Pedagogy of Kindness" (2019), where we are not asked to sacrifice ourselves or take on additional emotional labor, but to apply compassion to

every situation we find ourselves in. Denial also emphasized the importance of believing people and believing in people, which are the two parts that make up the practice of kindness as pedagogy. Believing people builds trust and believing in people builds collaboration. In this study, I relied heavily on collaboration, working with my participants as collaborators who added valuable contributions and made this study what it is.

I also embraced relationality in advocacy work influenced by Rhetoric and Writing scholar, Maria Novotny. In Novotny's article, "Intervening in #Access2Care: Towards A Rhetorical Framework for Relational Advocacy" (2021), I learned relationality is rooted in indigenous traditions. According to indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson cited in Novotny's (2021) article, it means to practice "respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and humility" (para. 7). The researcher is the role of the mediator where "we are accountable to ourselves, the community, our environment or cosmos as a whole, and also to the idea or topics that we are researching" (Novotny, 2021, para. 8). Practicing relationality "may situate rhetorical scholarship toward practices that actively embrace an ethics of care—not just for our research participants but toward practices that care for greater social change" (Novotny, 2021, para. 25). I treated each participant with respect and situated myself as an empathetic learner. While I originally wanted to place emphasis on feedback practices and essentially find wrongdoings in those practices, I realized it was not the correct starting point for this research, which I expand upon in the next chapter. I recognized I wanted to adapt research practices that would work toward greater social change and build community with each participant. This is when I learned about rhetorical slippages as an advocacy practice and how I could apply this term to my research to reflect an ethics of care and to emphasize my participants' stories.

Rhetorical slippage is "a term offered by John Gagnon and calls upon rhetoricians to examine the ways in which terms and concepts slip into more simplistic forms that fail to account for important nuance and detail" (Novotny, 2021, para. 15). Rhetorical slippage as a practice in this study included active, radical listening to the stories of my participants. Additionally, I often asked participants more than once to define the same term or to try to build upon their definitions of WAC, writing, and advocacy. For example, instead of defining WAC as just writing across the curriculum, I tried to reframe my questions for a deeper, nuanced definition. I asked my participant, Maeve, "If a student says they're taking a WAC course, what do you envision?" This led to an explanation and visual of WAC from what Maeve imagines and what she hopes. Rhetorical slippage is also a term I use when describing the misalignment between the instructor's intention with their feedback to students and how students actually experience their feedback.

I used grounded theory for this study, where the data influenced my codes and findings in my analysis. I chose to utilize grounded theory to remain open to the possibilities, shifts in research goals, and data. I went into this research with many hopes and goals, alongside my own strict beliefs about writing and feedback, but grounded theory helped me situate myself and my expectations. Within the collection, *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies* from Nickoson and Sheridan, Broad (2012) emphasizes the responsibility of situating oneself and further highlights the benefits of integrating a grounded theory approach to qualitative research:

> Grounded theory is the qualitative method that does the best job in my view of meeting qualitative researchers 's most urgent responsibility: to actively seek out interpretations contrary to what they might have hoped or expected to find, and to ensure that

> interpretations are 'emic,' that is, that they are deeply rooted in the interpretive frameworks of research participants. (Broad, 2012, p. 204)

The use of grounded theory within my research process impacted various stages of research, but I return to how I highlighted direct quotes from my participants in the transcripts. It was not until all the data was collected and when I pulled specific quotes that I built my codes and findings. I began to think about the quotes as clues and I leaned in with curiosity. This is where meaning making happened and how grounded theory led me there by formulating specific codes, gaining new knowledge in an area I considered myself an expert in, and keeping participant voices intact.

Data Sources

All interviews took place remotely through Zoom. The interviews were recorded, saved to my personal laptop, and transcribed using the online software Otter.AI. Aside from Lilian, Jay, and Maeve being my main data sources, I collected data through the recruitment surveys using Qualtrics.

Other data sources included rubrics that were sent directly to me through e-mail. Before I began the recruitment process, The WAC Director sent a rubric for review of WAC courses (see Appendix F). This rubric is offered to faculty and used by the WAC committee at Midwestern University to evaluate potential WAC courses. Lilian sent me two grading rubrics (see Appendices G and H). One rubric is for the rough draft essay assignment and the other rubric is for assessing students' final drafts for the essay assignment.

Data Analysis and Coding

Data analysis for this study occurred in multiple stages. During each interview, I took notes to track what stood out to me and to remind myself what to follow up on with the participant for the duration of the interview. The rubrics that had been shared with me were

lightly coded by adding reflective comments and I summarized information in the margins of the documents. I also lightly coded the survey responses from instructors and students. For the instructor survey, I used the following codes: Role Title, WAC Course Section, Feedback Practices, and Prior Knowledge of Feedback. For the student survey, I used the following codes: Midwestern University Affiliation, Feedback Experiences, Importance of Feedback, and Usage of Feedback. As I stated earlier, any participant who was interested in further participation by participating in an interview could provide their contact information, which concluded the survey.

After the first interviews had been completed, a formal coding process was applied to the transcripts. During the coding process, I highlighted information that aligned with the study, which originally focused on WAC, writing, feedback, and advocacy, but I ended up discovering information that was completely unique to the individual and their experiences. This was a learning opportunity for me that I wanted to bring to this study for readers and learners beyond WAC and Writing Studies.

I took the information for what it was—meaning that I did not look too deeply at literary nuances as I was used to when analyzing writing because of my creative writing background. I looked at the direct language, highlighted direct quotes from participants, and took brief notes on what that highlighted information was saying. The codes I started to work with first were:

- Definitions of WAC
- Definitions of Writing
- Advocacy Discourse
- Feedback Practices and Experiences

I ascribed each of those codes to the direct language from the transcripts. Any time a participant started to describe WAC; I assigned *Definitions of WAC*. In interviews, I asked each participant to provide their own definition of WAC, so I looked for their answers to that question, but I looked beyond their answer to that question to discover how else they understood WAC. I intentionally tried to be direct with my questions so the interviews could easily be categorized into WAC, writing, feedback, and advocacy, but with the participants' personal experiences and my follow-up questions, I once again took the direct language and picked out keywords and considered what was discussed just before to identify any associations so that I could formulate an appropriate code. For example, in my interview with Jay, we talked about unfamiliar writing situations, and he started talking about his experiences with workplace writing and feedback from bosses. So, I tried to see how all of my participants were making connections between words, memories, and their own experiences.

The way my participants told their stories is how the other codes were formulated, which included:

- WAC Course
- Peer Review
- Writing Center Role Title and Responsibilities
- Campus and Community Connections
- Writing Center Pedagogy
- Student Profile
- Unfamiliar Writing Situations/Workplace Writing
- Transferable Skills

The codes that remained the same served as pillars of this study since they were the main topics initially proposed from the very beginning: WAC, Writing, Advocacy, and Feedback.

Member-Check Interviews

The primary purpose of the member-check interviews was for all my participants and I to mutually negotiate their representation in the study. The limited number of participants and the specificity of location and roles influenced this decision to conduct member-check interviews so that participants could be comfortable with the way they were represented in the study. I wanted to provide my participants the chance to be informed of their representation in my study, and ideally even contribute to a fuller, more accurate representation. In order to accomplish the purpose of negotiating representation, respecting my participants, and advocating for them, I provided each participant with an interview protocol document that highlighted significant quotations from their interviews, along with notes, and talking points related to my understanding of what each participant had said in their interviews and initial findings. I also included follow-up questions, which resulted in more space for the participant to reflect on their answers, expand, articulate, clarify, and contextualize for the most accurate representation.

Throughout the interview, I asked the participants to look closely at the information from the document and decide if it identified them or not. During the interview, we worked together to discard certain information, so their identity was not revealed. At the end of the interview, I asked how they would like to be referenced to in the study, which is how I determined the use of pseudonyms alongside their role titles (i.e., WAC student, WAC instructor, Writing Center Coordinator). The member-check interviews were planned for up to 60 minutes, but all participants agreed to extend the duration in order to complete the interview process and ensure that representation would be as accurate as possible.

Survey Responses and Results

WAC Instructor Survey

The first survey I sent was to potential WAC instructor participants. This survey was titled "Instructor Feedback Practices in WAC Courses" (see Appendix D). The survey was sent to 27 potential WAC instructor participants. I received five responses from professors, lecturers, and a Chair faculty member. Each participant provided the WAC course they taught. The subjects included History, Economics, Philosophy and Religion, Communication, and Women and Gender Studies. In the survey, I asked the participants to briefly describe their feedback methods and goals. One participant indicated that they use a grading rubric which "weighs 70% on content and argument and 30% on writing mechanics including organization, clarity, and grammar." Other participants stated they provide feedback on multiple drafts and use peer evaluation as a feedback method. One participant stated they grade in-class exercises and daily writings on completion only. All participants indicated that they were taught how to give feedback. Following those questions, the survey asked if the way they give feedback changes between course discipline. All participants indicated their methods do not change. The final two questions asked about further interest in participating in the study. If a participant selected "YES", then the survey went to an additional question where it asked participants to provide their name and e-mail. This is where two out of the five participants provided their contact information.

I felt that I did not receive in-depth answers. For example, I asked instructors to provide their WAC course name and number, along with when they taught the course and a brief overview of the course description. Only one participant provided an overview of the course, and that was Lilian. The rest of the participants only provided a course name or number, and one

participant only provided the course name. In another question, I asked instructors how they evaluate writing where I wanted them to describe their feedback methods. I was interested to learn new and innovative ways of feedback methods, but three answers indicated students give feedback on writing during peer review. It took two rounds of recruitment, and several follow-up e-mails to receive responses on this survey.

WAC Student Survey

The second recruitment survey I sent was to potential WAC student participants. This survey was titled "Feedback in Writing Across the Curriculum Courses" (see Appendix E). Generating a list of potential student participants was more difficult than the instructor participant list. It was required that I went through a professor to receive student names and then receive written consent from the students to receive a survey from me. There were four potential WAC student participants interested in taking my initial recruitment survey. I received the names of the students and sent them the e-mail with the survey. The survey received responses from three students. One student was an alumni student, one was a fourth-year undergraduate student, and the last participant was a third-year undergraduate student. The survey asked each participant what WAC courses they were enrolled in. One of the survey participants only took one WAC course, another participant took two, and the third survey participant took three WAC courses. In the survey, I asked if the students receive feedback on their writing and I asked them to describe their experiences with feedback, both positive and negative, from their instructors. All three participants indicated positive experiences. Two of the participants detailed their experiences. One participant stated their professor always ensured that their writing was clear and concise, and they never felt any negativity regarding their writing. The other participant who detailed their experience said their biggest critiques included expanding ideas further or to include more

supporting sources for a particular point. This participant also said, “Beyond that however, most of the feedback was positive regarding content, presentation of ideas, and reflection of material covered in class.” After students shared their experiences with feedback in the survey, the next question asked how important feedback is to them. Students could indicate that feedback is not at all important, slightly important, moderately important, very important, or extremely important. Two participants indicated that feedback is very important to them, and one participant said feedback is moderately important to them. The last question asked how the student uses feedback given to them by their instructor. One student said, “I take it to heart and try to use it to better my own writing skills.” Another student indicated that they incorporate feedback into their writing to improve their arguments and to detail their evidence more clearly. They said, “Instructor feedback has been critical in helping me improve my clarity while helping make my overall writing more concise, which are crucial skills to master for my future academic plans.” This survey participant indicated that they have plans to attend law school where they believe writing is a major component.

I found that the answers the students provided were richly detailed. It was great to hear that all the students felt that their experiences with feedback were mostly positive. In this study, I've often wondered how our teaching of writing and feedback methods help the individual writer and not the product of writing. From these results, I was able to identify that the feedback we provide can help improve students’ skills that they find useful to achieve their academic goals. I expand on the relationship between feedback and students’ personal, professional, and academic goals in the final chapter.

Representing the Results from Interviews with Lilian, Jay, and Maeve

The following three chapters demonstrate a deeper discussion into the topics discussed in this chapter and the previous one. Each chapter is a perspective. I chose not to scaffold or combine voices in one chapter because each participant shared a unique story. While there are connections that I will make in the final chapter, each story is its own and they are not fully in conjunction with one another. For example, Jay's interview is not an answer or response to Lilian's interview. To keep each participant's voice intact, I felt it was important to create individual chapters. Each chapter presents my findings and utilizes direct language from the participant's initial interview and member-check interview. Chapter 3 is Lilian's perspective as a WAC Lecturer. Chapter 4 is Jay's perspective of WAC and experience with feedback as a WAC student. Chapter 5 is Maeve's perspective of WAC and feedback from a Writing Center Coordinator's perspective. Each chapter covers WAC, writing, feedback, and advocacy. Other topics are included in each chapter based on the participants specific experiences and knowledge. The following chapters serve as a unique set of stories told using each participant's own words where I attempt to create an interconnected case study of experiences and practices from WAC affiliated participants at Midwestern University.

CHAPTER 3: "MY WRITING IS NOT THAT BEAUTIFUL": A WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM LECTURER'S PERSPECTIVE

During the time of data collection in spring 2022, Lilian was an Associate Lecturer at Midwestern University who taught History courses—one of those courses being a WAC course[4] she'd been teaching for nine years. After meeting with Lilian, it quickly became apparent to me that she is a passionate historian and values writing in many ways as an instructor of WAC. In this chapter, I begin by sharing Lilian's experience with WAC at Midwestern University. I provide an overview of the WAC course Lilian taught and how writing is applied in the course. From there, I explore discussions of the study's key terms, which are *WAC*, *writing*, *advocacy*, and *feedback*, drawing on the initial interview and member check interview that I conducted with Lilian. I conclude the chapter with a reflection on the takeaways that speak to my research questions that I later synthesize in a final chapter.

Lilian's Experiences with WAC

Overview of the Course

Lilian teaches a History WAC course at Midwestern University and my interviews with Lilian focused on this course and the subject of History. The History WAC course focused on teaching the basics of writing like a historian. It is a required course for History majors and minors, and History Education majors. It is meant to be taken as a first-year or second-year student. Lilian talked about the kinds of writing practiced in the course and the order in which the assignments are completed by the students. She stated, "So, we do bibliographies in Chicago style, and then they write a research paper, and I teach them how to do footnotes, because that's the big thing we're obsessed with in history" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian mentioned that the course highlights writing as a process and the writing in the course is

[4]Lilian requested that I do not name the course or provide the course number. The course will be referenced as History WAC course.

about the journey to the final research paper, which is required to be fifteen pages. Students complete a bibliography, a short rough draft, a long rough draft, then the final research paper. Lilian said, “Everything is geared towards the paper” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022), connecting each assignment to one another. The course prioritized evidence-based writing where students chose their own topic and performed in-depth research with primary sources. They then learned to synthesize the information they found in their research to create an argument for their paper. Lilian emphasized, “Show, don’t just tell” to her students. She mentioned she always talked to her students about this and said, “Use evidence and explain what that evidence means to you [the students]” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). As Lilian talked, I learned it was very important for the writing in the History WAC course to contain a strong thesis statement. Lilian said, “If the person only read your thesis, they should know what the whole paper is about” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). The thesis statement would then be the argument that is carried throughout the entire paper supported by the evidence the students later presented to the class.

While the argument needs to be strong and strongly supported, Lilian mentioned, “We’re not expecting perfection” and she suggested that the writing from this course could be used as a sample piece of writing for graduate school. She explained:

> The paper they write could totally be a sample that they send off to graduate school, but it doesn’t have to be that because, if you’re a freshman or sophomore, your writing is going to get better as you go along, so it’s okay if it’s not perfect at the end. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Writing as a journey of developing a reflective stance on process was very apparent in Lilian’s WAC course rather than writing being a product of perfection.

Applying WAC Principles

Lilian applied writing and principles of WAC in numerous ways over the past nine years. It is important to note when Lilian first began teaching the History course in 2013, it was already labeled a WAC course and was previously taught as a WAC course, but no one explained to her what made it a WAC course. Lilian mentioned if the course was not a WAC course, all the same assignments would still be included besides the writing about writing (WAW) assignment. Lilian created the WAW assignment after she attended a WAC training session in 2018 at Midwestern University and realized she was supposed to incorporate a reflective component into her course where the students write about writing. After the training session, Lilian searched the internet for examples of WAW assignments and this is where she received a suggestion on an assignment called Letter to the Reader. In Lilian's WAC course, the letter to the reader was a letter the students wrote to Lilian. It was a space for students to reflect on their research and point out what was helpful for them during peer review. She determined this assignment would be the most manageable for her students and it would make the most sense to them. Lilian described her thought process when incorporating the WAW assignment into her course:

> I thought, yeah, that sounds great. Because otherwise, like, write about writing…I don't understand. But if I say, oh you're writing this letter to the reader: Tell the reader this is what I did, this is what I want you to get out of it, this is what my argument is, and I hope you like it. That seems that makes sense to them. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Aside from the WAW assignment, Lilian incorporated other types of writing as she learned more about WAC.

Lilian said, “WAC is having different kinds of writing and some of it being low stakes” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). So, when Lilian assigned readings, she began asking her students a question over the reading that they would write a response to and turn in before class. This type of writing served many purposes as Lilian learned more about WAC through training sessions and her own research. Lilian said, “I actually originally started doing it as a way to make them do their homework, but then as I found out more about WAC, I was like, oh yeah, we should have been doing this all along” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). She said it was the type of low stakes writing that WAC encouraged instructors to implement into their WAC courses. While it originally was an assignment meant to get students to do their work, it turned into a way students could engage more with topics that they would potentially research further and it met the WAC requirement at the same time.

Another way that Lilian incorporated WAC was through what she called brainstorming classes. She stated, “Sometimes I have a brainstorming class before discussion. Usually that’s something about, you know, you read this thing about history, let’s talk about it, then I have them pick a topic and start their bibliography” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). The first version of the bibliography is shorter and goes through a round of peer review before the students write up a more complete bibliography. Lilian found that peer review is very important to WAC, so she provides students with more than one opportunity to practice peer review and give feedback.

Before students completed their bibliographies and conducted a peer review, there was an initial peer review that Lilian assigned them. Lilian uses an online tool for peer review called Critic. She mentioned, “The students had to pay, I think, $24 for six months. But you can upload your papers and then Critic will anonymize them and assign them. It does it all for the instructor”

(Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). In peer review, Lilian gave the students an older example of writing from a past student and the students filled out a rubric. It is the same rubric that Lilian uses to assess their writing. Lilian said, "So, it gives them [the students] a level to see, oh, am I on the same page as the professor? Or am I different?" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Once this is completed, they conduct peer review on each other's bibliographies. The students gave feedback on a minimum number of papers that Lilian assigns to them, which varies, and then the students "get to give feedback on the feedback" they receive. This way, students received feedback on how to improve their paper, but they also received feedback on how to give better feedback on other people's papers. Lilian noted that students see the mistakes that are easy to not get right, particularly in the footnotes, like commas and parentheses, which are necessary for Chicago style formatting, and Chicago style formatting is an essential part of writing like a historian. Most of Lilian's students were History majors, History minors, or History Education majors, so writing like a historian is important to each of those areas of study. Students also gave feedback on the credibility of sources. To help assist students in peer review, Lilian made a peer review sheet that asks students to comment on argument, specifically making sure the argument was focused, and pointing out anything that needed clarification, and then there should be one final comment of praise.

Overall, the main WAC principles that were applied by Lilian included WAW, WTL, and WID. Lilian incorporated a WAW assignment where students reflected on their own writing and had the opportunity to explain what they were writing in their research and why. This assignment also serves as a WTL assignment, because, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, WTL is viewed as an opportunity for the student writer to explain the matter to themselves versus explaining the matter to others. While this assignment did have to be turned in to Lilian, it served as a space for

students to understand their points in research and learn more about why they're writing what they're writing. During peer review, students used the same rubric that Lilian uses throughout the course. Because of this, they learned the importance of footnotes and argument, which are both essential to writing like a historian. Utilizing a rubric designed for writing in history was a way students engaged with the discipline and how to write in their discipline.

Defining WAC

One of my study's research questions asks, what are the current understandings of WAC? I've been able to investigate this question by asking different members of WAC at Midwestern University, or those closely associated with WAC in some way, how they define the term WAC. With the experiences, training, and knowledge that Lilian has, I was interested to hear how these informed her definition of WAC. When I asked the question, "How do you define WAC?", Lilian responded, "When I first started teaching this WAC class, I was kind of confusing WAC with writing a lot. Sometimes, I think, maybe writing intensive is the right word, but I also think that can sound very intimidating to students" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). This initial discussion of defining WAC led to Lilian and I talking about the way WAC is defined in the course syllabus. Midwestern University WAC instructors are required to include a WAC statement in their syllabi. Lilian said, "We have to say it's a writing intensive course and so it gets the WAC designation" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). This made me question how often and why WAC is misunderstood as writing a lot and it's something I asked Lilian as a follow-up question. Lilian recalled her past experiences with writing classes, especially in high school. She said, "In high school English class, we write and that's it" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). We discussed that this was how most people experienced their English classes in high school. Lilian also speculated about WAC's early

efforts. She said, “Maybe when WAC was first getting started, that’s what it meant. We wanted students to write more to improve their writing skills” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian said WAC doesn’t always have to mean writing a lot or only adding more writing, but it is difficult not to associate WAC with writing a lot because she says, “WAC itself emphasizes writing…it’s in the name!” (Lilian, personal communication, November 16, 2022). In both our interviews, she put an emphasis on peer review and revision in relation to her definition of WAC.

Lilian mentioned, “Professors tend to think WAC has to mean adding more writing, but peer review and revision are very important to WAC” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). While Lilian talked about her definition of WAC, she recalled peer review and revision often. She said, “I always say, the big thing with WAC is peer review and revision” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). She placed importance on revising the same piece of writing throughout the semester because it led to better and deeper practice with revision. If students spend time revising a portion of one paper on one topic and revise another essay on a different topic, it doesn’t give them the best opportunity for revision or the kind of in-depth research that historians practice. In her member check interview that took place six months after her initial interview, Lilian returned to the idea of revision and how quickly the college curriculum moves. She said, “We have to move quickly in college which leaves no room for revision or refining” (Lilian, personal communication, November 16, 2022). Lilian believed WAC should embrace and emphasize a writing process curriculum.

In the end, Lilian expressed, “All of this shows a need for WAC professional development” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian attended at least one WAC professional development event, but since the COVID-19 pandemic, there haven’t been any

opportunities for further professional development. She reflected again on how her course was already designated WAC before she began teaching it and it wasn't until later that "they started to be more intentional about it," she said. This included more engagement through emails and a plan for different types of training to be offered every two years. Lilian recalled attending a WAC training session in 2018 that served as a refresher for instructors who are teaching WAC courses. Lilian remembered, "It was actually from that training session that I realized, oh, they [the students] need to be doing a writing about writing assignment" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian said these types of sessions are very helpful for understanding how to add writing to a WAC course. But without professional development, WAC will remain misunderstood by faculty as writing a lot, which might ultimately leave little space for formulating new understandings of WAC or transforming faculty and student definitions of WAC.

Teaching and Defining Writing

Another important research question I ask in this study is how my participants define writing. With writing being an essential component of WAC, and my general interest in the way scholars and students outside of Writing Studies define writing, I explore each participant's experience with learning to write, beliefs about writing, and their definition of writing. In this section, I discuss Lilian's experience with teaching and defining writing. I first begin by investigating how Lilian learned to write, her beliefs about writing in general, and her beliefs about her own writing. From there, I include Lilian's definition of writing. Since Lilian is a history scholar and teaches History, a lot of our discussion focuses on writing as a historian, and I provide examples of specific conventions of writing in History and the lessons we can learn from History.

When I asked Lilian where she learned to write, she recounted her prior experiences:

> I mean, I had to have learned it at school. So, about the only stuff I remember is, we would do more in middle school, we would do more fiction writing in English class and I was not good at that. And then when I got to high school English class, we all of a sudden—it went, okay, we read this book. Now, make an argument about this book, and I don't know, but even from freshman year, I was like, I got this. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

For Lilian, academic writing was easier than creative writing. She talked about the aspects of academic writing that she enjoyed, which were forming arguments, researching sources, and providing examples to support a point. In high school, Lilian learned the basics of writing, which included writing thesis statements and using credible evidence. Lilian mentioned that she took Advanced Placement (AP) History classes where she practiced writing, but most of the writing she did was in her English classes. Writing outside English courses was not common in education. Lilian talked more about this and said:

> Most writing was almost always done in English class, which is why I think that writing across the curriculum is good. You're already writing in way more than just English class in college, which is good to have that emphasized, because I imagine most students think writing is English. It's like, no, writing is an essential skill. You need to do it in more than just English class. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Along with the misconception that WAC means writing a lot, I discovered another misconception that writing should only be practiced in English classes and writing is not a skill necessary beyond the English classroom. With the existence of writing misconceptions, I believe

this is where WAC plays a huge role in changing the narrative about where writing belongs at the college level and how WAC can teach students the basics of writing beyond English class.

Lilian continued to talk about her experiences as a writer and where she learned to write. She mentioned how much she enjoyed fiction writing and reading fiction, but she expressed fiction writing is hard for her to do. She became a stronger writer in graduate school. She stated, "It was in grad school that I got a lot better at it [writing], because the professors were trying to help you a lot, but particularly, [there was] a lot of emphasis on evidence in undergrad, but then for me, in grad school, professors could be much pickier" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). By picky, Lilian said the professors would ask questions in their feedback about the content in the paper, such as, "What do you mean by this?", or "Why are you saying 'they'?", and "Why is this passive?" This is where I learned the importance of active voice in historical writing. For example, if someone writes, "The law was created," it leaves out what law, who created the law, and when the law went into effect. The passive voice can unintentionally leave out important details, particularly people, so to historians, while it might appear to be "nitpicky," active voice is an essential component of writing like a historian.

I was curious to know if active voice led to more credibility. I asked Lilian, "Do you find when you focus on fixing passive voice in evidence-based writing that it makes the writing more credible? Do you focus on rhetorical appeals in historical writing?" Lilian responded positively and stated this is what she was indicating on the initial recruitment survey. She stated:

> So, in terms of what I would consider rhetorical skills and English level stuff, I would say I do not focus on that so much anymore. If the students are having really long, windy sentences, I'll cut stuff out a few times to try to help them make it more understandable. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Lilian mentioned when she teaches writing in a lecture, she focuses on clarity and organization, but not rhetoric. She stated, "I'm not really equipped to teach rhetoric. My writing is not that beautiful. It's just writing" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). She believed that rhetoric was a step beyond her writing. The more we talked about rhetoric, the more Lilian emphasized she did not teach rhetoric or writing in a rhetorical manner.

Lilian continued to talk about how she teaches writing in her History WAC course by focusing on evidence from primary sources. She said, "We talk more about good evidence, having multiple sources of evidence, and understanding the point of view and bias in your sources and yourself" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian also mentioned the importance of interpreting sources by saying, "You can't take your piece of evidence and be like, oh, the pyramids were built? I bet it was aliens. No, that does not logically follow from that piece of evidence" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian emphasized the importance of forming an argument in writing as a historian, but that the writing itself is not argumentative because it does not use rhetorical appeals, such as ethos or pathos.

Lilian mentioned there are applicable skills and lessons we can learn from writing and history. She said, "Understanding what happened in the past will help you understand what's happening now" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). While she didn't give a specific example, she said her and her students are always learning lessons from the past, which she said is more important than writing a research paper. Lilian noted the importance of writing and the types of skills that will carry over into the real world:

> Writing is important. But let's be real. Most people, you know, your job is not writing a research paper. Writing will be a part of your job, but you don't necessarily have to write a research paper. So, it's more of the skill of finding the

> evidence, understanding if the evidence is good, and how it makes an argument. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Lilian gave the example of not believing everything you read on the internet and recognizing the bias in your source of information as an applicable skill we can learn from writing. History also teaches us about inclusivity and asking questions. Lilian said, "There are always going to be new questions, and this is why history keeps getting bigger. It is because people have been asking, who's not being represented, who are we not hearing from?" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). In her teachings of history and writing, Lilian reminded her students of these lessons and the questions they can ask, focusing on how lessons from the past inform our current understandings of the world.

Lilian's teaching of writing and experience with learning to write are both interconnected with history. After talking about how Lilian learned to write and her experiences with writing and learning as a historian, I asked her to define writing or describe what writing means to her. Up until this point, Lilian responded quickly and deeply to the questions I asked in our interview together. When I asked Lilian to define writing, there was a long pause before she answered:

> So, for me, I would say that writing is primarily a method of communication, and that writing for history, and I think one of the main reasons that the kind of monograph, the sort of argumentative narrative, I guess, is my favorite, why that is kind of our chosen mode of expression, it allows us to get a lot of nuance in there, because we can have the footnotes and cite a bunch of different things, and also you can say something and then have a footnote and say, here's an extra reason why I said that. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Lilian defined writing and writing for history. She defined writing as communication and a way to share information, and she added, “hopefully [you’re] being convincing while doing it” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian talked about writing as a method to help “clarify your thoughts” about a topic or argument. She used the example that students oftentimes start with writing a thesis, but that thesis changes over time as they write more, especially once they write their conclusion and discover their thesis could be a better expression of their argument.

Lilian also discussed writing in terms of emotional satisfaction, or something that is cathartic that you can get out of writing. She explained:

> I would say, for me, I’m like, yay, it’s done. And, you know, you feel proud of it. I generated this and I think it’s good. I think I have something to say. But I guess I don’t really consider myself a writer in the sense that you just write. I’ve never done journaling or any of it. I guess I need a point to writing. So, just writing doesn’t make me feel good. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Writing for emotional satisfaction or for fun is not how Lilian experienced writing, although she recognized writing is very meaningful in that way to others and she loved reading work from writers that contain emotion and beauty. Lilian mentioned, “I’m always amazed, I mean, good poetry is so amazing” (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). She also drew back to her experiences as a reader and how she was an avid reader of fiction where writers rely on an emotional aspect for writing. But Lilian often returned to writing as a historian where she focused on argumentative, evidence-based writing. Sharing information as a historian is where writing resonates most with Lilian.

Teaching the Writing or the Writer

Lilian and I continued to talk about writing, history, feedback, and advocacy. At first, I intentionally left out one of my questions that asked, "Do you think that we teach the writer or the writing?" It was the last question I asked. Lilian said, "I remember seeing that question and I'm not sure I have the answer" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). I referred to a moment earlier in our initial conversation. We talked about how we both related to being encouraging towards our students and their ideas rather than the piece of writing at stake. Lilian explained that this was a difficult question to answer because she said in class, she certainly shows specific content to teach students how to write. She mentioned she pulls from past examples of writing from her students and then describes the writing and how to do it. She mentioned teaching the content and quality of the writing is in the grading:

> A lot of it is in the grading. So, I guess, maybe it's a little bit of both [teaching the writer and teaching the writing], because I would say I'm teaching the writing or the standards of history in class, because I'm like, this is how we do a footnote and here's an example of showing versus telling, like, do that. But then when I read their paper and talk to them, it's more, okay, so you did this, that's good, now add this or explain to me how this is, but I guess it's still following those principles of what we want to look for. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Lilian continued reflecting on this question and jumped between saying we teach the writing, or we teach the writer, but then as she thought more about meeting with students and recognizing talented writers in her class, she believed it's a combination of both teaching the writing and the writer. Lilian also mentioned she's never taken any pedagogy courses or professional

development on how to teach writing or to recognize the difference between teaching the writing versus the writer.

I left this question open-ended and stated that it was solely based on an opinion, and I could not determine an answer “right” or “wrong”, especially since I did not have the answer myself. As I’ve researched WAC and connected with other scholars from different disciplines, I’ve discovered there are writing conventions that are specific to a certain discipline. These conventions have oftentimes been viewed by myself as lower-level concerns in writing, meaning it is a writing standard that I don't often evaluate in my students writing, or if I do, I don't prioritize it or base their grade off it. A few examples include grammar, passive voice, and formatting. Writing in other disciplines is different. I've learned that certain areas of study write differently in and about their subjects. I recognize I might not view an aspect of writing as important as someone else might it in their writing. So, I don't hold the sole definition and meaning of writing or writing conventions. Although I identify as a scholar in Writing Studies, I can see how teaching writing and the writer happen simultaneously. Writing exists in numerous places, and it exists differently—more than I might ever know, but it is why I've found more passion in WAC, because the field of writing is being shared widely and should be continued to be shared and learned in different disciplines and outside of higher-level education.

Identifying Advocacy in History and Teaching

At the beginning of this study, I wanted to identify advocacy discourse in instructor feedback practices. I was hoping to look at actual comments from a professor and easily define advocacy as championing or supporting students and their ideas and focusing on teaching the individual writer, and not the writing. As I began my research, particularly during the time I was writing the literature review, I could not find a lot of research on advocacy and Writing Studies

or general advocacy discourse research. I came to a bigger realization when I read the article titled “WAC Seminar Participants as Surrogate WAC Consultants: Disciplinary Faculty Developing and Deploying WAC Expertise” (2018) by Bradley Hughes and Elisabeth L. Miller.

The article identified the aim of WAC programs as opening up conversations about writing and teaching with writing with interdisciplinary faculty. The study Hughes and Miller conducted offers a powerful form of program assessment. Participants attended a WAC seminar called “Expeditions in Learning: Exploring How Students Learn with WAC” offered every spring by The University of Wisconsin-Madison that focused on faculty development and expertise. Participants must go on “expeditions”, which are active, immersive learning opportunities, including attending a teaching assistant (TA) meeting for a writing intensive (WI) course or interview a professor for a WI course across the curriculum, observe in the writing center, watch videotaped student writing conferences with instructors from WI courses, and observe a class session focused on writing. From this WAC seminar, Hughes and Miller found that “participants emphasized they learned how important it is to integrate process, interaction, and instruction in writing assignments” (Hughes & Miller, 2018, p.17). The WAC seminar also disrupted how different departments think about their courses, especially in terms of how they teach those courses. Seminars like this are helpful because, “WAC experts contain certain knowledge of rhetorical theory and composition pedagogy” (Hughes & Miller, 2018, p. 31). After reading this article, I remembered reflecting that the seminar described in the article is the first step for faculty, and many faculty have not taken this step or are offered an opportunity like this. I realized at this point I didn’t feel that it was right to jump straight into analyzing instructor feedback methods in WAC courses when the first step of training and overcoming threshold concepts most likely hasn’t been done. My research goals shifted in this moment. I returned to

my experience with WAC at Midwestern University in 2012 and how little of an understanding I had of WAC and how little of an understanding I still held when I started my research. This is where I decided I wanted to gain insight from multiple perspectives and ask the fundamental questions of defining WAC, writing, feedback, and advocacy and where to locate them. So, instead of trying to find advocacy on my own, I asked my participants how they define the term advocacy and where advocacy discourse lies in their discipline, writing, job, pedagogy, etc. This section explores what advocacy means to Lilian, as well as the connections Lilian makes between history and advocacy. As we talked more, I was also able to identify transparent efforts of advocacy in Lilian's teaching.

When I introduced advocacy in my interview with Lilian, I framed it as an inquiry into our practices as advocates and then asked her, "How do you define advocacy?" She said, "I'm not sure I have a good definition of advocacy, but it is something we talked a lot about in history" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). While Lilian did not form a definition of advocacy, she did identify advocacy discourse in history and said:

> There can be a lot of advocacy in history, simply based on the questions you're asking and what you want to look at [in your research]. For example, historians know there were peasants in medieval England, so let's read about them. You know, let's talk about people who were poor. I would say I see that in women's history, like, hey, women were doing stuff, and they weren't just, you know, sitting around, being functional and not functional. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

For Lilian, advocacy is calling attention to underrepresented and minority populations in the research you conduct, but Lilian is also an advocate in the way she teaches.

Lilian called attention to how sources are being misused and misinterpreted in history and she taught this to her students. She shared:

> People are doing things that are really harming people in the present and they are misusing, misunderstanding, misinterpreting the primary sources. So, that's a problem. That's a problem. So, in that regard, I kind of incorporated some of that into my classes of, okay, we're going to read about, you know, race, the understandings of race in the Middle Ages, and we talked a little bit about how it's different than it is now. I'm not well enough informed to be doing proper research on that, but I can take other people's research and digest it and, you know, give it to the students and help them to understand, and I think that's super worthwhile to a certain extent. I mean, obviously, I need people to generate that research, but just as much we need professors to take it into the classroom, because let's be real, the amount number of people who read academic journals is very small. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Initially, Lilian didn't feel that she could provide a definition of advocacy, but after she reflected on her experiences and identified advocacy discourse in her field and role as a history instructor, she said she "definitely sees a place for advocacy," especially in the sense of sharing information and gaining new knowledge in important areas such as race and race in the Middle Ages.

As I elaborate more on Lilian's specific feedback methods in the next section, I identified a few advocacy practices in her role as an instructor and in her feedback methods. First, Lilian highlighted compassion as a practice in her classroom. She said to be open and work with the student, even if it is not specific to their paper. For example, if a student is sick, dealing with personal matters, or misses class, then it is important to meet that student with compassion.

Lilian said that some practices that might be identified as advocacy by others are simply practices of "just not being a jerk" to her and it isn't necessary to label it as advocacy. But I did view Lilian as an advocate for her students because of the different written opportunities that are available for students to express their current needs, wants, or concerns with their research. She also ensured that her students chose a topic that they were truly passionate about to research. I viewed that choice as a space for students to take ownership of their own learning and experience an in-depth project from start to finish being as fully engaged as they can from the start, and it ultimately advocates for the student's learning.

Feedback Practices on Student Writing in WAC

Just as I did with WAC, writing, and advocacy, I asked Lilian to talk about her approach to feedback. When I first asked Lilian how she evaluated student writing, she said she would often recognize how other professors were focused on grammar. She said, "When I was a student, professors would say don't use contractions in your writing and they would be more nitpicky on grammar. And I definitely do not do that" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian said as she's learned more about writing, she talks to her students about a certain level of formality that is required in their writing, but it was not a huge factor in evaluating student writing. Lilian said there are worries with emphasizing formality. She said, "I don't want them [the students] to become formal and have it [the writing] sound so awkward and stilted" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). To help address this issue, Lilian told her students to think about their audience. She told them, "You're writing this paper for a normal person. You don't need to turn it into some sort of Downton Abbey person, but also, maybe think about it like you're writing to your parents or grandma, so don't use slang" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian continued to share that she encouraged her students to be

conventional, but don't take it so far as using standard English. Lilian only hoped to see clarity and she wanted to understand what is being said the first time she reads something.

Clarity is one standard of writing that Lilian expected. Another standard of writing that Lilian asked of her students was tense. She mentioned:

> So, I do prefer that students write in past tense which I know is awkward for them if they've done most of their writing in English, because I'm pretty sure in English, even if it's The Odyssey, you still write in present tense, but in history, well, everyone is dead. Or this event has happened a long time ago, so you should use the past tense. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Although this was something Lilian told her students, she said she did not get upset or take off points if the students did not use past tense. Grammar and tense are writing conventions that Lilian viewed as lower-level concerns, but she had higher writing standards that she prioritized.

Lilian said, "I really tried to get down in my head to what really matters when they write this paper" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). What really mattered to Lilian was if and how the students made an argument in their paper. This included putting forth their best effort and finding evidence and explaining how that evidence supports the argument. "It's really about the argument" Lilian said. "So, I might tell them to reorganize things because this flow will make the argument better" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). In her evaluation of writing, Lilian prioritizes good argument, solid evidence, and effort at footnotes. Lilian requested that students run a spellcheck, especially if there are obvious errors.

In student writing, instructors might find multiple areas of concerns that they want to comment on, but Lilian encourages instructors to only focus on a certain number of areas to not

overwhelm the student. She said her focus in on the argument in the paper. Lilian also looked at how students engaged with their evidence and data. She mentioned:

> I don't want you to report, I don't want you to tell me what you learned, I want you to wrap it up into a certain point and argument, an answer, if you will, that you want me to learn. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Lilian encouraged this kind of engagement with writing because she believed it is an important life skill to talk about something and explain why it is important for others to know.

During Lilian's time as an undergraduate student, she mentioned her professors did not use rubrics, but Lilian utilized rubrics in her courses to evaluate student writing (see Appendices G and H). She said, "I have rubrics for everything. And with peer review now, I give the students a rubric too" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian used a rubric for all drafts and the final paper and said it helped students see where they are on track and where more work is needed. I found that Lilian provided feedback that is tailored to writing as a process. She emphasized that even though she is using the rubric on the drafts, she is not taking the grade and determining it in that moment, because "it's a draft," she said, and she wanted students to always be aware of what they're being graded on.

After Lilian discussed how she evaluates writing and what she prioritizes in her feedback, I asked, "How does the feedback you give reflect your value and belief systems in the classroom?" Lilian described her values and said:

> I want to be understanding and compassionate towards the students so, I mean, I want them to reach standards, like not anything is gonna go. But I what them to still feel good about themselves and I recognize you can only do so much. You don't want to say, here is 8000 things that are wrong with your paper, because

> there's just no way they're gonna fix all that. So, I want to focus on the big things particularly important in terms of writing in history. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

This is another reason why Lilian lets students pick their own topics—they feel good about their research and feel confident in their work.

Some specific feedback methods that Lilian discussed included what she gives comments on, takes points off for, and tone in her feedback. Lilian would take points off of a student's paper for unintentional plagiarism, incorrect formatting of the footnotes, and page count. She mentioned if the paper was required to be ten pages, but it was nine, she took off one point from the overall grade. Lilian also focused on repetitive statements. She said if two sentences were saying the same message, she crossed out one of the sentences. Lilian's reader experience is important when evaluating the students' writing. She said, "If I'm not convinced, then keep explaining this to me. I want them [the students] to succeed" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian provided the example of suggesting a new organizational structure of the paper so that the reader will experience the points from A to B to C.

Lilian reflected on her learning experience of how to give feedback. Lilian's graduate advisor once told her if something is good in the paper, you say, "You did this great." When something is bad, then you say, "This paper needs…" or "The footnotes should be…" The graduate advisor encouraged not using "you" statements when it pertains to critical comments. This means to provide critical comments without attributing them to someone. Because of this Lilian said she uses "I" statements, like, "I am confused because I read this point this way…"

Lilian circled back to the importance of practicing prioritization in feedback. She said, "If there are five big things they need to work on, then I will focus on three. Footnotes always get

priority. You do not want students to feel overwhelmed or that they are not doing anything right" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Lilian shared her ultimate goal in feedback in history and said:

> The ultimate goal is the argument part because I even stress in class that if I were going to say one sentence about history, I would say history is an argument. Then I say history is an argument backed up by adequate evidence. (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Lilian's feedback methods did not focus on grammar, but she expected a level of formality and clarity. Lilian based most of her feedback on proper Chicago style formatting and the structure and content of an evidence-based argument, which were essential writing conventions in History. While Lilian talked about the standards she expected from students and their writing, she was also committed to teaching with compassion. She considered how her students might experience her feedback. Lilian was aware of the tone in her feedback. For example, she encouraged instructors to focus on a few aspects of the student's writing and not provide feedback that only stated a list of what was wrong with the paper. Lilian wanted students to feel confident in themselves so they would feel encouraged to continue their research. She did not want to overwhelm or discourage them. Lilian relied on her experience with her graduate advisor on learning to provide comments, especially critical comments, so they wouldn't be attributed to the student writer.

In her feedback, Lilian chose to focus on what is important to writing like a historian. This made me return to a question my initial recruitment survey asked, which was, "Does the way you give feedback change between course discipline?" Her course was a History WAC course and most of her students studied History or History Education as their major or minor at

Midwestern University. In some ways, Lilian's feedback was specific and tailored to the student because of its focus on the general conventions of a discipline. Lilian's course was meant to be taken by first-year students and second-year students, so as students continued their education in History, they could recall some of the foundational lessons they learned in Lilian's course on the basics of writing like a historian.

Finally, Lilian truly cared about her students and readily shared her passion for history. History was never a subject I took any interest in during my time as a student, but I am grateful for Lilian and our conversations because I think differently about history and writing. In particular, I think about the work historians do in their writing to ensure full representation, especially Lilian's recognition of the misuse and misinterpretation of voices and platforms and how she introduces new works on underrepresented topics to her students.

Reflection and Conclusion

In this section, I consider how Lilian's responses offer insight into my study's research questions. I begin by explaining the takeaways from my interviews with Lilian. My study asks how WAC, feedback, advocacy, and writing are understood and practiced at Midwestern University. At first, Lilian defined WAC as writing a lot. I'm not clear on whether this meant in terms of frequency or quantity. Frequency would be how often students write for the course or in the course. Quantity would be how many writing assignments are in a given course. In refining her definition of WAC, Lilian returned to the idea of writing a lot and how WAC is misunderstood as writing a lot, but she mentioned that WAC is peer review and revision. She recalled that she learned WAC encouraged incorporating low stakes writing. While Lilian disagreed that WAC meant writing a lot, her definition still signaled adding more writing to her course to fit the WAC requirement: revision and peer review. When I reflect on this part of the

study, I question if WAC is writing a lot, or if it is writing about focused topics in different modes of engagement, meaning different genres where students can engage with writing digitally, visually, spatially, publicly, etc. Lilian focused on the writing-intensive quality in her definition of WAC but considered how students might perceive writing-intensive as an intimidating term. At this moment, I wonder how we can demystify the terms writing-intensive and WAC for students and include students in conversations and training sessions about WAC. I could not define WAC confidently ten years ago, I could not define it at the beginning of this research, and I still struggled at this point in the study to define WAC without attributing it to writing frequency and quantity.

In the next part of the interview, Lilian talked about her experiences with learning to write and shared her dispositions towards writing and definition of writing. Lilian learned the most about writing in school, specifically her English classes. She talked about how uncommon it was to do writing outside of English class. Early on, Lilian enjoyed research writing and said she is good at reading a book or source and formulating an argument in writing. She defined writing as communication and identified it as an essential skill for students to learn. While Lilian talked about her experiences with writing, I learned a lot about history. At first, I was taken aback by the emphasis on avoiding passive voice in historical writing. I viewed passive voice as not important. If I recognized it in a student's writing, I would tell them, point out examples, give a resource on where they could improve this aspect of their writing, and offer one rephrase suggestion so they could see how to make a writing move from passive voice to active voice. It wasn't something I commented on more than once or actively searched for in my students' writing. To have passive voice be a crucial part of writing was not something I was used to, but I quickly learned its importance, especially to historical writing. Lilian referenced her knowledge

and background in history throughout our interviews and I believe her skill and passion in evidence-based writing influences her understanding of writing. But she also mentioned she became a better writer in graduate school because professors left specific comments on her papers and approached feedback differently than during her undergraduate career. I identified this experience as Lilian learning more about writing through instructor feedback. It was in this moment I saw that there was the possibility to learn writing strategies and gain writing knowledge from instructor feedback on writing.

Lilian approached feedback with compassion and with the ultimate goal to prioritize what is important for writing in history or writing like a historian. I am not aware of how her feedback responded to the individual student writer and their specific needs, but I do recognize Lilian's feedback is overall beneficial for her students since they are history scholars themselves and are trying to learn to write in the discipline. Lilian's feedback focuses on argument and footnotes, which are crucial writing conventions in history. Lilian was good at negotiating with herself and the students' writing because she prioritized certain comments and areas of concerns in the paper over others. This prevented Lilian from leaving several comments that could overwhelm the student. She commented on and fixed repetition by crossing out sentences. Regarding clarity, Lilian provided comments explaining her reader experience. In those comments, she described her confusion and requested the student develop it further. She did not take off points for incorrect grammar, unless errors were obvious and excessive or if it was apparent the student didn't run a spellcheck on their paper. She took off points for unintentional plagiarism, argument, footnotes, and page count. What I wished I could learn more about is how Lilian greets a student in their paper or makes her feedback personable. I also wanted to see how Lilian praised students and offered actionable feedback, in other words, feedback that gives students an

action or motivation for revision. Due to the shifts in research goals, time limitations, and the amount of data I already had, I did not request an additional interview with Lilian to see an example of her feedback on a student's paper. Although I did not seek this additional information, it was clear that Lilian is compassionate and knowledgeable, and she wants her students to succeed.

Finally, I learned more about advocacy and not in a way that I expected. Lilian did not provide a definition of advocacy, but she identified it in historical practices. After talking with Lilian, I wrote in my notes that advocacy was simply put as "don't be a jerk." Advocacy was much more than that. I began to redefine and reimagine advocacy in my study. I wanted to find advocacy discourse in instructor feedback practices, but each participant identified advocacy differently and in different locations in their academic and social lives. From Lilian's interview, I learned that advocacy is the careful and accurate representation, use, and interpretation of sources. Advocacy is including names and deeply researching what others left out or assumed, like women's roles in history. Advocacy is learning the lessons of the past and ensuring we don't repeat those practices now and learn about the individual changes we can make. Advocacy is believing our students when they are sick and not penalizing them. Advocacy is there when we look, but at this point, I still question how it fits into academia or WAC as an important practice, which I speculate further in my final chapter.

In the next chapter, I share the story of a Midwestern University History student, Jay. Jay was previously enrolled in Lilian's History WAC course and completed it with a passing grade. The chapter is similarly structured to this one as it explores the study's key terms and uses direct quotes from Jay's interviews to build a story about a WAC student's understandings, experiences, and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback.

CHAPTER 4: "WHERE'S THE FEEDBACK?": A WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

In presenting the findings of my research, I've had the opportunity to learn the definitions and practices of WAC, writing, feedback, and advocacy from the perspectives of two members of the History Department—a faculty member and an undergraduate major who are involved with WAC at Midwestern University. In the previous chapter, Lilian's story explored personal and prior experiences with teaching WAC and learning how to write. Lilian reflected on her teaching as an Associate Lecturer over the past nine years and how WAC professional development changed over the years. She discussed how all of her experiences and knowledge ultimately affected her teaching of writing in WAC. She drew on her passion for history and how to write like a historian. At this point, I want to share another story from another History scholar, Jay. At the time of this study, Jay was in the last year of his undergraduate career at Midwestern University. He was a nontraditional student who received an associate degree from a community college.[5] He started at Midwestern University five years after receiving his associate degree and studied History as his major. He was a past student of Lilian's and completed her History WAC course that was discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter explores Jay's experiences with WAC including the types of WAC courses Jay recalled taking, his definition of WAC, and how Jay differentiated WAC, History, and Writing courses. Following the discussion of WAC, is Jay's experiences with writing, including his definition of writing and dispositions towards writing. During the five-year gap between his associate degree and bachelor's degree, Jay held workplace roles in sales and retail. In his interview, Jay discussed writing in the workplace versus writing at the university level, and how his knowledge on writing is transferable to unfamiliar writing situations. The section on writing

[5] The Community College is intentionally unnamed to protect the identity of Jay.

in this chapter is unique to Jay's experiences as a writer, student, and employee where he encountered writing in various situations. From there, I share where Jay identifies advocacy in writing and in the field of History. Lastly, I provide Jay's definition of feedback and his experiences with feedback generally and in his History WAC course. I conclude the chapter with a reflection on the takeaways that speak to my research questions of defining the study's key terms—*WAC*, *writing*, *advocacy*, and *feedback*, and I highlight Jay's unique experiences with each term.

Jay's Experiences with WAC

At the beginning of our first interview, I asked Jay, "What are the WAC classes that you've taken so far?" Jay recalled one WAC course, which was Lilian's History WAC course.[6] He knew for certain the History course was WAC, but he had trouble remembering what other courses he took that were designated WAC. He said, "I'm not sure if it was qualified as a WAC [course], but I think they [the instructor] said it was. It was about propaganda. I can't remember the exact name of the class—Visual Persuasion, maybe" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay also reflected on his education at a community college, which was five years prior to starting at Midwestern University. Jay remembered he'd taken WAC courses at the Community College, but he could not remember what the courses were about or what they were titled.

Jay remembered the History WAC course well and positively reflected on his experience in the course.[7] He said, "She [Lilian] told us to pick a topic and then write about that for the whole semester, you know, do a lot of research and learn the historiography method" (Jay,

[6]The History WAC course is the same course from the previous chapter. It cannot be named, so it will continue to be referred to as History WAC course.
[7]Jay requested that I do not share when he was enrolled in Lilian's WAC course at Midwestern University.

personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay mentioned he liked the course a lot because of its focus. “I like that a lot” Jay said. “—Getting to do my own thing and really dive into it” (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay also mentioned most undergraduate courses jump from one assignment to another, so the WAC History course was a great change of pace, and he enjoyed the opportunity to focus on one assignment and one research topic. In the History WAC course, Jay said he learned why historians approach the subject the way they do. He also learned how to pull from different resources to create a meaningful argument, which is a skill Jay mentioned he continued to use in his other courses.

After Jay reflected on his experience in Lilian’s History WAC course, I asked if he could define the term WAC. When there was some hesitation on Jay’s end, I decided to share my experience with WAC at Midwestern University. I told Jay I was once an undergraduate student at Midwestern University and took most of my WAC courses in 2014 and 2015, but I didn’t really know what WAC was and I merely viewed it as a program requirement. I still struggled to define WAC nearly ten years later. So, I rephrased my question to Jay, and asked, “Do you have a definition of WAC?” He said, “Honestly, not really. It’s just, like, these are the WAC classes you have to take. I think they’re supposed to be more in depth, but I don’t know if that’s true or not” (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). At this point in the interview with Jay, I already found myself relating to his definition of WAC and experience with WAC. We found ourselves questioning, “Is WAC just a requirement?”

Jay continued to reflect on WAC and thought that WAC meant writing a lot, but he said, “That’s like every class I take. It’s all writing because I’m a History major” (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay thought that WAC would mean writing more, but he said all of his history classes, whether they were designated a WAC course or not, were writing

focused. He stated he did not see a difference between WAC and any other courses he took that incorporated writing, including other history classes and his first-year composition classes he took during his time at the Community College. He considered whether the particular focus of a course determined it WAC. He said, "I don't see much of a difference in anything else I've done besides the focus. But I don't know if that's why it's considered a WAC course" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay said the History WAC course was so heavily focused on one subject, which was studying historical methods like historians, and he thought that might be why it was a WAC course.

In our member-check interview four months after our initial interview, I asked Jay to expand upon the depth aspect of WAC in his definition from our initial interview. Jay said WAC is "heavily writing focused and our [the students] entire grade [in the History WAC course] was based on writing a paper on our choice of topic" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). He recalled Lilian explaining that their history course was a WAC course, but his understanding of WAC was still that it meant writing more or completing more writing focused assignments. Jay said he enrolled in a history course on Ancient Rome that was not a WAC course and it had half of the writing his History WAC course with Lilian incorporated, but ultimately, he said the amount of writing was dependent on the professor and how they taught their course.

Jay's definition of WAC continued to be expanded upon between our initial interview in November 2022 and our member-check interview in March 2023. While describing his definition of WAC in the member-check interview, Jay said, "Cool, that's a WAC course, but I don't know why it is. Sometimes it seems like WAC is just to put a label on something or it indicates a level of difficulty" (Jay, personal communication, March 14, 2022). Jay often

returned to WAC as a label, WAC as writing a lot, WAC as a requirement, and WAC as the focus in a class. In our initial interview, I asked Jay if anyone ever explained what WAC was or if any WAC training seminars were offered to students. Jay said there were no learning opportunities for WAC besides when Lilian described it from her syllabus, which was a required, standard statement that only gave off the impression that WAC meant writing a lot. His definition certainly transformed from the first time I asked him and throughout our discussions, but overall, Jay remained unsure of what WAC meant.

Writing Experiences, Definition, and Knowledge

While this study focuses on writing in WAC, defining writing, and locating writing in the WAC program at Midwestern University, Jay's experiences and understandings of writing were influenced by the job roles he held in the workplace and his identity as a writer at the university level and beyond. Because of his writerly background, I asked Jay in our member-check interview about the kind of writing students could learn in WAC courses that would be helpful to students who graduate and enter the workplace. In this section, Jay shares his experiences with workplace writing and academic writing, which were experienced very differently and at different points in Jay's life. Before I discuss this part of Jay's story, he shared where he learned to write, his attitude as a writer, and how he defines writing.

Once Jay began reflecting on his composition classes and questioning if they were considered WAC, he shared:

> Where did I learn the most writing, and that was one of the questions, right? Where did I learn to write? Well, it was for my composition classes, like, I mean, I've always been a pretty good writer, but composition really taught me how to write a college paper. So, that to me is where you learn how to write. So, I don't

> understand why they're calling all these other courses writing in a sense. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay learned the most about writing from his composition courses, like writing thesis statements and how to make a good argument in writing. He found it difficult to grasp that WAC courses are considered writing classes when he did not learn about writing from them. He mentioned in his formative school years, he always favored writing assignments and enjoyed them. But it was the more advanced techniques of writing that he learned in college. The examples of advanced techniques he learned were not talking in circles in your writing and writing each sentence deliberately so that each sentence has a point supporting your argument.

Jay also learned about writing through reading. He mentioned he was an avid reader and said, "I just always loved to read when I was a kid, so I was naturally pretty good at writing" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Near the end of our initial interview, I asked Jay, "What helps you learn about certain ways to write if you're not receiving feedback?" Jay returned to his experience as a reader and said, "I read. I have four or five monographs sitting around here that I've been reading. They [the authors] know how to write. I think I just inherently pick up some of the stuff that they do" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). As a history student, Jay reads work by historians, specifically monographs, which are specialized book-length written works on an aspect of a subject, and in this case, Jay reads historical monographs. By reading these monographs, Jay picked up on writerly moves from historians that he applied to his own writing:

> I'm starting to notice, like, isn't this redundant? But I was thinking, no, they're repeating this information because they want to reinforce it in your mind, and it also helps to support what they're saying. I'm currently reading *An*

> *Undocumented Life*. It's about Mexican immigration in the United States. At first, I was like, she is so repetitive, she keeps saying the same thing over and over, but then I realized she has to be doing that for a reason. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

From these monographs, Jay learned where and how to repeat his argument in his writing. In the end, Jay emphasized if students can be convinced to read, their writing will improve.

After sharing his experience on where he learned to write, Jay talked about the kind of writing he enjoys and the kind of writing he doesn't enjoy. I asked Jay to share what writing he's done or was currently doing that he found the most meaningful:

> I like research. So, for [the History WAC] class, I chose to write about Julius Caesar, because I always want to learn more about Ancient Rome. I was like, okay, I can pick anything! It was really fascinating to actually get to go deep into that topic because I learned so many things. I wish I had more time to do that, like to read all these different things. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay also talked about his current research on a coup in Guatemala that the CIA engineered in 1954 that he was doing for another upper-level History class with Lilian. He said learning all of the new information was fascinating and his favorite aspect of research writing.

The kinds of academic writing that Jay does not find enjoyable include writing reading responses or summaries. Jay said, "I don't mind doing it [writing summaries], but I feel like you're missing some of the depth that way" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay desired writing assignments where he could learn more about a topic and research it deeply

instead of summarizing what's already been researched. I asked Jay if he felt writing helped him gain more knowledge and he responded:

> Yeah. When you read something, you'll get the gist of it. But when you actually have to write and figure it out, some of it is problem solving, in a way, especially writing a big paper is like resolving a problem because you're trying to put it all in the correct order and make sure it makes sense. I think that reinforces the information. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Looking back at this point in our interview, I noticed that Jay favored WTL assignments. I did not bring the term WTL to Jay's attention because I was riveted by Jay's research and his excitement about the research process. He readily talked about the kinds of sources he found and what they were about and the different topics in history he wanted to research further. Writing to answer a question and discover new information was Jay's favorite way to engage with writing in his History WAC course with Lilian.

Jay was a confident writer and repeated throughout our interviews that he had always been a strong writer, which helped him in unfamiliar writing situations. I define unfamiliar writing situations as scenarios that someone encounters with writing where they either do not know how to approach the writing task or do not have the knowledge to complete the writing task. It could be a new genre, new subject, or new audience the person might have to consider in their writing. I asked Jay if he ever encountered an unfamiliar writing situation with the goal in my mind to understand how learning to write and written feedback might have helped Jay to navigate the situation. Jay shared his experience in the workplace setting as an example of an unfamiliar writing situation:

> You get into a workplace setting, and a lot of the times, they [managers] will ask you to do something and I'm like, you didn't show me how to do that. I had one job a while back where I was doing online sales. They told me to email [and] communicate with all these people. They didn't give me any guidance on how to write those emails. So, I was thankful at the time that I'm a pretty good writer, so it didn't bother me too much. But I could see where that would definitely be difficult for some people who had no real knowledge on that kind of writing. The workplace setting and emails and being professional in writing is so important. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay found professional communication in the workplace important. He suggested classes in college should teach real-world communication since a lot of jobs are focused on email writing and learning new software applications that involve more surface-level communication with people. Jay pointed out that this kind of writing is still important to know since we are often not taught in the workplace or in college how to do the writing that is required in a workplace. He said most colleges assume that students already know how to write an email, but even if they do know how to write an email, Jay believed more practice is necessary and helpful to become a stronger writer. Jay questioned at one point why math courses were required for students to take but not a real-world writing course. He said he was aware technical writing classes existed at Midwestern University and could help with certain types of writing, but he wished they were required. Jay was thankful for his history classes because he said, "History writing is focused on reporting, which helps with workplace writing" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Overall, Jay said he did not encounter many situations where he did not feel "fairly

confident" to complete the writing. He relied on his experiences as a writer and student and said the more experiences he had, the better a writer he became.

As we talked more about unfamiliar writing situations and what is important to know about writing in the workplace, Jay placed importance on grammar:

> The most important thing, especially in the workplace, is to be able to say what you need to say in the most professional way, in correct English, correct grammar—that's important. I'll rewrite a sentence four or five times sometimes, just to make sure it is correct. Thank God for all this technology we have now to help with grammar. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

I noticed in our initial interview that Jay emphasized "correct" grammar and "good" writing. It wasn't until our member-check interview that I asked Jay to explain what constitutes as "good" writing. With Jay's experience and confidence as a writer, I wanted to see how and if Jay viewed writing outside of grammar conventions. Jay said he was always enthused with being a better writer. To him, that meant, to be concise and not repetitive, have strong sentence structure and smooth transitions between thoughts, be able to learn from resources and paraphrase them, proofread and identify errors on your own, and establish a tone so that the writing grabs people's interest, which Jay said was important to both academic writing and writing in the workplace.

After we talked about Jay's knowledge and confidence as a writer, I asked if he could define writing in his own words. He responded, "That's a tough question. I would say, it is reading material, understanding the material, being able to synthesize that material into something comprehendible to an audience" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay said the writing should be completed in a succinct and clear manner that proves a point. He continued defining writing and said, "I think it's all about the argument. Writing is all about the

argument" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). He added if the argument is good, then the writing is good. I pushed Jay to further describe writing and he said, "Writing is communication" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). I asked one last question about defining writing to try and discover if WAC informed Jay's definition. I asked Jay, "How does WAC inform your understanding or definition of writing?" He responded, "I don't know. I really don't know" (Jay, personal communication, March 14, 2022). Jay returned to the fact that WAC did not teach him how to write and he ultimately wished more WAC courses focused on real-world writing practices.

Identifying Advocacy in History and Writing

When I introduced the term "advocacy" to Jay, I shared my experience with advocacy and my motivation for wanting to know more about advocacy discourse. I shared my view that a lot of advocation could happen through writing. I mentioned that I identified in some of my articles for my research how authors would say they advocate for an idea, concept, or action. I was curious to know what it meant to advocate for something, especially in academia. I drew back to Stephanie White's article on writing as advocacy in first-year composition which sought to explain how a commitment to writing as advocacy would motivate students to develop transferable writing knowledge. So, I asked Jay, "Do you view your writing as advocacy?" Jay said he didn't know if he could say that his writing advocates for anything. He shared he was currently enrolled in an Ethnic American class which focused on disenfranchised groups. Jay said, "I guess, in a sense, my writing would be advocating for those disenfranchised groups, but I don't think I'm particularly emphasizing that" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). At the college level, Jay said he wasn't presenting his writing to an audience to advocate, he was presenting it to get his grade.

Jay started to think about advocacy beyond his writing and said history teaches lessons of the past and it teaches why people did what they did. In history, Jay learned what not to repeat in the present day, but he said the same events and actions keep happening. Jay provided an example:

> In one of my classes, I'm learning about immigrant lobbies, and immigration policies in the past were very strict, racial, discriminatory, and terrible. And we're still doing the same things today with some of the legislation we're passing now. It's still terrible. There are always lessons you can learn from history, but it's very hard to get people to listen to them. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay mentioned that people remain disconnected to major issues in our world, but it is important to teach and learn so we can try to get better.

When we talked about advocacy, Jay talked about world issues like equal rights and immigration policies. He said he considered himself an advocate for equal rights, but he recognized he was not following it up with action, like presenting to a larger audience or group where change could happen or teaching new information to a group where it's necessary. In our initial interview, Jay was unsure if what he was researching and writing about could be advocacy. As he talked more about his experiences with writing in history, he said, "Maybe, in a sense, that is advocacy. Isn't it?" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). While our conversation on advocacy in our initial was short, Jay became genuinely curious about advocacy. In our member-check interview four months later, Jay told me he thought more about advocacy after our first interview. He decided to deliberately focus on advocacy in his writing because he believed it existed in his life and he was writing about topics he cared about. He said the more he

thought about advocacy, the more topics he identified that needed to be brought to the surface and advocated for, one being institutional racism. Jay started to view his writing as advocacy because of the care and time he put into his research, and because he believed such topics needed to be presented beyond an academic audience.

Feedback Experiences

This section details Jay's experience with written feedback on his papers generally and in the History WAC course with Lilian. Jay also describes his experience with verbal feedback in the workplace. Using his direct experiences with feedback, Jay shares the lack of feedback on his papers, the kinds of feedback he preferred, his professional goals as a writer and student, how he used instructor feedback, and what he's learned from feedback in Lilian's History WAC course.

Feedback on Academic Writing at Midwestern University

Jay and I began our discussion on feedback when I asked him about how instructor feedback helped him learn new writing strategies to navigate unfamiliar writing situations. Jay shared he had a previous professor who was particular about being concise and presenting information in the correct order. For example, Jay recalled that his sentences must never begin with a date. Jay mentioned the professor gave feedback on specific items like grammar and order of thoughts, which he believed helped him navigate the workplace. But Jay shared more about his general experiences with feedback on his academic writing:

> I think, just in general, my professors don't give me a whole lot of feedback. When they do give me feedback, it's just something that's confusing to them as a reader because my sentence would be weird, or I missed the point of something. That's usually the kind of feedback I get. It's rarely focused on how my writing

> is. Two professors prioritized grammar and I think that's the most important thing in feedback. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

I wanted Jay to describe more of his experiences with feedback so I could learn more about how comments on grammar were considered writing-focused feedback, but comments on clarity and missing information were not. So, I asked, "Do you find feedback helpful when it focuses on the way you articulate ideas in your writing?" Jay responded:

> I don't see much feedback in that respect if I'm being honest with you. I think professors are just happy you're writing stuff. I mean, I am a pretty good writer, so I think a lot of times professors will say you're doing fine and go help somebody who needs it more. You know, I bet I've had that my whole life where they think, oh, he's fine, he's good. So, rarely do I have that professor that really gets after me about my writing. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

After Jay shared this, I was curious to know if he mostly had positive experiences or negative experiences with receiving feedback on his writing. In response, Jay told me he does not take feedback personally, but as we talked more about Jay's experiences with feedback, he stated that feedback could be a personal experience.

In his member-check interview, I asked Jay, "Is feedback a personal experience?" He said, "It can be personal. Most professors who give good feedback will highlight parts of your writing and provide comments specific to your writing and topic, and that is helpful" (Jay, personal communication, March 14, 2022). Jay said that the best kind of feedback is personal and not generalized, and it asks the student to think more deeply about their topic, or it gives them something to take away when they revise their writing. In chapter one, I defined

generalized feedback as comments provided on one student's paper that can be directly copied and pasted onto a different student's paper and it would still apply. In other words, the comments are not specifically tailored to the individual student or their writing. These types of comments do not promote student agency or advocacy and they are comments that Jay found unhelpful on his writing. For example, when an instructor said Jay's writing was confusing, he wanted to know what was confusing and how to make it better.

Jay said he used to take comments personally when he was younger, but he shared that since he's gotten older and held many jobs in between his time at the Community College and Midwestern University, he does not take comments personally anymore. He mentioned:

> Sometimes it might hurt my ego a little bit if I didn't write the way I was supposed to, or I missed something that was important, but usually, I try to take that feedback as a way for me to do it better next time. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

He said most professors are not mean in their feedback. I asked Jay what he meant by a mean comment, and he provided the example, "Oh, you're an idiot" as a type of comment he would never receive on paper. Jay circled back to the type of feedback he finds helpful, which is when a professor discusses a point he missed in his writing and how to go find it, but he said professors don't do that in their feedback. Jay shared his frustration:

> I've had a few professors that do help me learn more, but not too often. Usually, it's just like, "Hey, good job." Where's the feedback? I like feedback. I'd like you to tell me what I could be doing better. Please tell me what I can do better, so I can get better. So, if I want to go on to higher education, I have an easier time

> when I get there, you know, please tell me how to write this better. But I don't see that. I don't see it. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay spoke passionately about his experiences with feedback and how it was not often he received critical comments. What Jay shared stood out to me for a couple reasons. First, I recognized Jay's passion for writing and learning. He remained open to his professors and mentioned he understood that grading writing is time-consuming and that professors did not have unlimited time to provide comments on every idea. Jay said he would like comments on every paragraph, but he understood it was not realistic because of the time constraint professors face. Second, Jay is an individual with professional and academic goals. He wanted feedback that would help him obtain those goals, one of those goals being studying History at the graduate level. After Jay shared this sentiment, we briefly talked about how even the strongest writers still need feedback. Eventually Jay said he felt that some of his professors gave feedback because they wanted to find something that sparks their own interest so they can write about it.

Jay expressed that he wanted to seek out verbal feedback from professors, which he did in between our initial interview in November and our member-check interview in March. He visited one of his professors and that professor offered verbal feedback on his writing, stating that Jay's writing improved from the last time Jay had this professor for a class, which was a year ago. The professor was able to give Jay information and advice on what writing in History at the graduate level would be like and what Jay could do now to start preparing for that level of research and writing. Jay was excited about this interaction and found it helpful to meet one-on-one with his professor.

Workplace Feedback

Jay worked for five years before starting at Midwestern University to complete his bachelor's degree. He mentioned he held job roles in sales and retail. I asked Jay if he received feedback in the workplace, and he said:

> Oh, yeah. The managers love to give feedback. It's every job I've ever had. You're always doing something wrong. That's one reason I started going back to school. You could be the best worker in the world, and they'll still find something you're doing wrong. And I've always prided myself on being a hard worker, especially at my last job as a Route Sales Representative. I'd work fifty to sixty hours a week, then come back at the end of the day to be told that I could be doing better. What do you mean? I'm out here exhausting myself to do all this work for you. But there's always more you can do. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay said the feedback in the workplace was different from the type of feedback he received in school. Jay never received critical comments in school, but the workplace was only ever critical comments. He said in school, the comments only said, "Oh, you're doing great, thanks for turning this in." Jay often wondered if professors only cared that the writing was completed and turned in and not the actual ideas or writing.

Jay also talked about the differences in penalties for late or missing work. In school, professors usually give students an extension or a chance to turn in the work late, but at work, Jay said, "If I didn't turn something in, I'd be getting a write up" (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). In the end, Jay said school is where more critical feedback should be given, but in his experience, work is where all the critical feedback is given to him. The type of

feedback he desired at work was praise. Jay said, “Work should focus more on praise instead of always saying ‘do it better.’ As a worker, we are doing a service for others and work feedback should show appreciation because positive reinforcement goes a long way” (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Jay concluded that workplace writing and workplace feedback were very different from writing in college and receiving feedback on his papers in school.

Using and Learning from Feedback

In both our initial interview and member-check interview, I asked Jay what he wanted to learn from feedback generally and what he learned from his feedback in the History WAC course. Jay began to share his experience with feedback from Lilian in the History WAC course. Jay said the feedback helped him learn about Chicago formatting, citation, and writing a bibliography. Beyond that, Jay said the feedback he received wasn’t too critical and it let him know he was on the right track with his research paper. Jay said he wasn’t sure what it meant to be on the right track, but he took Lilian’s words for what they said. Some of Lilian’s feedback on Jay’s writing pointed out if a sentence didn’t make sense. Lilian would elaborate on what didn’t make sense, like if it was odd phrasing or wasn’t clear or easy to understand. So, Jay would focus on clarifying certain sentences in revision. Jay said since the course was focused on one bigger writing project, there wasn’t a lot of opportunity for Lilian to give a range of feedback. He said his feedback from Lilian was mostly positive and the feedback was minimal besides the letter grade on the paper, but Jay wanted to learn more from feedback.

Jay said he wanted to learn how to do all of it better. I asked him if he could explain and he said, “I want to learn something from my writing and do it better next time” (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022). He continued to explain the type of feedback he could

learn from was feedback that services him to learn. He didn't want to continue to receive feedback that doesn't give him something to improve or only says, "Doing good, keep it up." Jay wanted feedback on where he could dive deeper and articulate his ideas further. He desired feedback that could give him an action plan, especially in the research process. If Jay missed key information, he wanted guidance on where to go to improve his argument.

Jay enjoyed feedback that broke down a sentence and identified or labeled the parts of the sentence. He wanted more feedback that reinforced grammar concepts. This kind of feedback was important to Jay because although he stated he didn't struggle with grammar; he wouldn't be able to break down and describe the parts of a sentence. The last time Jay learned about grammar concepts was in sixth grade. Ultimately, Jay thought a course on grammar would be very helpful for his writing.

I asked Jay how he uses feedback and if he revises his papers. He said he does revise his papers and shared his approach in revision:

> Yeah, that's what I would do with any kind of feedback. I try to find a way to use it and fix whatever they want me to fix. I try to build on anything they want me to build on, but usually, I don't get too much feedback. I think I got more feedback in my freshman and sophomore years because I wasn't good at writing. But I applied [the feedback] and I worked hard to apply what they taught me. So, now I can write better. It's all a process. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Jay mentioned it was important to him to always improve and he was curious to see that if he wrote something at a master's level if he would finally see the kind of feedback he's been after

throughout his undergraduate career. He expressed the importance of feedback and said it was necessary to have on writing.

Throughout our discussion about feedback, Jay emphasized his desire for more feedback in the form of written comments on his essays. He experienced minimal critical feedback during his time in college and received the most critical feedback in the workplace from his managers. While Jay acknowledged the time constraints and labor of his professors, he would've preferred to receive extensive feedback, and if possible, critical feedback on every paragraph in his written essays. He believed his professors were happy the work was being turned in, which led to short, positive comments like, "Good job!" and "Keep it up!" Jay was interested in attending graduate school after completing his undergraduate degree at Midwestern University, but he wasn't sure if his writing met the standards of a master's degree, and he didn't feel that the written feedback he received prepared him for graduate school. In the end, Jay expressed the necessity of feedback and his aspiration to learn from feedback so he could improve his writing skills.

Reflection and Conclusion

In this section, I consider how Jay's responses offer insight into my study's research questions. I begin by explaining the takeaways from my interviews with Jay and restating his definitions of WAC, writing, and advocacy, and his experiences with feedback.

After completing two interviews with Jay, I recognized that we shared similar understandings of WAC nearly a decade apart from each other. This prompted me to question Midwestern University's efforts in informing students on WAC or if Midwestern University offered WAC seminars for students that serve as an introductory course where students can learn about the possibilities of WAC. When I was a WAC student at Midwestern University in 2014, I understood WAC as writing a lot, in terms of both frequency and quantity. Neither Jay or I had

WAC professional development, training, or seminar opportunities. Jay was unsure of what WAC meant. In his initial interview, he reflected on the term WAC and questioned it. He defined WAC as the actual label on a course catalog at Midwestern University, WAC as writing a lot, WAC as a program requirement, and WAC as the focus in a class. When I asked Jay about the relationship between WAC and writing, he said he didn't know how WAC teaches writing differently and why WAC courses are considered writing courses. Jay attempted to define WAC throughout both of our interview, but he did not understand the purpose or true meaning of WAC.

In the next part of the interview, Jay discussed his experiences with learning to write and shared his dispositions towards writing and definition of writing. Jay learned to write from his college composition courses at the Community College. He also learned to write through reading. He loved to read and learned certain writing moves from monographs. For example, Jay mentioned he learned the importance of how and when to repeat the argument throughout his research paper. He was a confident writer and enjoyed writing. Jay said he always favored writing assignments in school, even from a younger age. His knowledge on writing was also influenced by his experiences in the workplace. During the five-year gap between the Community College and Midwestern University, Jay held multiple roles in sales and retail. He encountered writing professionally and emphasized the importance of professional communications in the workplace. Because of his experience with writing outside of school, Jay recommended the teaching of workplace writing and wanted WAC courses to teach professional communication. He ultimately defined writing as communication.

In our interviews, Jay placed importance on "correct grammar" and "correct English." With Jay's experiences and confidence as a writer, I believed that Jay viewed writing beyond the

English standard, so I asked him to explain writing further. Jay's answer highlighted many important areas of writing, like transitioning between thoughts, properly using resources, and establishing a tone to appeal to your readers. I wished I talked to Jay more about writing standards and practices so he could learn more about the possibilities of writing beyond writing for a grade, but it was our conversation on advocacy that seemed to resonate and affect Jay in ways I didn't expect.

Advocacy isn't always a deliberate action or easily identifiable as I stated in Chapter 1. I've found that open and low-stake conversations about advocacy led to my participants' personal engagement with the term. They began to see advocacy in their job roles, their field, their workplace, and their writing. When I first introduced advocacy to Jay in our initial interview, I heard him actively attempt to take apart the term and apply it to his life. He noted some of the actions he takes as a writer in history, and questioned if those could be considered advocacy. He was genuinely curious about advocacy. In our member check interview, Jay told me he thought more about advocacy from our initial interview fourth months prior and deliberately focused on advocacy in his writing because he believed it existed in his life and he was writing about topics he cared about.

Lastly, Jay and I discussed feedback in college and feedback at the workplace. Ultimately, what I learned from Jay was that he wanted feedback in college to be more critical than feedback in the workplace. He received only negative feedback in the workplace and his feedback experiences at school were all positive. Jay mostly received written feedback on his papers, but they were generalized comments and often didn't leave him with an action plan for revision. He questioned if professors only cared that the writing was turned in and completed instead of engaging with students and their ideas. But Jay also recognized labor inequality and

time constraints for professors. At one point, he said it must be a lot for professors to go through hundreds of pages of writing and provide in-depth feedback on each idea in a paper. In between our initial interview and member check interview, Jay sought out verbal feedback from a professor and it was a positive experience for him. He learned more about writing in history and writing at the graduate level, which was important to him and his professional goals.

In the next chapter, I share the story of the Midwestern University Writing Center Coordinator, Maeve. Maeve was directly involved with faculty outreach efforts in the Writing Center at Midwestern University and experienced student writing and instructor feedback in various ways. This next chapter is similarly structured to chapters 3 and 4 as it explores the study's key terms and uses direct quotes from Maeve's interviews to build a story about Maeve's understandings, experiences, and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback with an eye toward WAC sustainability and the importance of the Writing Center.

CHAPTER 5: "CREATING A BETTER WRITER, NOT JUST A BETTER PAPER": THE WRITING CENTER COORDINATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Maeve was the Writing Center Coordinator at Midwestern University during the time of this study and held an educational background in Literary and Textual Studies, as well as Rhetoric and Writing Studies.[8] In this chapter, I begin by sharing an overview of the Writing Center at Midwestern University, including Maeve's role as the Writing Center Coordinator, providing a list of all the responsibilities she held. Relying on Maeve's knowledge and experiences, I also list the services the Writing Center provides at Midwestern University and the benefits of the Writing Center for anyone on Midwestern University's campus. From there, I explore discussions of the study's key terms, which are *WAC*, *writing*, *advocacy*, and *feedback*, drawing on Maeve's initial interview and member-check interview. Additionally, Maeve defines writing center pedagogy. Finally, this chapter emphasizes the relationship between WAC and the Midwestern University Writing Center which will be expanded in the final chapter.

The Midwestern University Writing Center

The Midwestern University Writing Center supports student writers in all disciplines and assists both undergraduate and graduate students at any stage of the writing process. Maeve shared that the Writing Center offers in-person appointments, synchronous online appointments, and asynchronous appointments. During an in-person appointment, students meet with a consultant face-to-face in the Writing Center, which is in the lower level of the campus's library. Synchronous online appointments take place as a "Live Chat" appointment. The student meets with a consultant in an online setting and logs into a personal account through Midwestern University's website to access the live chat. Asynchronous appointments allow students to

[8] While I include details of Maeve's educational background and job role, there are many details that I intentionally exclude from this study to maintain anonymity.

receive feedback without visiting the Writing Center. Students upload their paper and assignment sheet to an online appointment form, then they receive feedback from the consultant through their Midwestern University email. Anyone affiliated with Midwestern University can visit the Writing Center, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff, but Maeve shared that faculty and staff did not use the Writing Center. Appointments can be scheduled online by logging into a personal account where the student or member's Midwestern University identification number must be provided. Writing Consultants provide written and verbal comments on writing. Additionally, Maeve said the Writing Center offers workshops and presentations to classrooms on campus and to campus organizations.

During our discussion, Maeve mentioned the importance of the Writing Center for students. I asked Maeve if she could further describe the benefits of the Midwestern University Writing Center for everyone, and not only students. Maeve said, "We promote it as a space that is nonjudgmental. And for everyone, we consider feedback on writing a standard part of the writing process. So, it is beneficial to everyone" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). Maeve often noticed students' hesitation or nervousness about going to the Writing Center for writing assistance and having someone else read their work. To alleviate their fears, Maeve told students that her writing consultants—her community of writers—schedule appointments with each other to receive feedback on their writing just like any other student who visits the Writing Center. Maeve said, "It's just a standard part of their writing process. And that's the kind of community we're always trying to establish. We're a community of writers helping other writers" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). Furthermore, Maeve shared multiple other benefits of the Writing Center and what students can learn in their session:

> Students can get a better idea of the expectations of their assignments, especially if they bring their assignment sheet. They learn to develop their own ideas and unique voices, and overall become more confident writers. And I think that speaks to the idea of creating better writers, not just a better paper. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

I asked Maeve if faculty members at Midwestern University utilize the Writing Center, but she said they do not work with faculty on their writing, but the Writing Center is still beneficial to faculty because it serves as another point of assistance for their students. Maeve recognized that faculty manage multiple course loads at once and serve hundreds of students, limiting their availability for additional conversations with their students. The Writing Center offers support for students when faculty might not be able to meet with a student or help them with a specific concern in their writing. Maeve shared, on average, the Midwestern University Writing Center had around 1,000 visits with students each semester. Maeve said, "The most popular request [from students] is grammar, but students typically end up talking about high order concerns during the session as well" (Maeve, personal communication, June 5, 2023) with guidance from writing consultants.

As the Writing Center Coordinator, Maeve held multiple responsibilities. She ran the everyday operations of the Writing Center at Midwestern University and maintained training and professional development for students and staff. Maeve shared a list of her tasks:

> I was in charge of overseeing all hiring and scheduling. I organized payroll for the Writing Center staff and contributed to management and oversight of the Writing Center budget. I coordinated the classroom visits to promote the Writing Center, set priorities and articulated strategies for ongoing professional development for

> my consultants. I also provided leadership in developing useful and a sustainable process for self-assessment. I developed and maintained the training curriculum, and the general meeting content. Also, I acted as a liaison between the Writing Center and the faculty. I was required to tutor graduate students. So, I provided tutoring and academic guidance, most often for theses and dissertations, but general graduate coursework as well. I maintained social media and general advertisements for the Writing Center. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

I was speechless by the amount of tasks Maeve managed, considering her role as the Writing Center Coordinator was part-time. She worked 30 hours per week and 10 of those hours were designated for tutoring graduate students, which left Maeve with only 20 hours per week to complete the rest of her tasks. From our discussions about her role, I valued Maeve's work and learned that she was innovative with her practices and aware of how her practices were informed by writing center pedagogy.

Writing Center Pedagogy

Before I met with Maeve, I read little scholarship on writing center pedagogy. In my research for chapter 1, I learned that writing center pedagogy can offer more effective and inclusive assessment practices that WAC might implement. I also discovered that writing center pedagogy can support diversity and inclusion efforts on campus because of the writing center specialist's ability to reach students and faculty beyond one department. In my initial research into writing center scholarship, I identified the Writing Center as a site of advocacy and continued to work towards the goal of connecting advocacy discourse and writing center work. I brought the idea of the writing center as a site of advocacy to my interviews with Maeve, which I

elaborate on in a later section of this chapter. But first, I recognized I did not learn what writing center pedagogy was from my readings. The scholarship left me with an understanding of how writing center pedagogy could impact assessment, diversity, and inclusion efforts, but I was curious to learn about the specific practices, definitions, and values of writing center pedagogy.

Maeve briefly mentioned writing center pedagogy in her answers at the beginning of our initial interview, so I asked her if she could explain writing center pedagogy. Maeve described writing center pedagogy:

> At the core, I think writing center pedagogy is all about creating stronger writers, like I said, not just better papers, because we want to support long term growth and transfer. It's about developing writers' unique voices, and not trying to adhere to certain standards. And also, just meeting students where they're at, and, you know, learning to adjust our practices to meet their needs. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

Based off Maeve's answer, I had two follow-up questions. I asked her if she could describe what she meant by adhering to certain standards. She said she did not want students to follow white language supremacy, which is the use of language to control reality and resources that can damage our students and democracy. Maeve shared an example of using language to control. She mentioned instructors' comments in feedback can try to change the student's voice by crossing out students' words or providing strikethrough comments and automatically correcting their word choices. She said this type of feedback teaches students to follow a dominant written language. Maeve suggested that instructors not write over the student's work or insert their own language preferences.

The second question I asked was about writing transfer. I asked Maeve, “How do we teach a skill or what is a writing skill that a student will know and take to a different writing situation?” At this point in my study, I didn’t research writing transfer too closely, but it appeared in my participants’ answers in different ways, and I wanted to learn the scope of writing transfer from the perspectives of my participants. Maeve said there are many opportunities for writing transfer:

> There are a lot of different things that students can take from a given consultation and apply it to their next assignment. I think, oftentimes, that's why we really, at least at Midwestern University, I had to encourage the consultants to talk about the client report form that we fill out at the end of the session, because that usually talks about like, what did you like, what did we talk about today? What did you take away from this? What are next steps? And what are some things that this will help you with in the future? So, it's already getting students to consider some of the things that they might use in the future, whether that's like, how to integrate sources into a paper to, how to I add their own voice and not let the research take over their writing? There's a lot of opportunity for transfer. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

At the end of a consultation session, students and consultants filled out a client report form together which provided space for the student to reflect on the session and what they learned. This is where most writing transfer practices are identified which can help students with their next writing assignment.

Writing center pedagogy promotes writing transfer, lifelong learning, and the growth of the individual writer. As Maeve and I discussed the topics of WAC, writing, advocacy, and

feedback, I learned more about writing center pedagogies. The following sections are discussions of the study's key terms: *WAC*, *writing*, *advocacy*, and *feedback*.

Maeve's Experiences with WAC

This section provides Maeve's definition of WAC and explores her experiences with WAC as the Writing Center Coordinator, including outreach efforts, interdisciplinary knowledge, and the relationship between WAC and the Midwestern University Writing Center. When I first asked Maeve to define WAC, she said, "So, writing across the curriculum, but for me, that means writing beyond composition, literature, and other English courses. It's about how we transfer those skills to other disciplines and support students in those other disciplines with their writing" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). This is the definition that Maeve provided in her initial interview. In our member check interview eight months later, I asked if she could explore her definition of WAC further. I asked, "If a student says they're in a WAC class, what do you envision?" Maeve said she envisioned that students are learning course material through writing, but her hope is that those writing assignments are scaffolded, and students are writing to learn, or writing to apply, not just writing to regurgitate information. Scaffolding means to break down a larger writing assignment into smaller assignments. For example, if a course requires students to write a research paper with multiple sources, some smaller writing assignments might include synthesizing research sources, peer review, writing data reports, or writing research narratives. Maeve placed an emphasis on writing transfer in her definition of WAC. She hoped students were learning valuable information about writing that they could continue to apply to other writing situations rather than report information given to them about a subject or from an instructor.

With Maeve's potential to reach multiple students in different disciplines, I wanted to know the importance of Writing in the Disciplines (WID) to writing consultants. WID is the focus and practice on a field's specific writing conventions. I asked Maeve if it was helpful for consultants or required of them to know other disciplines' writing standards and conventions. Maeve said it is certainly helpful, but it is not required or productive since that is a large amount of knowledge to discover and requires a lot of time and labor. In her role, Maeve put effort towards interdisciplinary representation so that consultants were from fields other than English. For example, the Midwestern University Writing Center at one point had a law specific consultant to help writers studying law. Maeve said the Midwestern University Writing Center wanted other disciplines represented because the content-related knowledge ultimately helped student writers who had to follow conventions specific to their field. Our conversation about interdisciplinary knowledge sparked a deeper conversation about general campus and community connections.

I wanted to learn more about how the Midwestern University Writing Center forms connections with campus groups and departments besides presentations. Specifically, I asked Maeve about the Writing Center, WAC, and faculty outreach efforts. Our discussion started with what the Writing Center and WAC could've done to collaborate more. Maeve answered, "Meetings, being more actively involved and collaborative, I think" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). One challenge with collaborative efforts was the frequent change in leadership of WAC. Maeve said sometimes she didn't know who the point of contact would be at given times. When there was a change in leadership in WAC, it wasn't communicated clearly to other departments, including the Writing Center. Additionally, Maeve said the change in ownership of the Writing Center changed how the Writing Center was

perceived by students. The Midwestern University Writing Center was housed under the English Department, but it was currently housed under Academic Support Services. Maeve speculated that this might have affected how students understood the Writing Center and the scope of its services. Changes in leadership and ownership ultimately put a strain on the relationships between the Writing Center, WAC, students, and faculty.

Another challenge was labor issues. The Writing Center oversaw most outreach efforts to students, faculty, and departments. There was little collaboration between the Writing Center and faculty. Maeve recognized that faculty have a lot of work to manage at once, while also meeting the needs of hundreds of students. Maeve believed that the Writing Center could help alleviate some of the pressure that faculty experience and become a site of support for students, but students weren't often aware of the Writing Center services or students only experienced the Writing Center as a requirement from their instructors. Oftentimes, instructors require their students to visit the Writing Center at least once during the semester. I asked Maeve what she thought about the Writing Center visit requirement, and she said:

> I have mixed feelings. I think I like when faculty require it, because students get an idea of what the Writing Center is, what we do, and how we can help them. Forced participation in anything, though, it always has some consequences, because I think sometimes students will already go in with a mindset, like, I just have to do this for this class, and they might not see beyond that. There's always that fear because they're forced to be there, it might not resonate as well with them. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

Maeve said the requirement is a way for students to be introduced to new resources. She promoted the Writing Center as a space where students at any skill level can visit and have a conversation about their writing.

When I asked Maeve more about the relationship between the Writing Center and WAC regarding professional development, Maeve did not have an example to share. She said professional development focused on training writing consultants, but the Writing Center and WAC did not work closely together. This led to my curiosity about the possibility of a WAC faculty member or WAC representative being employed at the Writing Center and how that might improve the relationship between WAC and the Writing Center. Maeve said, "That sounds like something that would be really promising for the future" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). Maeve shared that the COVID-19 pandemic affected new efforts and collaboration in the Writing Center:

> Before the pandemic, the English department had a requirement for faculty. They had a rotating list of faculty members who served as consultants. So, they would actually work in the Writing Center and be active participants in, you know, the training that we did and any kind of other professional development opportunities, but they would work specifically with graduate students. After the pandemic that had to go away, sadly. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

Also, prior to the pandemic, Maeve shared that the Midwestern University Writing Center worked with one of the local schools to help students develop their writing and prepare for college, but this stopped and hasn't resumed. At this point, I shared with Maeve what I learned about sustainable WAC programs and community connections through different conversations I had with other WAC involved members. I believed the reason why some WAC and writing

communities are doing as well as they are, is because they thrive off service and free labor from their members. While I sought additional participants for this study, I formed new connections and experienced conversations with WAC scholars from other areas and roles, including Ann Blakeslee, Ph.D. from Eastern Michigan University who directed the WAC Program. Her official title was Director of the Office of Campus and Community Writing. I learned from Ann Blakeslee that Eastern Michigan University had a robust WAC program and many community connections, including a non-profit community writing center that supports writers in the entire city called YpsiWrites. YpsiWrites also hosts virtual events that reach multiple cities and states. Ann Blakeslee is the co-founder of YpsiWrites and shared that the community is successful because of the service of faculty members and volunteers. Relying on the service and free labor of faculty is not a realistic expectation, and there are other options for WAC sustainability. Maeve agreed and shared, "There is not always a lot of opportunity within the expectations of your job that already exist" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). Meaning, the expectations of someone's current role are so demanding that it cannot allow them to pursue other work or service opportunities, even if it is something that appeals to their interests. Together, Maeve and I identified labor issues as a challenge for long-term program sustainability. In the end, Maeve expressed that she wished there was more collaboration and an established relationship between WAC and the Writing Center at Midwestern University.

Defining Writing and Writing Transfer

While discussing her definition of writing, Maeve described her own understanding of writing but also attributed her role in the Writing Center to her exploration of writing and writing transfer. I asked Maeve to define writing in her own words, and she said:

> In my opinion, writing goes beyond just composing letters on paper or screen. It's the various stages of the writing process from the initial planning and drafting, research, revision, and even those metacognitive practices that happen throughout and after the process. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

I was intrigued by the metacognitive aspect of Maeve's definition of writing and immediately related to it. I told Maeve, especially with poetry writing, I've written ideas in my head before I ever spoke those ideas out loud, put them on paper, or typed them in a document. My mind is always active with ideas for poems, and Maeve and I believed that this metacognitive experience is an important part of the writing process regardless of the discipline.

I also asked Maeve if she thought that writing is a personal experience. She said, "Yes, writing is a personal thing. Each writer brings their prior experiences and each hold specific dispositions towards writing" (Maeve, personal communication, May 3, 2023). Maeve carried this belief to her practice as a writing consultant and remained aware of students' prior knowledge and experiences with language and writing. She practiced writing center pedagogy to support her students' unique voices by asking open-ended questions and providing personalized feedback where she provided suggestions in feedback but never corrected a student's voice or word choices.

In our discussion about writing, Maeve returned to and emphasized the importance of writing transfer and her hope that students are learning writing for transfer. In this study, I define writing transfer as previously learned strategies, skills, or knowledge that can be applied outside of the classroom in new and unfamiliar writing situations. Maeve focused on writing transfer that students can gain from Writing Center sessions. She said, "Students can learn more about genre and audience" in their session at the Writing Center (Maeve, personal communication, May 3,

2023). Maeve also discussed how writing consultants can ask future oriented questions to the student writer so that the student writer can think about how they will approach different writing assignments and reflect upon their learning for the purpose of transfer. Lastly, Maeve believed that writing transfer derives from teaching the individual writer, not the writing. It is the student writer who will carry over knowledge and skills, not the paper.

The Writing Center as a Site of Advocacy

When I introduced the term advocacy to Maeve, I contextualized it in writing studies scholarship and shared my experience with the lack of scholarship on advocacy discourse. I told Maeve about my discovery of the Writing Center as a site of advocacy for student writers and I wanted to know if and how Maeve viewed the Writing Center as a site of advocacy. She said:

> Writing centers can and should be a site for advocacy. And, you know, depending on the institution, it's going to vary how you put that into practice. I can draw from Midwestern University examples, specifically. We're dedicated to diversity and inclusion, so writing consultants are trained on antiracist practices, including students' rights to their own languages, and how we can actively fight against white language supremacy. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

Aside from diversity and inclusion work happening within the training of the writing consultants, Maeve shared that the Writing Center completed an accessibility audit of the Writing Center space. She provided a list of criteria and asked consultants what they noticed about the space and what improvements could be made to improve the space so that it is more accessible for people. In this accessibility audit, Maeve and her consultants observed the exterior and interior space to

determine the usability of the space for people with disabilities and disabled people.[9] Some of the criteria included wheelchair accessibility, indoor mapping, correct usage of Braille, color of the walls, and space between the desks and chairs. Overall, this audit helped determine what would make the Writing Center more accessible so everyone can access and use its services.

Another example of advocacy at the Midwestern University Writing Center that Maeve provided was professional development presentations that she often planned for her writing consultants. Maeve said she invited a friend who had experience working with the Ohio State House to present on how to enact change at the state level. In the presentation, she talked about how to use your voice to enact change. After the presentation, Maeve talked to the writing consultants about how they might use that information in the Writing Center and beyond. Maeve found advocacy work interesting and wanted to see more opportunities for it in the Writing Center, starting with a potential partnership with the student government on Midwestern University's campus.

Maeve provided training and partnerships as practices of advocacy at the Midwestern University Writing Center, but she also mentioned how the space itself through the practice of writing center pedagogy is a site of advocacy for students. The Writing Center is a nonjudgmental, safe space for students to have an open conversation about their writing with other writers. The Writing Center can become a community for students. Writing center pedagogy encourages consultants to meet the student where they're at with their writing and goals and learn to adjust their practices to meet the student's needs. Maeve emphasized the Writing Center as a site of support for students and sought out ways to prioritize students, their needs, and the writing consultant training. For example, if a professor required students to visit

[9] I've decided to use both people-first language (people with disabilities) and identity-first language (disabled people) to recognize that both are valid and advocated for within the disability community.

the Writing Center, Maeve reached out to those professors and asked for their assignment sheets. She created a workshop opportunity with consultants so they could learn together what the assignment expectations are, and it prepared them to work with students and connect them to the student and their work as early in the process. Maeve believed in developing students' unique voices and supported their growth as writers and thinkers.

Feedback Experiences

This section describes Maeve's experiences with feedback in the Writing Center. Instead of Maeve describing the types of feedback she received on her writing, she talks about the types of feedback she saw on student writing from instructors when students visited the Writing Center. Maeve also describes how feedback is given by writing consultants on student writing relying on writing center pedagogy.

The feedback Maeve encountered in the Writing Center on student writing varied. The feedback depended on the course and on the instructor. Maeve said:

> Some professors would give heavy detailed feedback while others would give less detailed feedback. Sometimes the tone varied as well and it's always hard to establish tone, like intended tone versus what the student will feel as the reader reading those comments. But especially if the tone felt off for the student, then that was particularly hard for them to navigate because writing is so personal. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022).

Maeve often mentioned tone and detail in her discussion about feedback. In her member-check interview, I asked if she could further explain tone and detail regarding instructor feedback. Maeve said feedback that is not detailed will often be one-word comments and they are not actionable comments, meaning a student has no direction to revise. Feedback that isn't detailed is

not specific and can often be referred to as generalized comments. For example, a comment on a student's paper might just say "incorrect" with no explanation of what is incorrect and why it is incorrect. One-word comments can be applied to any student writing, and it is not specific to the individual writer. The less detail in feedback, the vaguer it is.

Maeve said tone can vary depending on the number of comments and what was said in the comments. Tone also relies on how the student perceives comments versus our intention with our comments. Maeve and I talked about how we use exclamation points and smiley faces in our feedback with the intention or meaning to be encouraging and positive towards our students, but we don't know how our students would interpret those kinds of comments. Maeve said, "It is hard to determine what a writer will feel personal about" (Maeve, personal communication, May 3, 2023). Maeve described abrupt, single-word comments as carrying a negative tone and she shared an experience she encountered with this type of feedback. Maeve said the student received a comment from their instructor that only said "No…" and there was no further elaboration.

Maeve warned that such a negative tone in feedback can shut the writer down and leave them with no opportunity to engage meaningfully with their writing. With tone being a difficult aspect of feedback to navigate, Maeve said, "It's always hard to tell what students are going to take away from the types of comments that you're giving" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2023). When Maeve said this, I was brought back to my initial proposal of this project when I discussed the give and take nature of feedback. Students put their work into our hands and trust us to give them feedback that they can take and utilize. I asked Maeve if she identified the review process of student writing as a give and take relationship. She said, "Yes, it is inherently a give and take situation" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2023).

But Maeve said the feedback process might not always be experienced the same because of the instructor's teaching methods. She said, "Some writing courses do not scaffold assignments. Specifically, WAC sometimes isn't set up so the students can return or revisit their writing to revise" (Maeve, personal communication, May 3, 2023). I asked Maeve how the feedback process could be less of an exchange and involve active student participation and she provided the following suggestions:

> Be intentional with feedback methods, follow up with students, provide opportunities for reflection so students can reflect on the feedback they receive in class, create more dialect in the entire process, collaborate with students, and students should have the opportunity to give their instructors feedback on their feedback. (Maeve, personal communication, May 3, 2023).

I found Maeve's suggestions helpful. I asked if she thought there was a misalignment between what instructors intend with their feedback and how students actually experience and use the feedback. This is what I determined as a rhetorical slippage, or a disconnect between our well-meaning intentions and the real, lived experiences. Maeve said there could be a misalignment. She recalled how dependent misalignments are on the type of feedback and what students take personally in feedback. Maeve provided an example and said, "If an instructor focuses on everything in a paper, meaning all higher-order and lower-order concerns, students could get very overwhelmed and only revise the easy, lower-order concerns" (Maeve, personal communication, May 3, 2023). Higher-order concerns include the thesis statement or ideas in the writing that support the argument. Lower-order concerns are grammar errors or formatting page numbers. While a professor might hope their students will revise higher-order concerns, if the

comments are not guided or encouraging, students might resort to revising what is less complicated and directive, like formatting.

In the final chapter, I identify moments of rhetorical slippages or instances of misalignments in feedback between Lilian and Jay with Maeve's contextualization of these types of instances. Maeve and I discussed our own feedback practices where we connected and found similarities in our processes. She was attentive and compassionate towards student needs and viewed feedback as a necessary standard in the writing process.

Writing Consultants' Feedback Practices

Maeve described the type of feedback that is encouraged at the Writing Center from writing consultants. She said:

> We typically strive for a non-directive approach to feedback depending on the student. We focus on asking open-ended questions and helping the writer generate their own ideas with guidance. We tend to focus on a few specific areas in a writing consultation as to not overwhelm the writer. And typically, we encourage consultants to focus on those higher order concerns versus lower order concerns. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2023).

Maeve explained that the feedback consultants give to a student writer during their in-person session is verbal, but consultants also provide written comments especially during asynchronous sessions. For written comments, Maeve encourages and trains consultants to follow the praise, question, suggestion, and justify (PQSJ) approach and to continue the model of asking open-ended questions in their written feedback as they would in their verbal feedback. A praise comment compliments what a student writer does well in their writing. A question comment asks a student an open-ended question about their writing. A suggestion comment will offer a

recommendation or idea for the student to consider in their writing. A justification comment is for the consultant to explain or rationalize their feedback to the student so the student can understand why they're receiving comments on a certain area in their paper, and it is meant to encourage revision.

Maeve described the consultant's approach is dependent on what the student wants out of the session. Maeve said:

> We have to navigate their needs versus what we're noticing as consultants. So, if sometimes students come in and they're like, I want to focus on grammar, and you're like, I think we could also focus on establishing a thesis statement, or something that is of higher-order concern, then we have to negotiate a little bit with students to get them to focus on bigger picture ideas. (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2023).

Once students are focused on higher-order concerns, consultants can move into the next stages of the process to get students from one stage in their writing process to the next. I found this helpful to learn since I was a writing consultant for the Learning Commons at Bowling Green State University. As a writing consultant, I was taught that each session should be focused on helping students achieve their goal and move them forward in the writing process instead of progressing them through the process prematurely to reach the end or achieve a perfect paper in one session.

I discovered that the PQSJ approach in feedback was a similar approach I learned in my creative writing pedagogy course. On creative works like poetry and short stories, my colleagues and I were encouraged to follow a structure in our feedback where in our comments we made an observation of the work, described or interpreted an idea in the writing to ensure accuracy, offered a suggestion, asked a question, complimented the work, and required one change.

Justifying feedback is a helpful addition because it encourages specificity in feedback from the person who is providing feedback. It is a space for an instructor to write about their own writing where they can rationalize their comments. Justification as a commenting method actively involves students because it shows them what they do in their writing and why it might need revision. When a student understands their feedback, they might be more likely to revise their writing and apply the experience to another writing situation.

Reflection and Conclusion

In Maeve's interviews, it was apparent that she wanted students to gain lifelong knowledge about writing. She used writing center pedagogy and her own beliefs about the writing process to achieve that goal. During her time as the Writing Center Coordinator, Maeve promoted the Writing Center as an inclusive space and identified feedback as an integral part of the writing process. While she didn't have a direct connection with WAC, Maeve responses offer insight into my study's research questions which I explore in this section.

At the beginning of this study, my original participants were WAC instructors and WAC students at Midwestern University. When I struggled to recruit student participants, I considered adding to my participant pool. I thought about how WAC scholarship intersected with writing center practices. In my initial research, I started to learn about inclusivity and the writing center. I also learned about the importance of campus connections for WAC sustainability. This motivated me to ask new questions about the place of writing and WAC in the writing center. Instead of the questions heavily focusing on theorizing terms and describing past writing experiences, I wanted to learn more about writing center functions and practices, as well as experiences with feedback and advocacy. When I met with Maeve, I learned about her

experiences with WAC and feedback. She provided a definition of writing and identified practices of advocacy in the writing center.

Initially, Maeve defined WAC as courses that are outside standard English and Literature courses. She provided what the WAC acronym stood for as part of her definition. Maeve's definition of WAC aligned with my early definitions of WAC, but I wanted to learn more about WAC, so I asked Maeve to explore her definition further. This led to a visualization from Maeve where she imagined students in their WAC classes are writing as the main mode of learning. She also hoped assignments were scaffolded so students could gain transferable knowledge on writing assignments. According to Maeve's definition, WAC is a program with writing courses outside standard English and Literature courses where students engage with their learning through writing for the purpose of writing transfer. Maeve could not identify any WAC partnerships or professional development in the Midwestern University Writing Center. She mentioned that the Writing Center and WAC did not have a relationship and they would benefit from more meetings, communication, and leadership efforts. Additionally, Maeve said it was difficult to get faculty involved with Writing Center and WAC efforts, but she wished not to elaborate on this matter.

Maeve defined writing as a process and emphasized the initial planning and drafting, as well as revision and metacognitive efforts as writing. She believed writing was the actual typing on the screen and written words on a piece of paper, but writing was also the initial plans and ideas someone thinks up in their head. Maeve identified writing as a personal experience and was mindful about the way student's experience writing and feedback. In her discussion of writing, Maeve often returned to the idea of writing transfer. In every area of her interview, whether we were discussing writing center pedagogy, writing, WAC, advocacy, or feedback, Maeve

mentioned writing transfer. Maeve encouraged writing consultants to complete client report forms at the end of their sessions so writers could talk about what they learned and how they will use that knowledge for future assignments. She mentioned that writing transfer was at the core of writing center pedagogy. Additionally, Maeve included writing transfer in her definition of WAC, emphasizing that WAC is how we transfer writing skills to other writing situations.

Feedback was experienced differently by Maeve since the interview focused on her role in the Writing Center. Maeve detailed her encounters with feedback on student writing during consultations with students, but she also discussed how she teaches her writing consultants to give feedback to students. Writing consultants use a non-directive approach where students generate their own ideas and have authorship over their learning with guidance from the consultant. Maeve celebrates students' unique voices and values antiracist practices in feedback where students have the right to their own language. I learned about the PQSJ approach from Maeve and believe it is a feedback method that WAC programs could implement.

I believe writing centers can offer a lot to WAC programs, including inclusion efforts, such as focusing on student identities in assessment and educating student writers about their writing lives outside the university. My interviews with Maeve supported the idea of the writing center as a site of advocacy. The writing center is a nonjudgmental community and a resource for students. Beyond helping students, many training and professional development efforts within the Midwestern University Writing Center advocate for accessibility, student voices, and diversity and inclusion efforts. In chapter 1, I identified a gap in WAC regarding inclusivity, diversity, English as a second language, accessibility, and disability, which are all practices that the Midwestern University Writing Center implemented during Maeve's time as the Writing Center Coordinator.

Looking Forward: Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications

While Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 provided the background for this research, and Chapters 3, 4, and 5 shared the results from Lilian, Jay, and Maeve, Chapter 6 focuses on the implications of the research and provides a deeper analysis of what exactly the findings mean. In other words, the upcoming chapter looks closely at the experiences of Lilian, Jay, and Maeve and synthesizes their definitions and experiences to suggest potential implications, further areas of study, and considerations for future researchers of WAC and writing instructors. Specifically, the chapter addresses WAC sustainability and inclusivity, providing principles and goals for building sustainable WAC programs. It is my belief that the upcoming chapter will prove helpful to a variety of audiences, but my recommendations specifically speak to concerns of importance to WAC Directors and WAC instructors or anyone who wishes to learn more about WAC pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Looking closely at the stories of Lilian, Jay, and Maeve presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, it's important to clarify and synthesize their experiences in order to begin answering the two research questions for this study: What are the current understandings and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback at Midwestern University, and how do WAC programs benefit from collaboration with Writing Centers and community connections from a sustainability standpoint? While each participant presented a different background, their experiences contribute to the important and ongoing conversations regarding how WAC is understood, writing is defined and experienced, and advocacy is identified, as well as practices of WAC instructor written feedback on student writing.

In this chapter, I synthesize Lilian, Jay, and Maeve's definitions and experiences to present the current understandings and practices of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback at Midwestern University. From there, I revisit WAC scholarship to provide a framework for building and developing a sustainable WAC program with a focus on inclusivity and writing center pedagogy. Additionally, I suggest implications from these discussions for WAC administration, WAC instructors, and writing scholars. I conclude the chapter with a discussion about the possibilities of continued research and I provide my revised understanding and working definition of WAC.

What Are the Current Understandings and Practices of WAC, Writing, Advocacy, and Feedback at Midwestern University?

WAC

Throughout the duration of participant involvement, I asked each participant to define WAC. Each participant included an aspect of writing in their definition. Lilian focused on the

types and frequency of writing. Jay also referred to the frequency of writing in his definition of WAC. Maeve referenced the use of writing and design of writing assignments in WAC. Both Lilian and Jay understood WAC as writing a lot, both in terms of frequency and quantity. Earlier in her career, Lilian said she confused WAC as writing a lot, but as she started to learn more about WAC through training sessions at Midwestern University and her own inquires, her definition changed. Eventually, Lilian defined WAC as incorporating low stakes writing into the classroom for students to complete, such as reflections and reading summaries. Lilian believes that WAC is peer review and revision. She stated in her interview, "I always say, the big thing with WAC is peer review and revision" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). Jay also said WAC is writing a lot, but he held multiple understandings of WAC. He said WAC is a label on a course. The label is included in the course catalog when registering for classes. For example, a WAC course in the course catalog at Midwestern University would appear as the following: LST: Economics of Crime-WAC. Additional definitions included WAC is a requirement from a program and WAC is the focus of the class. Jay said each of his history courses focused on different topics in History. He questioned if those specific topics, such as methods or Ancient Rome were WAC. Maeve first provided what WAC stood for: Writing Across the Curriculum. Upon expansion of her definition, she described WAC as courses outside standard English, Composition, and Literature courses at universities. Maeve included writing in her definition by stating WAC uses writing as the main mode of learning. She hoped that students were gaining transferable knowledge on writing in their WAC courses.

While each of their definitions of WAC acknowledge writing in some way, Lilian, Jay, and Maeve understood WAC differently from one another. I believe their definitions were influenced by their backgrounds. Lilian's definition focused on WAC as a pedagogical tool. As a

WAC Lecturer, it made sense that her definition of WAC was informed by pedagogical underpinnings, such as how to incorporate writing into a WAC classroom and what kinds of writing assignments should be included in a WAC classroom, like the WAW assignment and its purpose for students. Lilian learned the most about WAC from training sessions that were specifically designed for instructors who taught WAC and wanted to learn more about how to teach WAC. As a WAC student reflecting on his experience in a WAC-designated course, Jay's definition of WAC focused on coursework. His definitions relied on what he was told through instructor syllabi and how he experienced WAC through course enrollment. But in the end, Jay said he didn't know what WAC was teaching him about writing. He didn't understand why WAC courses were being called writing courses. With Maeve's background in Literature, Textual, and Writing Studies, her specialized knowledge on writing informed her definition of WAC. Maeve was aware of the rhetorical nature of writing and focused on the importance of writing transfer for students. She placed writing and writing knowledge at the center of her definition of WAC.

In chapter 1, I identified multiple definitions of WAC. Based on my participants' answers, I believe that WAC continues to be uniquely defined in various ways. I find that WAC is an adaptable concept, meaning the term can be defined differently based on a person's knowledge, role, or experiences and still be a valid definition. For example, I ask myself if WAC is a requirement or a label, and I believe it is. I also believe that WAC is writing about focused topics in different modes for different purposes. While I identify that WAC is full of possibilities, it is also misconceived as writing being merely additive in terms of quantity. Both Lilian and Jay thought WAC meant writing a lot. Lilian identified that other instructors often thought that WAC only meant adding more writing to their classes. The reasons I do not support

their working definitions are because it leaves out student engagement, transformative practices, and the complex and rhetorical quality of writing.

Jay held the same understanding of WAC as an undergraduate student at Midwestern University in 2022 as I did when I was an undergraduate student at Midwestern University between 2012-2015. Our experiences with WAC are nearly a decade apart, but they are similar. This points to limited student engagement with WAC efforts at Midwestern University. I didn't learn more about WAC until I conducted this research and relied on my own inquiries. Hearing about Jay's understandings of WAC as a student, Lilian's lack of opportunities for WAC professional development as a faculty member, and Maeve's struggle to form a connection with WAC as the Writing Center Coordinator leads to my finding that WAC is understood and practiced in multiple ways at Midwestern University. The WAC program at Midwestern University does not offer many opportunities to engage with faculty and students. To my knowledge, the Writing Center and WAC program do not collaborate. Lilian practices WAC through her teaching by adding more modes of writing. In her practice of WAC, students experience scaffolded writing assignments where they learn transferable writing skills and knowledge to successfully complete their larger writing assignment at the end of the semester. Jay practiced WAC according to course and program requirements, but he did not ever learn what WAC was or how writing is situated in WAC.

Through my participants' definitions of WAC, I identify that writing and WAC are inextricably linked. It is impossible to separate writing from WAC and it is not productive to do so. I'm reminded of Lilian's statement, "WAC itself emphasizes writing…it's in the name!" (Lilian, personal communication, November 16, 2022).

Writing

Lilian and Jay shared similar attitudes and understandings towards writing.[10] They both defined writing as a method of communication and referred to historical monographs as their favorite kind of writing. They also shared similar learning experiences. When I asked Lilian and Jay where and how they learned to write, Lilian recalled her high school English class and Jay recalled his college Composition course. They learned to write through their education. Additionally, Lilian learned about writing through feedback she received on her papers. She mentioned she became a better writer in graduate school because professors left specific comments on her papers and approached feedback differently than they did during her undergraduate studies. Jay learned about writing through reading historical monographs. It helped him understand certain writing moves in argumentative writing. He encouraged others to consider reading as an important activity for learning how to write.

Lilian and Jay's understanding of writing were heavily shaped by their educational background and passion for history. They held positive beliefs about themselves as writers. Throughout our interviews, Jay referred to himself as a strong, confident writer. Lilian said she was good at interpreting a source and forming an argument. She felt confident about herself as an academic writer. Jay continued to exhibit confidence in his writing abilities, but Lilian expressed a personal belief about her writing that stunned me. Lilian said, "I'm not really equipped to teach rhetoric. My writing is not that beautiful. It's just writing" (Lilian, personal communication, May 3, 2022). I wondered if Lilian attributed beauty to rhetoric and why she thought her writing couldn't be beautiful. In the interviews, Lilian continued to talk about rhetoric and how she does not teach rhetoric in her class, but I identified rhetoric in her teaching of writing in the History

[10] I do not include Maeve's definition of writing or experiences with learning to write because Maeve was an additional participant. Therefore, her set of interview questions differed from Lilian's and Jay's interview questions.

WAC course. For example, she often talked about the credibility of sources and logical organization of a research paper. She also discussed the importance of audience to her students in their writing and how audience can affect the tone of writing. I believe that all of these lessons were teachings of rhetoric, but I'm aware that Lilian does not study rhetoric or hold an educational background in English or Writing Studies. She also never received more than one opportunity for training on WAC pedagogies, so I determined that she holds a specific view of writing based on her experiences in school and her passion for history.

Jay's knowledge of writing was impacted by his experiences as a nontraditional student. He completed his associate degree at a community college, then worked in sales and retail for five years before starting at Midwestern University to complete his bachelor's degree. He experienced writing in the workplace as professional communication through email to customers. Due to his confidence and strong writing abilities, Jay navigated unfamiliar writing situations with ease, but he acknowledged how writing in the workplace could be challenging for some people since no direction or guidance is given by managerial staff. Jay placed importance on standard English and correct grammar, which discouraged me as a Writing Studies researcher. I wanted to believe that writing was being taught as more than demonstrating good grammar, so I focused on this in my interviews with Jay. With his experiences with workplace writing, identifying argumentative writing moves, and research, I believed he understood writing past good grammar and proper formatting. Jay ultimately identified other important areas of writing, including the ability to capture an audience's attention, the use of resources, and how to form an argument.

I considered Lilian and Jay's positive attitudes towards writing as a motive for their readiness to participate in WAC despite their lack of understanding of WAC and WAC support. I

always carried a positive attitude towards writing, so when I discovered that WAC meant more writing, I was excited and embraced my WAC courses during my time as an undergraduate student at Midwestern University. Jay mentioned in his interviews that he always favored writing assignments and writing classes in school. Even though he determined he didn't know what WAC meant or how WAC informed his understanding of writing, he enjoyed writing and valued his education. He participated in WAC as a necessity for his degree, but also engaged in an activity he found enjoyable. I'm curious to know how a writer with negative beliefs about writing would engage with WAC and if students ever question their program requirements. In Lilian's case, the History WAC course she was assigned to teach at Midwestern University was a required course for History majors and minors, as well as History Education majors. Her course was already designated WAC before she began teaching it and she was required to follow a curriculum by the college. Lilian has taught the class for nine years and only shared positive experiences during her time as a lecturer. I believe that college requirements play a role in writing and WAC practices at Midwestern University, as well as a writer's attitudes and beliefs about writing.

Advocacy

At the beginning of this study, it was my hope to identify advocacy practices in instructor feedback on student writing. As my research goals changed, I found it valuable for my participants to actively identify and theorize advocacy in their lives. I wanted them to describe advocacy in their own words without my underlying motive impeding their understandings and experiences. Each participant identified advocacy, but they did not provide direct definitions of the term. Lilian and Jay identified advocacy in history, and Maeve identified certain writing center practices as advocacy.

From Lilian's interview, I learned that advocacy is the careful and accurate representation, use, and interpretation of sources. Advocacy is including names and deeply researching what others left out or assumed, like women's roles in history. Advocacy is learning the lessons of the past and ensuring we don't repeat those practices now and learn about the individual changes we can make. Similarly, Jay discussed the lessons that can be learned from the past and how we can make changes now. Jay associated current world issues like equal rights and immigration policies with advocacy. Rather than viewing the text in his writing as advocacy, he began to identify as an advocate because of the topics he was passionate about and believed should be shared with a wider audience beyond academia.

When I introduced the possibility of the writing center as a site of advocacy for student support, Maeve agreed that it could be a site of advocacy. She described the Midwestern University Writing Center as a nonjudgmental community and a supportive resource for students. In chapter 1, I shared authors Sarah Warren-Riley and Elise Verzosa Hurley's definition of advocacy. I recall their definition as "championing or supporting a particular viewpoint, cause, or policy" (para. 4). Beyond helping students, many training and professional development efforts within the Midwestern University Writing Center advocate for accessibility, student voices, and diversity and inclusion efforts. I believe these efforts demonstrate support for multiple causes, such as accessibility and diversity.

I was excited to gain new perspectives of advocacy, but I return to my question I asked in chapter 3 about how advocacy fits into academia or WAC as an important practice. I believe advocacy can be a powerful tool for writing based on Jay's experiences. After he learned about advocacy and had space to think about his writing in our interviews, Jay deliberately focused on advocacy in his writing because he believed it existed in his life and he was writing about topics

he cared about. Similarly, in Stephanie White's article "When It's Outside of You': Writing as Advocacy in First-Year Composition", she found that students began to see writing itself as advocacy after she conducted text-based interviews with them. White said the students developed "deep writing knowledge as a result of their personal investment in writing as advocacy" (2021, p. 29). Along with developing students' personal investment in research, advocacy can also help students gain writing knowledge, which would be beneficial for students entering WAC courses where writing is the main mode of learning. Advocacy is a practice that encourages students to engage with their writing in new ways, identifying writing's impact beyond themselves and the classroom. For example, students can engage in contexts that impact beyond themselves and instructors by researching organizations and identifying rhetorical challenges to learn more about civic participation and writing situations outside of academia.

Feedback

I begin this section by reviewing Maeve's experiences with feedback in the Writing Center at Midwestern University, then I discuss Lilian's practices and goals for feedback and Jay's lived experience with her feedback. As the Writing Center Coordinator, Maeve encountered feedback in various ways. She saw instructor feedback on student writing during consultations and she experienced feedback as a writing center practice. Maeve mentioned that instructors left comments that were not detailed and often one-word comments. Some instructors would provide detailed feedback and point to many areas for revision. Maeve considered how students experienced feedback and was aware that we don't always know how students will interpret our feedback, so she encouraged instructors to be aware of tone in their feedback. Maeve recognized tone is difficult to navigate in feedback since it is challenging to determine

what students will take personally. Overall, Maeve was attentive and compassionate towards student needs and viewed feedback as a necessary standard in the writing process.

Maeve and her consultants approached feedback with writing center pedagogy at the heart of their methods. Writing consultants used a non-directive approach where students generate their own ideas and have authorship over their learning with guidance from the consultant. Maeve celebrates students' unique voices and values antiracist practices in feedback where students have the right to their own language. Student needs are prioritized in each writing consulting session. The individual student is the focus and consultants create stronger writers, not just better papers.

In our discussion about feedback, I asked Maeve if she thought there was a misalignment between what instructors intend on in their feedback and how students actually experience and use the feedback. This is what I determined as a rhetorical slippage, or a disconnect between our well-meaning intentions and the experiences of students. Maeve said there could be a misalignment. She recalled how dependent misalignments are on the type of feedback and what students take personally in feedback. I use Lilian's practices and goals for feedback and Jay's lived experience with her feedback as an example to identify any misalignments or rhetorical slippages.

In her feedback, Lilian expected a certain level of formality and clarity. She also discouraged the use of passive voice and preferred that students write in the past tense. She didn't focus on proper grammar or standard English in her feedback. Additionally, her feedback focused on the standards of writing like a historian. Lilian provided feedback on the argument in a student's paper by pointing out any moments of unclarity or if the argument did not follow a logical order of main points. Lastly, since her ultimate goal in feedback was to prioritize what is

important for writing in history or writing like a historian, she spent time commenting on Chicago formatting and paying close attention to footnotes. While she did not encourage standard English, Lilian's feedback focused on what appeared to be stylistic choices, such as using passive or active voice and the formal tone of a student's written voice, but I learned there are specific writing conventions important to writing in history.

The use of passive voice can unintentionally leave out details, like someone's name or a name of a specific law or event. Lilian encouraged accurate representation of sources with an eye towards inclusion. She truly wanted her students to be successful and feel confident in themselves as researchers, so she focused on a few areas of improvement in her feedback that were particularly important for writing in history. She practiced methods of commenting that praised the student or pointed to where the paper needed more work. For example, if something was good in the paper, she told the student what they did well. When she provided critical comments, she attributed it to the paper and not the writer. Lilian wanted to be understanding and compassionate in her feedback and hoped her students were learning more about writing in history.

Jay spoke about his experiences with feedback generally and in Lilian's WAC course. In general, Jay wanted more critical feedback from his professors. He often questioned the motive behind his professors' feedback but ultimately understood the time constraints professors face and how much labor is required to grade writing. While Jay said his experiences with feedback in school were positive, I believe he meant the comments themselves were kind, encouraging, and often praising him, but they didn't offer him an actionable path for revision or how to do better in his writing.

In Lilian's WAC course, Jay left wanting to learn more from feedback and he didn't understand what it meant when Lilian told him he was on the "right track." He continued to write without knowing what the overall goal was for him to achieve in his writing. Jay said Lilian's feedback helped him learn about Chicago formatting, citation, and writing a bibliography. Beyond that, Jay said the feedback he received wasn't too critical. In revision, he focused on clarifying sentences that Lilian found confusing in her feedback. This often meant elaborating more on an idea or rewriting a sentence for precision.

I identify a couple of rhetorical slippages between Lilian's intentions with her feedback and what Jay learned from her feedback. First, I want to point out that Jay learned more about Chicago formatting style which is important for writing like a historian. That is where Lilian's goal with her feedback aligned with what Jay learned from her feedback. But Jay didn't identify his learning experiences from feedback as learning to write like a historian, like Lilian hoped it was. He focused on the lack of feedback. He wanted to see more comments on his papers and desired critical comments that could help him improve as a writer, but Jay mostly received comments of praise from Lilian. Although Lilian was very supportive as an instructor, Jay never expressed feeling supported by her, which doesn't mean he didn't feel supported, but his feelings of frustration were more meaningful and obvious to him.

Jay said:

> Where's the feedback? I like feedback. I'd like you to tell me what I could be doing better. Please tell me what I can do better, so I can get better. So, if I want to go on to higher education, I have an easier time when I get there, you know, please tell me how to write this better. But I don't see that. I don't see it. (Jay, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

This quote in particular resonated with me because of the momentum of Jay's words and the passion within his voice. He genuinely wanted to become a better writer and learn from the feedback he received. Even though he believed he was a strong writer, he said strong writers also need feedback to improve. I'm reminded of Maeve's comment that feedback on writing is a standard part of the writing process for every writer. But what makes that feedback unique? The individual writer.

Jay mentioned his goal of continuing his education. He was considering going to graduate school to study History, but he was unsure if he was writing like a historian or writing at the appropriate level and skill for graduate school. I recognize the importance of Jay's identity as an individual writer to his learning and how he experiences feedback. Lilian approached feedback similarly for all her students. It seemed that each student received comments on Chicago formatting and Lilian provided her interpretations as the reader to point out moments of ambiguity in her students' writing. But this is where I identify the largest rhetorical slippage.

Lilian wanted students to learn how to write like historians, but Jay felt unsure if his writing matched that criterion. It was especially important to Jay since he wanted to continue to pursue higher education. Since I was not able to see examples of Lilian's feedback, I can't conclude with confidence how her feedback responded to the individual writer, but I speculate that Lilian's feedback might have not considered the entire individual writer and instead focused on the important stylistic features of writing like a historian.

As I discuss WAC's lack of inclusionary efforts later in the chapter, I describe and suggest feedback strategies that focus on students' identities. I include my own approach to feedback. I recall writing center pedagogy and what it can bring to WAC inclusionary efforts. Relying on scholarship and my own experiences for support, I hope to provide an adaptable

framework for building and developing a sustainable WAC program with a focus on inclusivity and writing center pedagogy.

How Do WAC Programs Benefit from Collaboration with Writing Centers and Community Connections from a Sustainability Standpoint?

This section seeks to explore the study's second research question. Using Maeve's story and writing center scholarship, I discuss the importance of the connection to the Writing Center for WAC sustainability.

I'd like to begin with Maeve's statement: "I find that WAC instructors have varying definitions of what writing or what they feel that good writing is" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). Furthermore, Maeve shared that faculty must "be invested in the services that are provided to their students and actually know what writing centers do. And that's something that writing centers have struggled with for years" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). Throughout both interviews, Maeve expressed the need for more collaboration, both in quantity and quality, between the Writing Center, WAC, and WAC faculty members. At Midwestern University, the Writing Center and WAC did not work together. I asked Maeve to describe in what ways the Writing Center and WAC program at Midwestern University would collaborate if they formed a relationship. She said there would be more communication, professional development, and overall meetings. For example, Maeve said faculty meetings with the writing center would "solidify realistic writing goals for their students, it would be beneficial for instructors across the curriculum to know what writing centers do, and how we can support their students throughout the writing process" (Maeve, personal communication, September 13, 2022). It was apparent through Maeve's responses that there was

a longtime struggle with faculty involvement and WAC program communications with the Writing Center.

When Maeve expressed that faculty hold varying understandings of writing, it solidified my finding that there are multiple practices of WAC and writing at Midwestern University that haven't been specifically identified, which could be detrimental to the sustainably of WAC at Midwestern University. I believe this because it is a lack of knowledge of how, where, and when writing happens at Midwestern University, which are central to WAC sustainability. The lack of awareness could also mean misconceptions about writing are being circulated around the university unintentionally. The Midwestern University Writing Center and WAC program didn't have a relationship. Maeve held a sense of frustration about the lack of collaboration and interpersonal relations at Midwestern University, but she wished not to elaborate on the matter. Therefore, the lack of information I provide on this issue is intentional. Ultimately, Maeve wished for more collaboration and wanted to see an established relationship between WAC and the Midwestern University Writing Center.

In the article "Building Sustainable WAC Programs: A Whole Systems Approach" (2018) by Michelle Cox, Jeffrey Galin, and Dan Melzer, they introduced the whole systems approach. The whole systems approach aims to transform a campus culture "by approaching the problem of program sustainability systematically" (67). Cox, Galin, and Melzer recommended that WAC programs take time to study the whole campus system to identify writing activities happening on campus in order to create lasting change in WAC programs. The lack of knowledge of writing activities on Midwestern University's campus and the varying understandings of writing by faculty leave the WAC program vulnerable because any changes or

efforts in WAC development will not reach the wider campus culture or university structures, such as the Writing Center.

The Writing Center can offer students numerous language tools and indiscreet knowledge on writing. In "Inclusion Takes Effort: What Writing Center Pedagogy Can Bring to Writing in the Disciplines" (2018), Sarah Peterson Pittock states:

> One-to-one writing center work with writers from across the disciplines reminds instructors and writing pedagogy professionals what it's like to read a writing assignment sheet for the first time, how novices respond to new writing tasks, and why the varied identities writers bring with them to their writing practice matter; in other words, we are reminded how and why we center student writing goals as we work to make meaning and progress together with students. (Pittock, 2018, p. 106).

Additionally, Pittock described inclusionary work in the writing center as not just about the student being heard, but it also encourages diverse points of view and diverse voices across campus. With WAC's inattention to inclusivity, Pittock recommends that WAC programs consider requiring their faculty and staff to tutor in the writing center. A connection with the writing center is crucial for WAC sustainability not only because writing center specialists can reach multiple disciplines and people across campus, but also because of the inclusive practices the writing center prioritizes.

Maeve promoted the Writing Center as a nonjudgmental space and site of support for students. Writing center consultants demystify writing conventions by engaging with grammar challenges, but also by bringing attention to higher order concerns in writing, such as thesis statements and students' written ideas. Maeve always kept the student at the center of the

consulting session and their work, which supports Pittock's idea that students' full humanity matters and writing consultants support writers' relationship with their writing taking into account their entire identity. WAC programs can learn from Writing Center pedagogy by focusing on inclusivity practices and applying those to areas where WAC needs the most work, which is the inattention to race and racialized assessment.

WAC Sustainability

Inclusivity

In Chapter 1, I acknowledged a gap in WAC regarding inclusivity, diversity, English as a second language, accessibility, and disability. I believe WAC could learn from other areas and apply and adapt necessary inclusionary changes for sustainability efforts. In this section, I rely on scholarship from Mya Poe and Asao B. Inoue who focus on writing assessment and writing development with attention to inclusivity, race, and equity to outline a framework for race that WAC can adapt for sustainability. Pittock identified that WAC is not inclusive and needs to adapt an assessment framework that considers students' complex, individual identities. In the "*WAC Journal* Interview of Asao B. Inoue" conducted by Neal Lerner, Inoue identified "a lack of any substantive theorizing or use of theories of race and racism, intersectional or not, in how teaching or learning writing across disciplines happens or could happen" (Inoue, 2018, p. 114). Inoue encouraged changes in language judgment practices, as well as the incorporation of inclusive assessment practices, such as the use of labor-based grading contracts, which is a grading contract created and agreed upon both students and instructor that focuses on the labor for learning rather than the quality of writing.

Mya Poe offers a frame for race and WAC in the article "Re-Framing Race in Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum" (2013). Poe suggests situating race locally and states, "Instead

of starting with generalizations about teaching writing to racially diverse student populations, it is better to start with discussions about local students and local needs" (Poe, 2013, p. 5). Poe asks instructors to start with addressing the needs of students in their classrooms and programs because it is where "all teaching and assessment stories should begin" (Poe, 2013, p. 5). Instructors and administrators often over-generalize students' motivations, performance, and experiences. Poe states, "By describing students with greater specificity in our classrooms, we will likely find that initial notions about race become more complicated. Those more complicated notions of race allow us to respond more meaningfully to student writing" (Poe, 2013, p. 6). If WAC develops inclusionary efforts by starting to describe students in their program with more specificity and re-framing race as situated within the specific teaching and writing contexts, then WAC can be more prepared to design multiple levels of support.

The next principle for reframing race that Poe suggests is understanding what expectations we bring to writing instruction. Poe says, "It's more useful to consider what expectations teachers and students bring to rhetorical situations across the curriculum" (Poe, 2013, p. 6). The goal of a WAC program is to help improve the teaching of writing and not tell different campus departments and structures what and how to write. Poe recognizes that students bring to the writing classroom different motivations to learn and writing ability levels, as well as the readiness to adapt to a writing intensive course. These differences are normal considering learning to write is a complex activity and each student carries an identity. Poe states, "Problems arise when systemic barriers or our own biases lead to erroneous conclusions about race and writing ability. Race does not cause individuals to perform in certain ways, but racial stereotypes can influence the actions of teachers and students" (Poe, 2013, p. 7). Racial expectations affect the ways that instructors respond to writing. Poe recommends adding a focus on the raced

expectations that we bring to the classroom in WAC workshops or consultations which can ultimately improve the teaching of writing, department initiatives, and student support.

The last principle that Poe suggests is understanding the connection between multilingualism and race. Poe asserts:

> Understanding the racialized implications of linguistic diversity, thus, can be a valuable resource for teaching writing in many disciplines. If the goal is to help prepare students for real-world rhetorical situations, then teaching writing across the curriculum means preparing students for the multilingual spaces in which they will be writing and working. (Poe, 2013, p. 10).

In the writing classroom, we can begin to demystify grammar and white standard language by asking students to identify their own grammatical and spelling patterns, "noting when and where they find certain patterns more effective and where deviations from a particular dialect can be strategically useful" (Poe, 2013, p. 10). While most professions and publishing might require standardized language, there are many professionals and interactions where linguistic diversity will be encountered and is a normal daily practice for many individuals. If WAC teaches writing as one standardized method, it does a disservice to our students because WAC will not prepare them for writing outside the classroom or navigating unfamiliar writing situations.

Goals and Principles for WAC Sustainability

There are numerous goals, principles, indicators, and practices that are offered to institutions who are committed to building an effective and sustainable WAC program. The 2014 statement composed by the International Network of WAC Programs (INWAC) urges institutions to recognize the following principles:

- Writing is a highly complex and situated activity that cannot be mastered in a single course but is learned over a lifetime.
- WAC is not a "quick fix," but an initiative that requires sustained conversations among faculty that extend beyond a single workshop or consultation.
- Though often a faculty-led initiative, WAC programs require administrative support, such as course releases for program leadership, a standing budget, and support for professional development. (Cox et al., 2014, pp. 1-2).

In "More Than a Useful Myth: A Case Study of Design Thinking for Writing Across the Curriculum Program Innovation" (2018), Jenna Pack Sheffield encourages the use of design thinking for WAC sustainability. Design thinking is "a creative problem-solving approach" (Sheffield, 2018, p. 168). Design thinking can be applied to WAC administration specifically. Sheffield identifies commons problems that WAC administrators face and offers applications for WAC administration.

Some of the common problems WAC administrators face include the following:

- How to assess program effectiveness
- Monitor instructor compliance
- Resistance from chairs and faculty
- Class capacity
- How to work with faculty who are overly focused on grammar
- How to deal with disciplinary difference in writing conventions and pedagogical approaches
- Overburdened staff

- WAC ownership
- Where WAC is located
- Student perceptions of writing-intensive courses (Sheffield, 2018, p. 172).

In the article, "Of Evolutions and Mutations: Assessment as Tactics for Action in WAC Partnerships" (2016), authors Fernando Sánchez and Daniel Kenzie state, "WAC Coordinators should not overlook grammatical issues" (p. 131). Instead, Sánchez and Kenzie encourage WAC Programs to consider how to address grammar productively and learn what grammar means to students, faculty, and staff at a university and employers beyond the campus community. Sánchez and Kenzie state, "Having a concrete understanding of what grammar errors occur most frequently, and how style may be implicated in this discussion, may help WAC coordinators prioritize instruction in a way that connects grammar and style to students' writing context" (Sánchez and Kenzie, 2016, p. 131). Sánchez and Kenzie's study speaks to the issue of faculty pedagogy, concerns with grammar, and how to work with faculty on differences in writing pedagogy.

I offer the following suggestions that can be applied to faculty and writing consultant training, as well as student advocacy based on my prior research into implementing inclusive sentence-level training that I conducted for the Bowling Green State University Writing Center. Faculty, students, and writing consultants should practice self-correcting, or indirect correction of their own work. In this process, they highlight grammatical errors and describe why it is an error. Faculty, students, and writing consultants can reflect on how they define an error and where their understanding of an error derives from.

WAC programs can work more closely with faculty, students, and the Writing Center to create a training seminar on grammar errors. In the first part of training, it is important to provide

space for faculty, students, or consultants to self-reflect. I suggest watching Asao B. Inoue's 2019 keynote address at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, then have participants answer the following questions:

- What parts of your identity are most important to you?
- What are the ways in which your writing or speaking is an expression of your identity? This could be your race/ethnicity, age, class, major, gender. Try to think specifically about grammar, syntax, vocabulary as you answer this question.
- What are different ways that identity might enter a writing tutoring session or writing classroom? Try to think specifically about grammar, syntax, vocabulary, etc. as you answer this question.

The next part of training focuses on key points about identity and language, such as focusing on how language use is deeply tied to identity, linguistic identities are deeply tied to social inequalities, students come to the writing center and writing classroom with different needs and desires, writing consultants come to the writing center with different strengths and values, and writing center work is always raced. Understanding standard written English as the language of academia, an agreed upon set of conventions, is not the most common English, is not the same as "native English speaker," and is not static can influence WAC faculty's writing pedagogy, feedback practices, and definition of writing.

Lastly, faculty and writing consultants can be trained on empowering students at the sentence level, which includes the following:

- Use non-directive feedback, focus on higher order concerns
- Weekly group workshops for self-editing
- Start an error log to identify where, how, when, and why errors are happening in writing

- Affirm the writer's identity
- Advocacy: Give students tools and confidence and space for them to defend their choices

I believe a training seminar such as the one I've suggested will encourage collaboration between WAC faculty, WAC students, and the Writing Center. It will advocate for students' written voices and every participant's understanding of writing. Creating seminars can address WAC administrative concerns of how to work with faculty, how to radicalize student involvement with WAC, and understand students' perceptions in their WAC classrooms.

Applications for WAC administrators:

- Avoid bringing in biases or assumptions
- Experience what their local users experience by actually witnessing their feelings, emotions, and challenges
- Generation of radical ideas (i.e., allow students to run WAC workshops. Get rid of workshops and move to departmental consulting.)
- Not let typical concerns (about budgets, resources, staffing, etc.) get in the way of innovative ideas.
- Receive feedback on ideas
- Question basic assumptions and knowledge in their field of study (i.e., composition pedagogy) (Sheffield, 2018, p. 185).

Similarly, in "Reading an Institution's History of WAC through the Lens of Whole-Systems Theory" (2019), Brad Peters encourages wholeness, participation of stakeholders, transformational change, resilience to program challenges, leadership, and feedback as all important to sustaining WAC's momentum. Peters provides a list of sustainability indicators:

- Departments and programs with potential or existing writing intensive courses
- Capacity of student support
- Amount of faculty support
- Equitable numbers of faculty willing to teach writing intensive courses
- Budget capacity to support writing intensive courses
- Capacity to assess and improve writing intensive courses
- Control of class size
- Capacity of a university committee to oversee writing intensive courses
- Capacity of a WAC coordinator
- Communications to promote WAC visibility (Peters, 2019, p. 11).

In her interviews, Lilian commented on the amount of labor required to teach writing. She said, "A lot of professors don't want to teach WAC courses because it means teaching more writing and writing takes more time to produce and grade" (Lilian, personal communication, November 16, 2022). Faculty resistance could present a problem at Midwestern University regarding the amount of faculty support and equity, especially if WAC efforts are not taking into consideration faculty labor and burnout. Controlling class sizes could impact faculty support, but budgets and resources may interfere with WAC innovation at Midwestern University. As portrayed in this study, course and program requirements are a factor in motivation and participation in WAC. Because of this, I continue to wonder how the requirements of budgets and guidelines affect WAC administration and development at Midwestern University.

Implications for WAC Administration and Writing Classrooms

As the previous chapters demonstrate, many factors influence the understandings of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback at Midwestern University as shared by Lilian, Jay, and

Maeve. These influences include discipline background and knowledge, pedagogical practices, attitudes towards writing, program requirements and restraints, educational experiences with learning how to write, class content, workplace experience, and university job roles. The following section outlines my recommendations for various stakeholders involved with WAC and writing at the postsecondary level, including WAC administrators, writing instructors, and students. As each of these stakeholders exist in drastically different environments with different affordances and challenges, it is important to note the amount of labor WAC sustainability requires and the unknown capacity they currently perform under.

Program and Department Evaluation

WAC scholar Brad Peters supports external consultations by writing program evaluators that WAC institutions can take into consideration for development and sustainability purposes. Writing program evaluators hold extensive knowledge on "composition administration and instruction; current scholarship on writing, teaching, and administration; labor issues such as course loads, budget, staffing, and working conditions; institutional contexts; and varied models for addressing campus problems" (Brady, 2004, p. 79). Writing program evaluators offer an outsider perspective about strengths and challenges of a program and assist new writing program administration to establish goals and determine solutions for potential challenges. Site visits allow the evaluators to meet with various stakeholders including students, faculty, and staff. They review relevant policies and practices, then they share a report with the host department or program that summarizes their evaluation process. Lastly, they offer suggestions that speak to shareholder concerns and priorities and, also, WAC theory and arguments on effective practice.

WAC Consulting

Since writing program evaluations aren't always specific to WAC, I recommend the use of WAC consulting for WAC administration, faculty, TAs, and staff to address additional concerns. A WAC consultation can help WAC faculty formulate ideas about writing assignments and activities. Additionally, consultations can discuss the use of feedback methods in WAC courses and help develop WAC syllabi. Currently, WAC consulting is specific to a university's WAC program. For example, both The University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) and The University of Minnesota have a designated WAC consultant to serve faculty on issues related to teaching WAC. UW-Madison encourages all members affiliated with the university to schedule a WAC consultation. The University of Minnesota offers support to Minnesota WAC faculty members. Both universities provide a required form to be completed in order to request a consultation (see appendices L and M). Considering Lilian's experience with minimal WAC professional development, I believe a WAC consultant would be beneficial for Midwestern University's WAC program because WAC consultants can offer one-on-one support to faculty.

Student Involvement

WAC Workshops

Because of WAC's focus on faculty development and WAC pedagogy, I found it crucial to include student experiences in this research. Given Jay's experiences with WAC and writing, I recommend innovative student involvement in WAC and writing classrooms. First, WAC programs can extend their consulting services to students and offer support on describing writing assignments and provide rhetorical knowledge on writing. Second, I support the idea of radicalizing WAC by having students lead WAC workshops. Some examples might include the

use of artificial intelligence (AI) generated writing, defining writing, the application of instructor written feedback, identifying writing as advocacy, and students' relationship to language.

Writing Assessment

Self-Efficacy Worksheet for Pedagogical Application

Aside from WAC administrative efforts for student initiatives, I offer a framework for assessment in the writing classroom that considers students' complex, individual identities. As an instructor of writing, I've taught first-year writing courses, as well as creative writing, English Second Language (ESL), and intermediate writing courses. At the beginning of each semester, students complete a self-efficacy worksheet that asks them questions unique to their strengths, weaknesses, and goals as an individual. The worksheet asks students to recall a time they were proud of themselves, how they work through challenges, and how they want to approach the course. It also asks them to list their strengths and weaknesses (as an individual and in writing), their major, their goals for the course, the general goals they have, and what influences their goals. Lastly, I provide space on the worksheet for students to describe how I can help support them.

Students respond well to the self-efficacy worksheet and provide detailed answers. I typically assign this on the first day of class after reviewing the syllabus. It is completed as an in-class assignment, and it is graded based on completion. I learn about students' motivations to write and learn, as well as how they talk about themselves when discussing their successes and times of struggle through challenges. The worksheet is only shared and read by me. I reference the worksheet throughout the semester while I provide feedback on their writing so that I can keep in mind what each student wants to achieve in the class and beyond the classroom. I try to personalize my feedback by greeting the student using their preferred name and I describe my

approach in feedback. I welcome students to respond to my feedback. They can respond to my feedback by writing a feedback letter to me, responding to my comments within their document and emailing it back to me, or schedule a one-on-one conference through Zoom or in my campus office. If I recognize that students aren't engaging with my feedback, I build in an assignment that students complete in class where they reflect on the feedback that they've received from me on their written work. I encourage them to ask me questions about their writing and my feedback. This is another assignment that is graded based on completion.

The reasons I started these practices were because of my inquiries into self-efficacy and my own challenges with self-confidence as an individual and writer. I learned there are correlations between students' perceived efficacy and performance in the classroom, meaning students might understand what makes an effective piece of writing and what steps to take to produce that piece of writing, but if a student lacks a belief in their ability to achieve a writing task, then the student is likely to experience a decrease in motivation and an increase in fear of personal failure. Learning more about my students through evaluating self-efficacy helps me understand what motivates them and what I can do to support them so that they can continue to engage with their learning through writing. Additionally, I value feedback as an ongoing conversation between my students and me. Students experience writing situations through feedback, and as Jay expressed, students want to improve their writing skills, understand the feedback they receive, and achieve goals beyond the classroom.

Most instructor practices are guided by personal beliefs and values, as Lilian mentioned her feedback methods are motivated by her personal compassion for her students' success. She recognized most her students were History majors, History minors, or History Education majors and tailored her feedback for their success in their given field. My assessment framework is not

designed to conform to all writing classrooms, but it offers a glimpse into the possibilities of feedback as a powerful structure where active student participation is achievable. While my framework of assessment and recommendation of WAC consultation are in no way inclusive of everything that can be learned from investigating Lilian, Jay, and Maeve's shared experiences, it is my hope that it has offered additional understanding into the complex nature of WAC, writing, advocacy, and feedback.

Looking Forward: Implications for Further Research

While this dissertation implies numerous opportunities for future research, most of my interests for continued study lie at those points where I faced the most limitations: collaboration with WAC directorship, representation of student experiences, and WAC's inattention to inclusivity at Midwestern University. My research goals shifted throughout this study, and I wondered what I would discover. I held my own biases towards writing and feedback, as well as a limiting definition of WAC and understanding of administration practices and challenges. Taking into consideration my study's key terms: *WAC, writing, advocacy,* and *feedback*, I believe further quantitative research could be conducted into each key term individually using a case-study approach. For example, I would be interested in researching WAC instructor feedback practices by examining the comments offered on student writing from a group of WAC instructors at one institution from various fields. I would also enjoy working more closely with WAC students to share their experiences with writing in WAC and create a repository of their current definitions of WAC. What I would find exceptionally valuable for continued research is locating a robust WAC campus community in the U.S. at the university level and working closely with a WAC Director to identify current practices of inclusivity in the program or help develop a framework for race.

As a result of the project and as Lilian, Jay, and Maeve's experiences of WAC at Midwestern University, I hold an understanding of WAC's history, initiative, and principles at a postsecondary level. I'm curious to study WAC in two-year colleges and in high school curricula, but there is still so much work to do with regard to WAC inclusivity with race, assessment, and student voices. For example, I'd be interested in investigating instructor biases about students and writing that they bring to the classroom, as well as language and grammar practice in a WAC classroom. At Midwestern University, there were WAC courses offered in many subject areas. I wanted to know how students in a math course were learning about numbers through writing. This initial research into different terms and practices helped me redefine WAC and establish a newfound passion for writing. It made me question my own basic assumptions about writing and the strict knowledge I held as scholar in Writing Studies. I didn't prioritize grammar in my feedback on writing and sometimes completely dismissed grammar, but I'm inspired by my participants' shared experiences to not overlook grammar. Maeve shared that students' main reason for visiting the writing center was grammar. Jay found grammar important for his job and his written voice. Lilian recalled her instructors focused too much on her grammar in their feedback. I believe grammar is much more than the rules we're taught, but I have yet to discover what grammar offers writers beyond a set of rules.

Final Thoughts: Defining WAC

At the beginning of this study, I understood WAC as writing a lot. I formed that definition at Midwestern University 10 years ago when I was meeting with an Academic Advisor about course enrollment. I trusted what I was told about WAC from administration, but WAC was never explained to me beyond that. Before I began researching WAC more deeply, I adhered to one definition of WAC: Courses outside standard English composition courses. Now I define

WAC as a meaningful collaboration between campus and writing communities focused on transforming teaching practices and engaging students more actively and inclusively with their learning through writing. I will continue to develop my definition of WAC as I'll always value what we can learn through writing.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

BGSU
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board

DATE:	January 4, 2022
TO:	Anne Cigic
FROM:	Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board
PROJECT TITLE:	[1739252-2] [redacted]
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Revision
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	January 4, 2022
EXPIRATION DATE:	November 23, 2022
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category #7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the IRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on November 23, 2022. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

If you have any questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board's records.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program
English Deparment

Introduction

My name is Annie Cigic and I am a student in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Doctoral Program at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). My faculty adviser, who is serving as the chair on my dissertation committee, is Dr. Lee Nickoson (Department of English).

My dissertation research focuses on assessment in undergraduate Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) classes at [redacted] Assessment is an umbrella term for the numerous practices we use to evaluate students. Our assessment practices reflect our personal value and belief systems. For this study, I define assessment as the written or verbal cues and comments from instructor to student. More specifically, it is the feedback on student writing completed in a Writing Across the Curriculum course. I will be exploring instructor feedback methods and goals, and student dispositions towards feedback and learning from feedback. In my dissertation project, I plan to explore the intersections of advocacy, memory, and uptake in feedback. In addition, I will explore how writing in different disciplines is perceived as advocacy and what instructors advocate for in their feedback for students and identify rhetorical slippages where a series of discursive structures fail to fully empower students and advocate for students.

As part of my dissertation project, I would like to interview instructors and students like you who have expressed interest in further participation and are either an instructor or a student from [redacted] Writing Across the Curriculum Program. The remote Zoom interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. I obtained your contact information from the initial recruitment survey that was circulated through email.

Purpose

As discussed, the purpose of my research is to explore instructor feedback methods and goals, and student dispositions towards feedback and learning from feedback. The study's goal is to frame feedback as advocacy, call attention to new and emerging feedback methods, and situate assessment as an ongoing practice important to the student and their writing process and strategies. Some of my research questions include the following: How does instructor feedback advocate for students? How do we perform memory work in writing classes through our feedback? Do the goals and belief systems of instructor assessment align with student learning and experiences? How do students understand and use feedback?

The study will highlight unique and transformative feedback methods that most benefit the student writer. Knowledge gained from this study may be helpful to different communities of educators and writers as assessment is an interdisciplinary practice.

Voluntary Nature

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect you or your relationship with me, my faculty advisers, [redacted], or Bowling Green State University. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

Use of Information

This project is confidential, and procedures will be taken to protect anonymity by using pseudonyms and performing member check interviews. If you agree to participate in this research and answer the interview questions, some or all of the answers you provide to the interview questions will be included in my

dissertation project. During the member check interview procedure, participants will read through their interview transcript and talk about the information that is in them. We will discuss what information might reveal your identity and interfere with the integrity of your anonymity. I will electronically store your email responses (your signed informed consent document, your answers to the interview questions, and any other electronic correspondence I receive from you) on a password protected cloud server. Dr. Lee Nickoson and I are the only ones who will have access to your answers. I am the only one who will use them. Your answers will only be used for the project described in this document and all data will be deleted upon completion of this project.

Risks

Risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Contact Information

Annie Cigic (student), Department of English 415B East Hall, Bowling Green State University
aecigic@bgsu.edu
[redacted]

Dr. Lee Nickoson (advisor), Department of English 215F East Hall, Bowling Green State University
leenick@bgsu.edu
[redacted]

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this research or your participation in this research. You may also contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for your time.

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research.

_____

Participant Signature

APPENDIX C: SURVEY CONSENT FORM

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program
English Department

Introduction

My name is Annie Cigic and I am a student in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Doctoral Program at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). My faculty adviser, who is serving as the chair on my dissertation committee, is Dr. Lee Nickoson (Department of English). This is a survey for my dissertation research. The survey should take no more than fifteen (15) minutes of your time.

My dissertation research focuses on assessment in undergraduate Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) classes at [redacted]. Assessment is an umbrella term for the numerous practices we use to evaluate students. Our assessment practices reflect our personal value and belief systems. For this study, I define assessment as the written or verbal cues and comments from instructor to student. More specifically, it is the feedback on student writing completed in a Writing Across the Curriculum course. I will be exploring instructor feedback methods and goals, and student dispositions towards feedback and learning from feedback. In my dissertation project, I plan to explore the intersections of advocacy, memory, and student uptake in feedback. In addition, I will explore how writing in different disciplines is perceived as advocacy and what instructors advocate for in their feedback for students and identify rhetorical slippages where a series of discursive structures fail to fully empower students and advocate for students.

Purpose

As discussed, the purpose of my research is to explore instructor feedback methods and goals, and student dispositions towards feedback and learning from feedback. The study's goal is to frame feedback as advocacy, call attention to new and emerging feedback methods, and situate assessment as an ongoing practice important to the student and their writing process and strategies. Some of my research questions include the following: How does instructor feedback advocate for students? How do we perform memory work in writing classes through our feedback? Do the goals and belief systems of instructor assessment align with student learning and experiences? How do students understand and use feedback?

The study will highlight unique and transformative feedback methods that most benefit the student writer. Knowledge gained from this study may be helpful to different communities of educators and writers as assessment is an interdisciplinary practice.

Voluntary Nature

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect you or your relationship with me, my faculty advisers, [redacted], or Bowling Green State University. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

Use of Information

Your survey data will be kept confidential on a password-protected cloud server accessible only to the principal investigator, Annie Cigic, and the principal investigator's dissertation chair, Dr. Lee Nickoson.

If you decide to further participate in this research, you will be asked to share your email address for future contact. If you do not provide your contact information, I will only have access to your responses to the survey. All contact information will be kept on a password-protected server accessible only to the principal investigator and the dissertation chair. As this is an online survey, please clear your internet browser and page history after survey completion. You may want to complete this survey on a personal device as some employers may use tracking software.

Risks

Risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Contact Information

Annie Cigic (student), Department of English 415B East Hall, Bowling Green State University
aecigic@bgsu.edu
[redacted]

Dr. Lee Nickoson (advisor), Department of English 215F East Hall, Bowling Green State University
leenick@bgsu.edu
[redacted]

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this research or your participation in this research. You may also contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for your time.

Documentation of Informed Consent

By clicking "YES" below, you indicate you have been informed about this research study and you are volunteering to participate. If you click, "NO" or exit this window, you will be excluded from this survey.

APPENDIX D: INSTRUCTOR RECRUITMENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your current job title?
2. What Writing Across the Curriculum courses have you taught at [redacted]? Please provide the course number, course title, when you taught the course, and a brief overview of the course description.
3. How do you evaluate student writing in your Writing Across the Curriculum courses? Please describe your feedback methods and goals and what influences your practices.
4. Were you taught how to give feedback to students?
5. Have your feedback methods changed over time?
6. Does the way you give feedback change between course discipline? How?
7. Do you save or have access to the feedback you've provided for students in your WAC class?
8. Are you interested in further participation in this study through a follow-up interview? By clicking "YES", you will be prompted to share your name and email. By clicking "NO" the survey will be completed, and you can exit the survey.

APPENDIX E: STUDENT RECRUITMENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your affiliation with [redacted]? (multiple choice question)
   Choices: first-year undergraduate student, second-year undergraduate student, third-year undergraduate student, fourth-year undergraduate student, alumnus, other.
2. What Writing Across the Curriculum courses have you been enrolled in? When were you enrolled in those courses?
3. Do you receive feedback on your writing? Please describe your positive and/or negative experiences with instructor feedback.
4. On a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being very little and 5 being very much, how important is feedback to you? (multiple choice)
5. How do you use the feedback your instructor gives you?
6. Do you save or have access to feedback you've been given by your instructor from your WAC course?
7. Are you interested in further participation in this study through a follow-up interview? By clicking "YES", you will be prompted to share your name and email. By clicking "NO" the survey will be completed, and you can exit the survey.

APPENDIX F: RUBRIC FOR REVIEW OF WAC COURSES

The WAC Committee of [redacted] is charged with assuring courses awarded the WAC designation incorporate that philosophy and those practices. Therefore, every course proposed should include:

- A syllabus statement that advises students that the course is writing intensive and describes how writing will be used in the course.
- A syllabus that indicates the kinds and frequency of classroom writing.
- An opportunity for self-reflection to build metacognition through writing.
- Chances to write in a variety of forms.
- Frequent, low stakes assessment of writing, including peer review.
- Opportunities to revise in response to feedback from peers or faculty.
- Intentional use of writing to learn course content.
- Intentional instruction in writing in the contexts of the discipline.

Rubric for review of WAC courses

How does the syllabus explain to students that this is a WAC course?

Will students understand how writing is being used?
What aspects of writing are included in the learning objectives for the course? Are they explicit enough? What major assignments are described in the syllabus?

Are they writing related? Content related?

What comments about grading does the syllabus include? Do they seem appropriate?

Are revisions allowed? When and how?

What writing activities appear on the calendar? Will students be able to see the staging or the scaffolding for any major assignments?
What variety of writing activities are visible from the syllabus?

Where does the syllabus invite reflection?

Suggestions? Tips you would like to share?

APPENDIX G: RUBRIC FOR SHORT AND LONG ROUGH DRAFTS

Rubric for Short and Long Rough Drafts

Good	Fair	Poor
Thesis: The thesis of the paper is an argument and is clearly stated. It shows complex thinking.	Thesis is clear but is a statement of fact or does not offer much detail.	The thesis is difficult to find and understand. It might also change throughout the essay.
Argument and Organization: The essay has an argument that is well supported throughout. The paper also shows logical reasoning and is organized in a way that makes the argument easy for the reader to grasp and understand.	The argument is not always supported adequately. The organization and reasoning are hard to follow at times.	The essay has a weak, unsupported argument. The paper is difficult to comprehend.
Evidence: The essay backs up its argument with strong evidence from college-level sources. It quotes or paraphrases when appropriate and avoids overly-long quotes. Avoids over-reliance on a small number of sources.	The essay uses weak evidence and might use overly-long quotations. The essay might also need more evidence or have weak synthesis.	The evidence chosen does not support the argument or does not make sense in the paper.
Interpretation and Analysis: The essay interprets the evidence (explains what it means) and how it supports the argument.	Little effort is made to interpret the evidence or relate it to the argument.	Evidence is not explained or related to the argument.
Footnotes: The essay provides proper citations for quotes and paraphrases.	The essay has some footnote errors or only cites quotes and not paraphrases (or the reverse).	The essay has few citations and does not cite consistently.
Writing Skills: The essay is well-developed and shows evidence of proofreading beyond running spellcheck.	The essay has some proofreading errors, grammar errors that impede understanding, and/or is under-developed.	The essay has many proofreading errors, grammar errors that impede understanding, and/or is under-developed.

APPENDIX H: ESSAY RUBRIC

Essay Rubric

A (5)	B (4)	C (3)	D (2)	F (1)
Thesis: The thesis of the paper is an argument and is clearly stated. It shows complex thinking and does not simply recap in-class discussion. (x1)	The thesis is clear and a reasonably-complex argument.	Thesis is clear but is a statement of fact.	The thesis is difficult to find and understand. It might also change throughout the essay.	The essay has no thesis.
Argument and Organization: The essay has an argument that is well supported throughout. The paper also shows logical reasoning and is organized in a way that makes the argument easy for the reader to grasp and understand. (x2)	The argument is supported, but the organization or logic is not always easy for the reader to comprehend.	The argument is not always supported adequately. The organization and reasoning are hard to follow at times.	The essay has a weak, unsupported argument. The paper is difficult to comprehend.	The essay has no argument and is confusing.
Evidence: The essay backs up its argument with strong evidence from college-level sources. It quotes or paraphrases when appropriate and avoids overly-long quotes. (x4) Avoids over-reliance on a small number of sources.	The essay occasionally relies on weak evidence. The essay might also need more evidence, more diverse evidence, or better synthesis.	The essay frequently uses weak evidence and might use overly-long quotations. The essay might also need more evidence or have weak synthesis.	The evidence chosen does not support the argument or does not make sense in the paper.	Little to no evidence.
Interpretation and Analysis: The essay interprets the evidence (explains what it means) and how it supports the argument. (x3)	The evidence is explained but not adequately connected to the argument.	Little effort is made to interpret the evidence or relate it to the argument.	Evidence is not explained or related to the argument.	Evidence is not explained or related to the argument.
Footnotes: The essay provides proper citations for quotes and paraphrases. (x3)	The essay is missing a few citations or has slightly erred in the format.	The essay only cites quotes and not paraphrases (or the reverse).	The essay has few citations and does not cite consistently.	The essay has extremely poor citations.

Points Breakdown for Final Paper – History 2000

From Rubric:

Thesis (5 points) = _____

Argument and organization (10) = _____

Evidence (20 points) = _____

Interpretation and Analysis (15) = _____

Footnotes (15 points) = _____

Writing Skills:

Grammar (5 points) = _____

Proofreading (10) = _____

Paper developed but no filler (10) = _____

Etc:

Required Length (3 points) = _____

Pages Numbered (3) = _____

Times New Roman (2) = _____
-Font in size 12

One-inch margins (2) = _____

Extra Credit:
Included Historiography = _____

Total (100 points) = _____

Minus 10 if no bibliography (does not need to be annotated) attached

APPENDIX I: INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for helping with my project! Think of the following questions as "guides" –please feel free to add or include anything you think could be helpful for my dissertation. I very much value your experiences and expertise! This interview will take 45-60 minutes and I will be recording it using the Zoom recorder feature. The recording will be saved to my computer.

1. Could you tell me more about the courses you've taught in the WAC program at Midwestern University?
2. What do you understand WAC to mean generally and in your course?
3. Possible follow-ups: How is WAC applied in your course? How many writing projects do you assign?
4. Where and how did you learn to write?
5. What professional development opportunities are provided for you to learn how to teach student writers in a writing classroom?
6. Do you believe you teach the writer and not the writing?
7. How do you define advocacy?
    a. Do you see writing within your field as advocacy?
8. How do you evaluate students' writing in your classroom? What methods do you use?
9. How does the feedback you give reflect your value and belief systems in the classroom?
10. What are you advocating for in your feedback for your students? Or what do you hope students learn from your feedback?
11. Is there anything else about your experience that you think is helpful for me to know?

APPENDIX J: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for helping with my project! Think of the following questions as "guides" –as you talk, please feel free to add or include anything you think could be helpful for my dissertation. I very much value your experiences and expertise! This interview will take 45-60 minutes and I will be recording it using the Zoom recorder feature. The recording will be saved to my computer.

1. What is/was your major?
2. What WAC classes have you taken?
3. How do you understand the term "WAC?" Or how do you define WAC?
4. What writing have you done or are doing at the moment that is most meaningful?
5. How do you view your writing as advocacy?
6. How did you learn to write?
7. What are some unfamiliar writing situations you've experienced?
    a. Follow-up: How has your instructor's feedback helped your uptake of writing genres. In other words, what strategies for writing has instructor feedback taught you so that you are able to write in unfamiliar situations outside the classroom?
8. Can you share your positive and/or negative experiences with receiving feedback?
    a. Follow-up: Do you feel supported through feedback on your writing?
9. How do you use feedback?
    a. Follow-up: What do you learn from feedback?
10. What kind of feedback do you find helpful and how often would you like to receive feedback?
11. Is there anything else about your experience that you think is helpful for me to know?

APPENDIX K: WRITING CENTER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for helping with my project! Think of the following questions as "guides" –please feel free to add or include anything you think could be helpful for my dissertation. I very much value your experiences and expertise! This interview will take 45-60 minutes and I will be recording it using the Zoom recorder feature. The recording will be saved to my computer.

1. What is your role at Midwestern University and what are your day-to-day tasks?
2. What are the main services at the Writing Center?
3. If you work directly with students, what kinds of feedback do you notice from instructors on student writing and what kind of feedback do you encourage tutors to give on writing?
4. What connections does the Writing Center have or could have with university and beyond?
5. How is the Writing Center beneficial to student writers, faculty, and staff?
6. In your opinion, what is Writing Center pedagogy?
7. Is the Writing Center a site of advocacy? In what ways?
8. In your opinion, what is writing?
    a. What is WAC?
9. How is the relationship between WAC and Writing Center?
10. How could WAC benefit from the Writing Center?
11. What has the Writing Center offered for professional development?
12. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

APPENDIX L: UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON CONSULTATION FORM

1. Email (Please use your wisc.edu email address)
2. First and Last Name
3. Position

    Faculty

    Academic Staff

    Teaching Assistant

    Other:
4. Course (if applicable) that corresponds to the writing assignment/activity for your students that we'll be working on. Please include department, course number, and course title.
5. Elaborate on the particular concerns, questions, or clarifications for your writing assignments/writing activities for your students. This will help us tailor our feedback to your specific context.
6. Anything else we should know about you, your class, or this writing assignment/activity?

APPENDIX M: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CONSULTATION FORM

Complete this form to request a teaching consultation with a WAC Consultant. Consultations are available for individuals or groups.

Please note: If you are a University of Minnesota student and want support for your own writing, please go to Student Writing Support at http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.html. If you are an instructor seeking a writing community, see Faculty Writing Hunkers.

1. Name(s)

2. Role
Select one
Faculty
Instructor
Teaching Assistant
Other

3. Preferred consultation venue
In-person at Center for Writing Office, 10 Nicholson Hall
(currently unavailable)
In-person at another location on campus
(currently unavailable)
Email
Phone
Zoom
GoogleDocs

4. Email

5. Phone Number (if you prefer that we contact you by phone)

6. What do you want to discuss?

7. If related to a specific course, which course?

8. Consultant
Click one of the names below for more information about the consultant.
No Preference
Pamela Flash
Dan Emery
Matt Luskey

9. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?