Undaunted, Self-Critical, and Resentful: Investigating Faculty Attitudes Toward Teaching Writing in a Large University Writing-Intensive Course Program

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates attitudes toward teaching writing among a large group of faculty in the disciplines who teach in a writing-intensive course program. Attitudinal survey data was collected and analyzed using factor and cluster analysis techniques. The analysis revealed five clusters of faculty who share distinct beliefs about teaching writing. These results are interpreted in reference to previous research about faculty in WAC/WID programs, and also to large-scale survey research about faculty attitudes in higher education. We argue that faculty attitudes toward teaching writing are knitted into larger frameworks of beliefs about what it means to be a faculty member.

It is nothing new to say that writing across the curriculum programs depend on the willingness of faculty across the disciplines to reconsider and reshape their classroom pedagogy to make it more amenable to writing instruction. Eric Miraglia and Susan McLeod's review of continuing WAC/WID programs found that faculty support was critical to the success of a program, and that "[v]irtually all WAC activities are [. . .] designed to encourage colleagues across the disciplines to make changes in their pedagogy [. . .]" (51). But persuading faculty to focus on and make changes in pedagogy is not easy, and it depends not only on the persistence of the WAC director, but also on the attitudes toward writing, teaching writing, and faculty life that faculty themselves bring with them.

Given the overarching importance of faculty attitudes in the success of writing programs, it is curious that the research in writing studies has not delved more deeply into investigating them. This is not to say that accounts of faculty attitudes don't come up in our published literature—they do—

but faculty attitudes have generally not been the subject of sustained, methodologically rigorous research. Instead, when faculty attitudes are discussed, it is often in the form of anecdotal accounts of individual instructors' behaviors and comments, especially accounts of faculty "resistance" to aspects of the writing program. Patricia Donohue's "Strange Resistances" is a good example of this. She describes how faculty in her university showed resistance to the writing program by ignoring phone calls and emails, cancelling planned meetings, and falsely claiming to have made pedagogical changes in their classroom (34–35).

Such anecdotal accounts of faculty attitudes can have value in helping us discover common themes in our experiences across different universities. But they can also be very problematic when they aren't checked and challenged by research because they can lead us to misread the nature and prevalence of certain faculty attitudes, especially "resistance." And more problematically, there is a gap between describing what someone said or did (e.g. failed to return phone calls) and discerning their underlying attitudes and beliefs. It's easy to assume that we know what attitude drives a faculty member to respond in a particular way, especially when we ourselves are involved in the interactions. But precisely because we are involved and interested parties, it is also easy for our interpretations to be biased by our own concerns and beliefs.

In their 1996 study of WAC programs, Barbara Walvoord, Linda Lawrence Hunt, H. Fil Dowling, and Joan McMahon locate the main source of our misinterpretation of faculty attitudes in a conflict of interest (3–7). When a WPA does research on a program that she herself directs, she will naturally want to demonstrate that the program and her leadership of it are effective. This creates a conflict when disciplinary faculty do not want to follow where the director is leading. It is difficult for a director to report openly and objectively on faculty beliefs when those beliefs are opposed to the pedagogies and practices that our field advocates, and when those beliefs are thwarting the programmatic changes that the director is trying to institute. But Walvoord and her coauthors also suggest that it is possible to minimize this conflict of interest by using research methods that decenter the WPA's own agenda by explicitly grounding the investigation in faculty members' ways of thinking (11–16). A recently published account of faculty in a writing in the disciplines program provides compelling evidence that this approach works. In *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines*, Chris Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki present a thorough and carefully researched analysis of faculty who teach in a WID program. Their research method explicitly addresses the complexities that arise when the researchers and their participants are colleagues in the same institution

(25). The result is a nuanced portrait of university writing instruction that centers around the influence of disciplinarity on faculty members' attitudes toward teaching writing.

Engaged Writers offers testimony to the complexity of faculty attitudes toward teaching writing (and to the inadequacy of the notion of "resistance" to capture them), but it still leaves a gap in our understanding because it only addresses the beliefs of a small and selected group of instructors. Thaiss and Zawacki followed fourteen tenure-line faculty members, who were chosen because the authors knew them to be highly experienced and excellent teachers of writing (27). Thus, while we have an excellent understanding of the beliefs of the instructors profiled, we can't assume that their beliefs are representative of the larger group of university faculty who teach writing.

In our own research, then, we bring to bear our experience and training in quantitative methods to investigate the attitudes of a large, nonselected group of faculty in the disciplines who teach writing-intensive courses. We created and administered a survey, and we used statistical techniques designed for analyzing attitudinal data. We interpreted the results of the study against the literature from composition studies about WAC/WID faculty. But to avoid a WAC/WID bias, we have also drawn on a body of research from outside composition studies: namely, the mostly quantitative analyses of university faculty attitudes that are produced by and aimed at researchers of higher education. This research—which uses national databases such as those at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Center of Educational Statistics, among others—investigates faculty attitudes toward and satisfaction with a wide variety of aspects of academic life, from workload, to departmental interactions, to professional development, and more. Taken as a whole, this literature suggests that faculty members' overall job satisfaction is influenced by a complicated set of ideas related to the fairness and appropriateness of their teaching, as they perceive it. Or, put another way, their overall professional satisfaction is bound up in what Mary Wright has called the "ambiguous" role of teaching in academic faculty lives (333). As we will see, the faculty in this survey reflected complex, and in some cases markedly contradictory, perceptions about teaching, and these shaped their attitudes toward writing instruction in ways that both challenged and surprised us.

Our goal, then, is to offer a map of the attitudes toward teaching writing that prevail across the whole range of faculty who teach in a writing-intensive course program, and to relate those attitudes to previous research about faculty attitudes, both in terms of teaching writing and in general. We investigate their attitudes with an eye toward understanding which beliefs are common, and which are rare, and how various ideas and atti-

tudes fit together. And we investigate whether aspects of faculty identity—gender, discipline, rank, and years of experience—correlate with particular attitudes about teaching writing.

The Local Context for this Research

The writing-intensive course program at Temple University, where this research was conducted, comprises a set of mostly upper-division courses that are taught by faculty in the disciplines for students in their own departments. All Temple students are required to complete two writing-intensive courses as part of the requirements for their major. In a typical semester, there are around 300 sections of writing-intensive courses offered.

At Temple, courses earn a writing-intensive (wcourse) designation when departments submit a proposal to the Writing-Intensive Course Committee, which is the faculty committee that oversees the program. The proposal includes a course syllabus, as well as other course related documents, and it must demonstrate that the course meets the writing-intensive pedagogy guidelines. Once the proposal is approved, department chairs may assign any departmental instructor to teach the course, provided the instructor uses the approved syllabus, thus the faculty who teach in the program can include instructors at all ranks. For the semester in which this research was conducted, approximately 35% of the wcourse instructors were tenure-line faculty, another 35% were fulltime non-tenure-line "teaching" faculty, and the remaining 30% included part-time instructors and teaching assistants. Some of the wcourse faculty have decades of teaching experience, while others are new to teaching, or new to teaching writing-intensive courses. Writing-related pedagogy seminars and other faculty development opportunities are sponsored by the Writing Center (which is the administrative home for the program) and also by the university Teaching and Learning Center. Participation in faculty development is voluntary, and in the semester during which this research was conducted approximately 20% of the faculty participated in development activities.

The Development and Implementation of the Survey

As Walvoord and her coauthors have suggested, an essential part of the project in researching WAC/WID must be to explicitly set aside what we presume to be important so that we can register the beliefs of faculty on their own terms. For this reason, our research began with a series of four, two-hour focus groups with faculty in the program. We recruited a total of twenty-five faculty participants who were representative of the overall wcourse faculty in terms of discipline, years of experience and employment

status, and we designed an open-ended script to allow their concerns to emerge. To ensure that faculty could speak freely, the groups were facilitated by a trained social science researcher who was neither associated with the writing program nor known to the faculty participants. The conversations were audio recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed thematically.

Three broad themes emerged from this initial analysis. First, particular aspects of writing pedagogy were of great interest to participants. Faculty in the groups spent a good deal of time talking about how they taught their classes, including how they handled particular aspects of teaching writing (to grade drafts or not, to use rubrics or not, to "stage" papers or not, strategies for encouraging substantive revision, the value or lack of value for peer review, etc.). Second, faculty voiced a variety of concerns related to training and competence in teaching writing. Some described concerns they had about their own performance as writing teachers, while others wondered about whether other groups of faculty (especially faculty who speak English as a second language, new faculty, and part-time faculty, etc.) were capable of teaching writing. Finally, faculty spent a lot of focus group time parsing the attitudes and commitments of the various stakeholders in writing-intensive courses. They discussed students' commitment to learning to write, their colleagues' and chairs' understanding of and support for the wcourse program, their own commitments to teaching writing, the university's support of writing instruction, and so on.

Based on these focus group sessions, we designed survey questions to query instructors' attitudes and beliefs about issues they raised. We also included a variety of demographic and descriptive questions, mirroring previous large scale analyses of university faculty attitudes toward teaching. We added to this a single question about respondents' linguistic background, because that issue had been raised in the faculty focus groups. Finally, we included two open-ended questions in the survey. The first recognized that some faculty teach more than one writing-intensive course (e.g., they may teach one pitched at seniors and another pitched at sophomores). The question invited them to discuss the differences among the courses they had taught. The second invited respondents to add comments about anything they wished. (The complete survey can be found in the appendix.) The survey and our overall project were reviewed by our IRB office and considered exempt.

At the end of the spring 2009 semester, we sent emails to all 298 instructors who taught a writing-intensive course that semester. The email contained a link to the survey, which was available online at Surveymonkey. We received 140 responses, representing a 47% response rate. The response group was generally representative of the overall group of writing-intensive

course instructors in terms of gender, status, discipline, and years of teaching experience.

Attitudinal Survey Data and Factor Analysis

The simplest analysis of survey data involves nothing more than totaling up respondents' answers to individual questions, and reporting the results as averages. But averaging the answers in this way masks the differences among respondents. If 50% of survey respondents checked "strongly agree" on a particular question, while the other 50% checked "strongly disagree," the averaged results would suggest that the group is neutral on that point, whereas in fact they are polarized. Second, the averages approach treats each attitudinal question in isolation, whereas researchers who analyze attitudinal data recognize that attitudes toward individual issues are often linked to larger underlying beliefs that guide and pattern responses to groups of questions. Since our goal was to map the attitudes of a large group of faculty, we chose to perform a pair of statistical analyses—factor and cluster—that are designed to discover meaningful patterns and groupings among respondents.

A factor analysis starts with the premise that respondents' answers to attitudinal questions may be linked to underlying beliefs (or "factors") that are not directly queried in the questions but that guide respondents' answers. The analysis works by looking for patterns in respondents' answers to questions. When a statistically significant pattern emerges, the researchers review the questions to figure out what is the underlying belief or preference that links them and to name the factor accordingly.

The factor analysis of respondents' answers to the attitudinal questions on our survey of uncovered five factors that defined faculty experience:

1. **Enthusiasm about teaching (or lack of enthusiasm).** Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that wcourses were worthwhile for students also agreed that teaching wcourses was worthwhile and fulfilling for themselves professionally. They also reported that they like teaching wcourses, and they disagreed that teaching wcourses was frustrating.

2. **Confidence in teaching ability (or lack of confidence).** Respondents who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the assignments they created for their wcourses, also said that they were satisfied with how they responded to students' papers, how they incorporated information literacy instruction into the class, and how they managed the time spent grading in the course. They also re-

ported being satisfied or very satisfied, overall, with their own perfor-mance as teachers of writing.

3. **Belief in the Fairness of the Workplace (or belief in the opposite).** Respondents who said that teaching a writing-intensive course meant that they were doing more work than their colleagues who didn't teach such courses also reported that their other duties as faculty members suffered because of their involvement in wcourses. These faculty also disagreed that the university provided adequate support for wcourse faculty, and they disagreed that they received appropriate rewards for teaching wcourses. They disagreed that their workload was "fair" compared to colleagues who don't teach wcourses.

4. **Belief that Grammar Instruction Belongs to the Writing Center (or belief that it also belongs to classroom instructors).** This fac-tor was entirely related to the question about the Writing Center's role in working with students on grammar. Respondents either agreed or disagreed that the Writing Center should be responsible for correct-ing grammar errors in students' papers.

5. **Preference for Teaching Underprepared Students (or the oppo-site).** This factor was defined by a crisscross pattern in response to questions about student preparedness and teacher satisfaction. Re-spondents who disagreed that their students were well prepared for wcourses rated their own satisfaction with teaching the courses higher. And where faculty reported that students were well prepared, they rated their satisfaction with teaching wcourses lower.

Cluster Analysis of Faculty Attitudes

We performed cluster analysis to investigate how the five factors described here are combined and distributed among the faculty who responded to our survey. The analysis uses the factors described above as basis variables to identify clusters that have high internal consistency and that are signifi-cantly separated from other clusters. An individual respondent might be characterized by one or more of these five factors—for example, he would be strongly characterized by both the "enthusiasm" factor and the "con-fidence" factor if his answers followed both of those patterns closely, but only weakly characterized, or not at all, by the other factors if his responses didn't follow the patterns. Our analysis revealed five distinct clusters—four with meaningful numbers of cases, and one that appears to contain a pair of "outliers."

Cluster #1: The Undaunted Crusaders

Approximately 30% of the respondents were characterized by factors one, two, three, and five. They combined strong enthusiasm for teaching and a strong confidence in their own teaching ability with a negative view of the fairness of the workplace and of their students' preparedness. They believe that teaching a writing-intensive course involves lots of work over-and-above a normal workload, work for which they are both uncompensated and unrecognized. Nevertheless, they are committed to teaching, they express a sense of personal responsibility to teach students how to write, and they are averse to simply "passing students on." The Undaunted Crusaders report the highest level of overall satisfaction with teaching wcourses.

Students' lack of preparedness looms large in the Undaunted Crusaders responses to the open-ended questions, and their comments are often framed in terms of students not meeting expected levels of skill and achievement. One wrote: "[E]ach wcourse I've taught, including the senior capstone, has an element of remedial work required just to get students up to speed." Another wrote, "I teach seniors and I wonder how we can possibly graduate students who still can't construct a sentence."

For the Undaunted Crusaders, students' lack of preparedness is often tied to the failure of other instructors—at the university and/or in secondary schools—to adequately address students' development as writers. One respondent wrote:

> Students do not learn how to write in high school anymore which forces us to have to teach them to write in addition to all of the other information required for the successful completion of the writing intensive course. It takes hours and hours to line edit their work. But if I'm not going to do it, who will?

This response is worth quoting at length, because it captures the whole logic of the Undaunted Crusaders:

> As an adjunct teaching this course, and the amount of time and effort I exuded for it, I feel quite dissatisfied with the pay [. . .] I made the same amount of money teaching [a non-wcourse] last semester, which in terms of hours the courses are DRASTICALLY different. On the two major assignments I prepared for the students, the total grading time (drafts included) was well over 40 hours. [. . .] I believe I was quite thorough, and the grading could possibly have been done with less detail. However, that would have been at the cost of the

students' development. [. . .] I presume, based on my own experience alone, that many teachers of wcourses would not put in the amount of time required.

In spite of the fact that they do not feel that the university is providing adequate support for them as wcourse teachers, and in spite of the fact that they fault other instructors for not being committed to teaching writing, the Undaunted Crusaders were not in agreement that the Writing Center should be responsible for correcting grammar errors in students' papers. This may be because they construe the work of teaching grammar as part of their purview as instructors of record, as the comment about line-editing suggests. Or it may be that they view the Writing Center as a kind of fellow traveler in the unrecognized labor of teaching writing. One respondent wrote: "The Writing Center provides a valuable resource to the university—but it is obviously under-resourced. Too much demand, not enough supply."

The Undaunted Crusaders commitment to teaching writing evokes some of the faculty members who are profiled anecdotally in WAC/WID research, especially faculty who become enthusiastic advocates of and participants in writing-intensive course programs (see Walvoord et al. 8). However, one could also easily imagine these faculty "resisting" some WAC/WID pedagogies, particularly those, like "minimal marking," that would ask them to pull back on line editing their students' work. They would resist anything that made them feel that they were passing students on.

Their responses to the survey also echo the findings in some of the general studies of faculty attitudes. Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin found that new faculty members at all ranks were deeply committed to teaching, but that many felt stymied by the lack of collegial and institutional support for teaching (14–16). Several studies report that large percentages of faculty believe that they care more about teaching than their institutions and colleagues do (Lindholm 135; see also Leslie). Wright found that faculty had higher levels of overall satisfaction when they were in departments where expertise about teaching was broadly dispersed and shared, compared to departments where one or two people played the roles of "experts" (347–48). Thus, faculty who are strongly committed to their role as teachers recognize that teaching is a shared enterprise. When they believe that teaching work and resources are distributed unfairly among departmental colleagues, their job satisfaction suffers (Johnsrud and Rosser).

In this case, part of what defines the Undaunted Crusaders experience of teaching wcourses is precisely this sense of unfairness. There is no question that they see this work as valuable and are pleased with their own role in it, but they strongly believe that they are carrying more of the real work of teaching than others. It may be that faculty who have a strong notion

that teaching writing is very important are particularly prone to seeing failures on the part of their colleagues, simply because of the nature of writing development. Students may produce weak papers simply because they are struggling with difficult content or new genres. The Undaunted Crusaders may not realize that what they take as a poorly prepared student is often a student engaged in a normal developmental learning process. Poor student writing is not necessarily evidence that those students have been passed on by previous instructors.

Cluster #2: The Self-Critical/Humble Colleagues

This group, which comprised around 40% of the respondents, was characterized by factors two and three. They were satisfied with the fairness of the workplace, and at the same time they were dissatisfied with their own performance in the classroom.

The comments in the open-ended questions pointed to not knowing what they were expected to do as wcourse teachers and not having access to resources, like faculty development workshops. For instance:

> I had been told that the course I teach was a W-I course by another grad student instructor. The professor who I work most closely with never told me that and no one has told me what that means, what I should be doing in that regard

Whereas the comments by the Undaunted Crusaders emphasize working ever harder in the face of obstacles, the comments of the Humble/Self-Critical Colleagues reflect no such motivation. One wrote: "We were suggested to assign a 'Portfolio Reflection' assignment but this was difficult to grade, and I won't do it that way next time." It may be that the Humble/Self-Critical Colleagues see effective writing pedagogy as outside their locus of control. One instructor noted:

> Getting students to take advantage of submitting drafts, and opportunities for revisions is next to impossible. I almost always grade on a portfolio system: no grade is official until the last and best version. But for 75 or 80 percent of the students that means nothing. The problem is structural and demographic. Five courses is too many when you work 40+ hours a week as well. But we're pretty much stuck with it.

Time spent grading turned out to be a significant issue with the Humble/Self-Critical Colleagues. In the survey, we asked instructors to estimate the amount of time spent per week grading student work. In keeping with their responses above, the Humble/Self-Critical Colleagues reported

spending significantly less time per week responding to student writing, compared to instructors in all of the other clusters. Perhaps because of this, the Humble/Self-Critical Colleagues were unlikely to say that teaching a wcourse disrupted their other duties as faculty members.

Previous research has shown that perceived competence—including how we perceive our own competence, and how we think our colleagues perceive us—correlates with faculty satisfaction and productivity (Johnsrud, "Measuring"; Blackburn and Lawrence; Blackburn and Bently). Given that, it is not surprising that the Humble Colleagues report relatively low satisfaction with their work as writing-intensive course instructors. It would be hard to draw satisfaction from an experience in which you feel incompetent. What is somewhat more confusing is their seeming lack of motivation to improve their teaching. But one explanation may come from the research on faculty worklife, which suggests that faculty members' commitment suffers when their satisfaction suffers (see Rosser, "Faculty"). In this research, "commitment" is typically gauged by faculty members' intentions to leave their institutions; however, it is not too much of a stretch to say that if a faculty member was dissatisfied with her teaching experiences, she might be likely to disengage from her experiences in the classroom.

What the Humble Colleagues may not see is that teaching writing is a struggle for everyone. Few faculty receive substantial training in teaching writing, and some of the best practices in teaching writing are not easy to implement. The particular teaching issues that the Humble Colleagues mentioned—the difficulties of getting students to engage in substantive revision, the ins-and-outs of grading by portfolio—are practices that most writing instructors, including highly experienced instructors, find challenging. The Humble Colleagues may think that teaching writing is "easy" for other people, and they may take their own perfectly normal pedagogical struggles as evidence of their own lack of competence.

Cluster #3: Confident but Resentful Colleagues

The third cluster, which comprised 20% of the survey respondents, was characterized by factors one, two, three and four. They were satisfied with their own teaching performance, but they reported low enthusiasm for teaching and a negative view of the university's support for them as teachers. Of all of the respondents, those in cluster three were most convinced that the Writing Center should be responsible for correcting grammar errors in their students' papers. They also had the highest score on the individual item that queried whether their other work suffered because of teaching wcourses.

Their written comments suggest that the Confident but Resentful Colleagues have stronger commitments to their disciplinary identities and knowledge than they do to teaching, particularly when they have to teach "skills" like writing. For some, this was expressed as a conflict between teaching content and teaching writing, as the comments by these two respondents suggest:

> I fear that the new guidelines for the wcourses will make it more difficult for my students to write AND absorb the very challenging material that they get in my [. . .] course. I'll see.

And:

> With the heavy student load and the significant deficits which students bring in terms of information literacy and the writing process it is difficult to teach these skills while teaching the actual subject matter for the course.

Like the Undaunted Crusaders, the Confident but Resentful Colleagues had a negative view of the fairness of the workplace, and both groups expressed frustration about this in the open-ended comments. But whereas the Undaunted Crusaders' frustration was relatively targeted—at other faculty for passing students on, at the university for not recognizing their extra labor with increased pay—the Confident/Resentful Colleagues expressed a generalized resentment aimed at everyone and no one. One referred to teaching a somewhat overenrolled wcourse as "absurd and abusive." For this group, the whole situation of teaching these courses is filled with so many problems that it is a fool's errand.

Overall, these respondents reflect a sense of having been conscripted into the role of writing instructor, and having too little control over the circumstances of their work. They emerge as a group that would prefer not to be teaching in the writing-intensive course program at all. In the words of one instructor:

> My writing intensive course is taught in the upper senior semester. It is completely asinine to attempt to teach competent writing in the last semester of a student's career. As someone who has been compelled to teach this course, and this course only for the last decade, I have substantial experience with [my department's] undergraduates. [. . .] It is clear to me that whatever efforts are made to enhance the writing skills of our students either are not sufficient or not effective.

It is easy to see how the Confident/Resentful Colleagues might be depicted as "resistant" in the WAC/WID literature, especially if they were

required to attend a WAC/WID workshop. These are not faculty who want to learn how to teach writing; as their comments about the Writing Center suggest, they simply don't believe that teaching writing should be part of their jobs in the first place.

In a certain way, the Resentful Colleagues' attitudes are not surprising. Studies have shown that perceived lack of control over one's work and work environment leads to reduced satisfaction among faculty (Perry et al.). Additionally, some studies of faculty satisfaction suggest that when faculty feel that their teaching loads are too high, their overall job satisfaction decreases (Rosser, "Faculty"; Rosser, "Measuring"). But these studies stand in sharp contrast to the research cited earlier which reports that faculty satisfaction increased when teaching was valued and viewed as a shared enterprise. In fact, the contrast in the research literature mirrors the contrast between the Undaunted Crusaders and the Resentful Colleagues, and it is fundamentally a conflict about the nature of faculty work. If one believes, as the Resentful Colleagues seem to believe, that faculty work is really about doing research and that other activities—teaching, grading, completing paperwork, etc.—properly belong to other people, then teaching writing-intensive courses is almost guaranteed to be a frustrating experience. If, on the other hand, one believes that faculty work centrally includes participating in the collective work of educating undergraduates, then one is more likely to see writing instruction as a worthwhile endeavor.

In fact, those two conflicting notions of faculty work—the professor-as-researcher and the professor-as-teacher—have coexisted in academic life since the beginning of the modern university system. If asked, most faculty members would probably describe their own beliefs as encompassing both roles, in various measures, but the notion of professorial work as research-only enjoys enough standing in academia that one finds it expressed almost as a neutral and uncontested fact. In Rosser, for example, teaching was construed as a negative if too much of it was required, but the research design did not even allow for the possibility that teaching might enhance a faculty members' job satisfaction. In other words, too much teaching detracted from satisfaction but appropriate amounts of teaching did not add to satisfaction. Moreover, in the same study "support for professional development" is defined in such a way that it includes money for attending conferences and doing research, but excludes anything related to teacher development and classroom pedagogy ("Faculty" 287–88).

Cluster #4: One-Time Victims of Poor Communication

The fourth cluster, which represented 9% of the respondents, was characterized by factors four and five. They reported that their students were gen-

erally well-prepared, yet they were very dissatisfied with their experience as wcourse instructors. At the same time, they strongly disagreed that the Writing Center should be responsible for teaching grammar to students.

These findings were initially difficult to interpret, but an explanation emerged in the respondents' answers to the other parts of the survey, including the open-ended questions. Half of the respondents in this cluster reported that they had no access to the approved syllabus before the semester began. One respondent detailed the problems this caused:

> I did not receive any sample syllabi or any guidance that I had not solicited from colleagues [. . .] so I constructed my syllabi based on what I expected from students I'd taught at another institution. In both cases, as the semester progressed I found myself radically revising my expectations of student skill levels and analytical tasks I could reasonably expect them to perform. [. . .] I found myself retooling my assignments and assessment criteria.

Another respondent did not discover that the course she was assigned to teach was writing-intensive until well into the semester:

> I was assigned my first writing intensive course for last fall and not told it was a writing intensive course, let alone that there was some approved syllabus I was supposed to follow. [. . .] I literally inherited a syllabus [that] was not writing intensive. I adapted it some, but it still met very few of the writing intensive goals, partly through my ignorance, and partly through unwillingness to change a syllabus too much midstream (and feeling that this might be illegal/unfair.) In the meantime, again through inexperience I designed a course that was not supposed to be writing intensive in a way that was in fact writing intensive (for 45 students) And I spent hours and hours working with students on their papers. I believe in the process. I care about student writing. There is room for more support and oversight in this process.

Of all of the dissatisfactions reflected in the survey, the problems this group experienced were depicted as the most narrow and most changeable. Whereas the Confident but Resentful Colleagues were generally sour about their experiences, the One-time Victims were frustrated about specific things that went wrong, while still recognizing other aspects of their courses that went fine. Their responses to the questions about teaching effectiveness reflect this. They were dissatisfied with the aspects of their pedagogy that were hampered by the lack of information early on, like how

they designed their assignments. But they reported strong satisfaction with the aspects of pedagogy (e.g., responding to student writing) that they were able to shape during the semester, as the teaching situation became clearer.

Perhaps most tellingly, this group strongly disagreed that teaching a wcourse caused their other faculty duties to suffer. Their comments suggest that they embrace their role as teachers of writing. They were simply undone (for a semester) by a lack of information.

Neither the research on WAC/WID nor the research on faculty attitudes in general reflects directly on this question of poor communication; however, the latter does include several studies that reflect on the centrality and importance of department chairs in faculty members' acclimation to and satisfaction with the university (see Rice et al.; Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders). Indeed, in most universities departments are the main disseminators of information and departments are also responsible for making teaching assignments. Our survey queried faculty about where they turned for information about the writing-intensive course program, and to whom they turned for advice about teaching. Their answers pointed overwhelmingly to their home departments and departmental colleagues. More than 80% said they sought support from their departmental colleagues, while only 35% said that they sought support from the writing program. These results match the findings reported in Wright (338).

The One-time Victims' comments, then, suggest that one of the factors that influences faculty attitudes toward and understandings of writing-intensive course programs is the cross-departmental nature of writing programs. Since wcourse programs are not housed in faculty members' own departments, information cannot be disseminated along the normal channels. The potential for communication failures increases. This may be especially true for new faculty and for large universities.

Cluster #5: The Outliers

The fifth cluster comprised only two respondents whose views might best be described as extreme on all counts. They were very enthusiastic about teaching, but had a very negative view of their own skill as teachers. They had a very negative sense of the university's fairness toward wcourse instructors. They believe students are very well-prepared, but they rated their own satisfaction as wcourse instructors very low.

Since this cluster comprises only two individuals, we can't make too much of the numbers, and indeed we could have simply collapsed this group into one of the other clusters. But allowing them to stand as a separate group made sense, both mathematically as it allows the statisti-

cal coherence of the other clusters to emerge, and theoretically, as this pair may represent a truth about university faculty. Most faculty groups seem to include one or two people whose views are both very strongly held and very idiosyncratic. It's useful to recognize that they exist, and that they are part of our curricular programs. It's also useful to see that they are a distinct minority.

Non-Findings

Once clusters are identified, they can also be characterized in terms of their results on factual/descriptive data, such as demographic information. Particular clusters may be associated more strongly with certain genders, ages, disciplines, etc. When we saw the factors and clusters emerging in the analysis, we were convinced that the groups would be distinctive demographically. We thought the Humble/Self-Critical Colleagues would include disproportionate numbers of inexperienced teachers, and that the Confident but Resentful Colleagues would include disproportionate numbers of tenure-line research faculty, and that the Undaunted Crusaders would include disproportionate numbers of full-time, non-tenure-track, "teaching" faculty. As it turns out, however, none of these suppositions was born out in the analysis. There were no statistically significant differences among the clusters in terms of age, gender, discipline, number of years teaching, or the status of the instructor. All of the clusters here (apart from the Outliers) included a more or less representative sample of the overall population.

This non-finding is surprising given that large scale surveys of university faculty have found differences in attitudes toward teaching that correlate with age, status, gender, and discipline. It may be that those differences exist but we simply couldn't see them in our comparatively small sample. It may also be that those differences were masked by other factors, like the local culture of particular departments or colleges at this university.

Discussion and Conclusions

Part of the goal of this research was to add to the existing research on writing and writing instruction, and particularly to address questions of methodology related to attitudinal research. Our study questions the relatively simplistic understandings of faculty attitudes that have characterized some of the research on WAC/WID faculty. Walvoord and her co-authors argued that framing faculty attitudes toward WAC/WID as either "acceptance" or "resistance" is problematic because it is overly dependent on the program director's agenda. This research suggests that such a formulation is also problematic because "acceptance" and "resistance" are one-dimensional charac-

teristics. Faculty attitudes are better understood as multidimensional and interrelated collections of factors.

Moreover, our study suggests that these complex sets of attitudes don't necessarily map onto our common ways of understanding faculty identities. Women don't appear to share attitudes about teaching writing that are distinct from men's attitudes, nor do attitudes correlate with discipline, status, age, or any other demographic factor, at least not in this data set. Moreover, the attitudinal factors that we were able to identify don't connect with each other in ways we might have anticipated. It makes sense in hindsight that faculty who are least confident about their teaching would be the ones who felt most supported by the university, but we would not have anticipated that at the beginning. And who would predict that the faculty who are most convinced that their workloads are unfair are also those who are most satisfied with teaching writing-intensive courses?

The most important finding of this study is that faculty attitudes toward writing instruction are knitted into frameworks of beliefs about what it means to be a faculty member and about what ought to be the appropriate distribution of roles and responsibilities in a department and at the university. The cluster analysis suggests that these beliefs differ quite markedly, and because of this teaching a writing-intensive course means different things to different people, even when outwardly the teaching situation may look the same. At least half of the faculty in this survey believe that getting students to write college-level papers is extremely difficult because the students are very poorly prepared as writers. For some, these "facts" mean that teaching a writing-intensive course is an inappropriate and meaningless waste of their valuable time. For others, these same "facts" mean that teaching writing is both worthwhile and satisfying. If the latter group is frustrated, it is precisely because they cannot understand why their valuable work isn't being fully recognized and rewarded.

Finally, our research argues for the value of deepening the methodologies that we use to investigate attitudes and beliefs toward writing and writing instruction (whether of faculty, students, administrators, parents, or whomever.) Understanding what people believe, and why they might or might not embrace change, is a complex business that calls for rigorous methods. There is an easy tendency to assume that we can infer attitudes from demographic factors—faculty in the sciences value XYZ; tenure-line faculty think PDQ; etc. There is also a tendency to assume that we understand people simply because of proximity. In other words, we often assume that we "know" what faculty in our own universities think about writing and writing instruction, simply because we work near them and interact with them. Finally, there is a tendency to assume that the attitudes we hear

expressed most frequently (or most forcefully) are the attitudes that are held most commonly. In fact, all of these common assumptions are challenged by this study.

Conclusions: Thinking about Practical Applications

Most research on university writing programs begins with pragmatic concerns about building better programs, and ours is no exception. Part of the goal of this research was to find ways to improve our program, and especially to find ways to better support faculty. In fact, the results did suggest to us several practical changes. For example, the attitudes expressed by the Humble Colleagues made us realize that the way we advertised our faculty development opportunities could be off-putting for some faculty. Our advertisements for seminars made a point of acknowledging instructors' expertise, saying that faculty who participated in the seminars would be invited to draw on their own experiences in order to share best practices with each other. But for faculty who felt uncertain about their own knowledge, this may have been intimidating. We now offer seminars that are billed as "introductions" to writing pedagogy. We also developed a writing fellows program that provides a full semester of support for faculty who want to try new writing-related teaching pedagogies.

Similarly, the attitudes expressed by the Undaunted Crusaders made us realize that our program needed to find opportunities to recognize the work of writing-intensive course faculty. We developed a university-wide prize for teaching excellence in writing-intensive courses. We also collaborated with the deans of the colleges to develop a system for regularly acknowledging the work of w-course faculty. Now, faculty who teach in the program receive letters—co-signed by their dean and the writing program director—acknowledging their teaching, and acknowledging their participation in faculty development, if they have done so.

For WPAs at other universities, these particular programmatic changes may not be relevant, but the general idea of the research—that our programs serve faculty with different attitudes and different understandings of their work as writing instructors—should be broadly applicable. Overall, this research suggests that WPAs don't work with "a faculty;" rather, we work with a variety of faculties who have different perceived needs and expectations. Given this, we should expect that the services and supports we offer (like faculty development workshops) will sound appealing to some, but not others. And similarly, the ways we publically represent the program's goals will make good sense to some, but not to others. The more we can find ways to diversify what we offer and say, and the more we can explicitly address

the different worlds of ideas and opportunities that faculty inhabit, the more likely we are be supporting the full range of faculty in our programs.

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Appendix

Writing-Intensive Course Instructor Survey

1. For how many years have you been teaching at Temple University?
2. Which best describes your own academic training
    a. Fine/Performing Arts
    b. Humanities
    c. Social Sciences
    d. Science/Technology/Engineering/Math
    e. Business
    f. Education
    g. Other (please specify)
3. What is the highest degree you have earned?
    a. Bachelors
    b. Masters
    c. Doctorate
    d. Other (please specify)
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your age?
6. Which best describes your employment status as an instructor at Temple University?
    a. Graduate teaching assistant
    b. Adjunct/part-time instructor
    c. Fulltime non-tenure-track instructor
    d. Fulltime tenure-track (not tenured)
    e. Full-time tenured instructor
7. Which best describes you?
    a. Native speaker of English
    b. Non-native speaker of English
8. How many total courses/sections are you teaching this semester?
9. Of these, how many are designated writing-intensive courses?
10. Writing-Intensive Courses must go through a process of certification, in which a proposal is submitted to the Writing-Intensive Course Committee for approval. Which sentence best describes your involvement in the proposal process for the course you are currently teaching?
    a. I was solely responsible for drafting the proposal
    b. I worked with others to draft the proposal
    c. I was not involved in drafting the proposal
11. When an approved wcourse is taught, the instructor should have access to the course syllabus that was approved. Did you have access to the approved syllabus for this course?
    a. Yes, because I wrote the approved syllabus
    b. Yes, because I was given a copy of the approved syllabus

    c. No, I did not have access to the syllabus

12. Which sentence best describes how the course syllabus you are using this semester relates to the approved course syllabus?
    a. I used the approved syllabus without changes (apart from routine updates)
    b. I made minor changes to the approved syllabus
    c. I made major changes to the approved syllabus
    d. I don't know/I did not have access to the syllabus

13. Do you believe that the course you taught this semester met the guidelines for writing-intensive courses?
    a. All of the guidelines were met
    b. Most of the guidelines were met
    c. A few of the guidelines were met
    d. I don't know

14. What is the level of the writing-intensive course you are teaching this semester? (If you are teaching more than one, please check all that apply.)
    a. 1000-level course
    b. 2000-level course
    c. 3000-level course
    d. 4000-level course

15. How often do you use grading rubrics in your writing-intensive course?
    a. Every writing assignment
    b. Most writing assignments
    c. A few writing assignments
    d. One writing assignment
    e. Don't use

16. How often do you require revision in your writing-intensive course?
    a. Every writing assignment
    b. Most writing assignments
    c. A few writing assignments
    d. One writing assignment
    e. Don't use

17. How often do you use "staged" assignments, for which students turn in their work in parts that build on each other?
    a. Every writing assignment
    b. Most writing assignments
    c. A few writing assignments
    d. One writing assignment
    e. Don't use

18. How often do you require drafts of student writing before they turn in their final papers?
    a. Every writing assignment
    b. Most writing assignments
    c. A few writing assignments
    d. One writing assignment
    e. Don't use

19. How often do you require that students incorporate outside sources of information into their writing assignments?
    a. Every writing assignment
    b. Most writing assignments
    c. A few writing assignments
    d. One writing assignment
    e. Don't use

20. What kinds of outside sources materials do students typically incorporate into their written works for your course? (Please choose all that apply.)
    a. Academic books
    b. Popular books intended for lay audiences
    c. Materials from reference books
    d. Journal articles
    e. Newspaper or magazine articles
    f. Government documents
    g. Television or film media
    h. Internet sources
    i. Other (please specify)

21. How often do students receive instruction about information literacy in your course?
    a. More than once per semester
    b. Once per semester
    c. Never

22. What percentage of the student's final grade in based upon writing assignments?
    a. 100%
    b. 75–99%
    c. 50–74%
    d. Less than 50%

23. On average, how much time per week do you spend responding to students' writing assignments in a single section of a writing-intensive course?
    a. More than 15 hours
    b. 10–15 hours
    c. 6–9 hours
    d. 3–5 hours
    e. 1–2 hours
    f. Less than 1 hour

24. On average, how much time per week do you spend preparing to teach a single section of a writing-intensive course?
    a. More than 15 hours
    b. 10–15 hours
    c. 6–9 hours
    d. 3–5 hours
    e. 1–2 hours
    f. Less than 1 hour

25. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your course

[very dissatisfied – somewhat dissatisfied – neutral – somewhat satisfied – very satisfied]

    a.   The writing assignments you created for this course

    b.   The way you responded to your students writing in this course

    c.   The time you spent grading

    d.   Your effectiveness as a teacher of writing in this course

    e.   The way you incorporated information literacy practices into your assignments for this course

26. How many students were enrolled in your writing-intensive course?

27. For how many of these students were you responsible for grading and/or providing feedback on writing assignments?

28. Do you encourage your students to go to the writing center?

    a.   Yes

    b.   No

29. If yes, how often do you encourage them to go?

    a.   For every writing assignment

    b.   At least once every semester

    c.   Rarely/occasionally

    d.   I only discuss the Writing Center with certain students

30. In the past three academic years, have you had a writing center fellow assigned to your course?

    a.   Yes

    b.   No

31. In the past three academic years, have you had a Peer Tutor from the Provost's Academy assigned to your course?

    a.   Yes

    b.   No

32. In the past three years, have you invited a university librarian to meet your course?

    a.   Yes

    b.   No

33. Which of the following faculty development opportunities have you used? (Please check all that apply.)

    a.   Attended a Temple University–sponsored seminar related to teaching writing

    b.   Met one-on-one with someone in the Writing Center to talk about my course

    c.   Met one-on-one with a university librarian to talk about my course

    d.   Met with my department chair to talk about my course

    e.   Met with colleagues/peers to talk about my course

    f.   Read information online about teaching writing

    g.   None of the above

34. If you answered none of the above, please tell us why. Check all that apply.

    a.   I already feel comfortable/confident about my ability to teach writing

    b.   The times that activities were offered didn't work with my schedule/didn't have time

    c.   I didn't know that these opportunities were available
    d.   I didn't see activities related to the specific topics I was interested in
    e.   I am not interested in learning about teaching writing
    f.   Other, please specify

35. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?
[very dissatisfied – somewhat dissatisfied – neutral – somewhat satisfied – very satisfied]
    a.   The number of students in your writing-intensive course
    b.   The services your students received from the tutors in the writing center
    c.   The services your students received from a writing fellow
    d.   The faculty development seminars you attended
    e.   The support you received from your department chair/colleagues

36. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
[strongly disagree—disagree—neutral—agree-strongly agree]
    a.   I believe that writing-intensive classes are worthwhile for the students
    b.   I believe that teaching writing-intensive courses is worthwhile for me professionally
    c.   I believe that my students are prepared for the writing assignments in my writing-intensive courses
    d.   I spend more hours teaching/reading/grading in my writing-intensive courses than my colleagues do teaching non-writing-intensive courses
    e.   I think it should be the responsibility of the writing center to correct grammar in my students' papers.
    f.   I believe that my other duties as a faculty member suffer because I teach a writing-intensive course
    g.   I like teaching writing-intensive courses
    h.   I feel fulfilled professionally teaching writing-intensive courses
    i.   I feel frustrated having to teach writing-intensive courses
    j.   I believe I have adequate university support to teach writing-intensive courses
    k.   I think I receive appropriate rewards (merit, recognition, promotion) for teaching writing-intensive courses
    l.   I believe I have a fair workload compared to other faculty members in my department

37. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your experience of teaching a writing-intensive course?
    a.   strongly disagree
    b.   disagree
    c.   neutral
    d.   agree
    e.   strongly agree

38. For instructors who taught more than one writing-intensive course: If you have found some wcourses to be markedly different from what you consider a "typical" wcourse, please tell us about them. In what ways are they different?

39. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences teaching writing-intensive courses?