Race, Silence, and Writing Program Administration: A Qualitative Study of US College Writing Programs

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Abstract

While Writing Studies scholarship has interrogated race and college writing instruction, we argue that it still needs to substantially build upon this work in systematic ways that intersect race and writing program administration (Craig and Perryman-Clark; Green; Inoue; and Poe). This article discusses the findings of a survey administered in the spring of 2016. The results of the survey contribute to Writing Studies' current understanding of how race functions within writing programs. While the contingent nature of the labor force in most writing programs is acknowledged, WPAs hold a great deal of power to affect change in writing program curricula due to their ability to dictate what happens in terms of pedagogical training, faculty development, assessment practices, and student support (Halpern). When it comes to the consideration of race and writing program administration, participants in this study argued that scholars of color often work in isolation recognizing that programs lack effective strategies to systematically implement race-based pedagogy or examine specific institutional resources to help combat racism on campuses.

As the field of Writing Studies solidifies its commitment to anti-racist scholarship, looking at the direct relationship between the role of race and university writing program administration is a critical task. A part of this task, and the intent of this qualitative survey-based study, is to understand how writing instructors and administrators perceive the function of race in writing programs. With writing programs serving on the frontlines of most US universities, understanding this connection seems especially salient. While Writing Studies scholarship has interrogated race and college writing instruction, we argue that it still needs to substantially build upon this work in systematic ways that intersect race and writing program administration (Craig and Perryman-Clark; Green; Inoue; and Poe).

WPA: Writing Program Administration, vol. 40, no. 2, 2017, pp. 19–39.

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In this article, we discuss the findings of a survey we administered in the spring of 2016. The results of the survey contribute to Writing Studies' current understanding of how race functions within writing programs. While we acknowledge the contingent nature of the labor force in most writing programs, there is no doubt that WPAs hold a great deal of power to affect change in writing program curricula due to their ability to dictate what happens in terms of pedagogical training, faculty development, assessment practices, and student support (Halpern)—the areas that our survey focused upon.

Discourse about race in writing programs has been very scarce. This is largely attributed to writing programs' historical privilege of white meritocratic discourse; however, recent conversations linking social justice to discourses of linguistic normativity, assessment reliability, and high-stakes pedagogical and ideological choices made in US writing programs (Poe et al.) show that race matters a great deal. For example, when high-stakes assessment practices ignore race disparities, students of color are affected at disproportionate rates (Inoue, "Self-Assessment"; Green). One of the problems current WPAs face when trying to account for race within these programmatic shifts is that white meritocracy continues to manifest in the many practices, assessment procedures, and curricular decisions (Villanueva; Roediger); however, "[i]f we consider the relationship between social justice and writing assessment, then conversations on race, language, and difference, within composition studies should change how assessment is handled within the classroom and writing programs in general" (Green 153).

Adding to this ongoing conversation, our survey data reveals that many writing programs either do not consider or only marginally consider race when developing and administering their writing programs. Interestingly, this oversight occurs while writing instructors and WPAs affirm that race is an important factor directly affecting student success resulting in an ironic silencing of race as a generative subject for writing program administration. The results of this survey further illustrate that while writing programs often fail to account for race at various levels, compositionists of color are helping bring race into writing curricula and the daily functions of US writing programs, either as administrators or as composition practitioners (Green; Perryman-Clark). Many of these same practitioners express feeling isolated in WPA conversations about their programmatic goals and aspirations for a more race-conscious writing program. This reveals that race is still an uncomfortable topic for many and that WPAs need strategies on how to talk about race without isolating composition instructors and scholars of color. In short, WPAs must learn how to work through the discom-

fort of race and WPA work in order to achieve anti-racist writing programs. Further exacerbating this problem is that people of color are underrepresented in the field of Writing Studies, which in many ways contributes to the lack of attention to race in Writing Studies journals, conference spaces, and professional organizational policy, and when race is acknowledged, it is mostly because of their work and advocacy (Kynard).

The acknowledgement of race is often reduced to a "category to delineate cultural groups that will be the focal subjects of research studies," which fails to see the actual "relationship of race to the composing process" and "instead race becomes subsumed into the powerful tropes [or metaphors] of 'basic writer,' 'stranger' to the academy, or the trope of the generalized, marginalized 'other'" (Prendergast 36). This failure to connect race to the composing process, practices, and the assessments thereof has had dire consequences for students of color because these tropes reduce them to metaphors that connote deficits rather than assets. Race needs to be named, interrogated, discussed, and "demetaphored" in ways that are specific, explicit, and additive.

One compelling critique of this problem of metaphors and race was offered by Jennifer Clary-Lemon in "The Racialization of Composition Studies: Scholarly Rhetoric of Race since 1990" where she examines the discourses of the journals *College Composition and Communication* and *College English* since 1990. She discovers that the majority of race-related works published in these journals rarely use the actual words *race* or *racism*. Instead, authors utilize vague metaphors such as "diversity, inclusion, and social justice" when alluding to racialized phenomena (Clary-Lemon W6). This metonymic slide has caused potentially productive discussions about race to lose their definition. One productive discussion was Steve Lamos's book *Interests and Opportunities: Race, Racism, and University Writing Instruction in the Post-Civil Rights Era* where he traces the history of racism in basic writing. Victor Villanueva further notices racism's disguise, stating, "the new racism embeds racism within a set of other categories—language, religion, culture, civilizations pluralized and writ large, a set of master tropes (or the master's tropes)" (16).

This metaphorical/metonymical problem can be counteracted by scholarship that pays direct attention to race and writing programs. Daniel Barlow, for instance, looks at "the productive potential of racial inquiry in composition scholarship and pedagogy" in "Composing Post-Multiculturalism" (411). He claims that celebratory multiculturalism does not provide sufficient opportunities for critical inquiry into race and racism. He agrees with Clary-Lemon, stating that the field looks at race as a discursive problem (411), and while this is a productive point of critique, it still does not

move the field forward in a way that gets beyond either celebratory multiculturalism or discursive polemics. Race still seems to be a problem that is complex, context-dependent, and avoided as a point of departure, with exceptions such as composition scholars who have focused on rhetorics of race that challenge outdated, celebratory multicultural rhetorics and provide writing pedagogies with critical race dimensions (Smitherman; Gilyard; Kennedy et al.; Martinez; Prendergast; Jones Royster, Williams; Parks). Such critical expansions are the addition of critical race theory, whiteness studies, and critical historical research which look to add the missing voices of those considered absent from composition pedagogy and scholarship (Prendergast).

These scholars have demonstrated that race discourse, although perceived as discomforting, can inform and improve critical pedagogy. For example, scholars have looked at alternative counterpublics such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other public venues where literacy is associated with ethnolinguistic diverse communities (Green; Gilyard; Perryman-Clark; Ruiz). One such study is Susan Jarratt's "Classics and Counterpublics in Nineteenth Century Historically Black Colleges," which looks at three different HBCUs: Fisk, Atlanta, and Howard universities to explore how these counterpublics contributed to African American literacy and education after the Civil War. Scholars have continually argued about how vital identity is to Writing Studies (Spack; Gilyard; Davila; Kynard), and there have been calls to mainstream diversity writing (Marzluf; Ratcliffe) or to account for codeswitching (Canagarajah, "Functions"), multilingualism (Creese and Martin), and translanguaging in the classroom (Canagarajah, "Clarifying"). Furthermore, studies have looked at teaching instruction in minority-majority institutions (Redd) or incorporating the everyday writing practices of linguistically diverse communities and students of color (Guerra; García de Müeller). Yet the field of writing program administration still has not paid enough attention to these counterpublics, which offer a wealth of advice for how to think about race in college writing programs. This inattention becomes even more pronounced in the survey results.

Our work builds on Asao Inoue's *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies* in which he writes,

> it is not fairness that we need in antiracist writing assessment ecologies, or any antiracist project—it is not judgment by the exact same standard that we need—it is revolutionary change, radically different methods, structures, and assumptions about the way things are now and how to distribute privileges. (56)

Inoue speaks of the difference in equality and equity—the ideas that fairness does not solve the problem of racial differences in the classroom. He is arguing for radical changes in the ways that writing programs function. We agree with Inoue's claim and acknowledge that not only do race issues problematize how the field addresses assessment, but while intersecting race and writing studies, we found that there are considerable problems with how writing faculty and WPAs of color are treated when trying to address these issues Inoue is interrogating.

While contemporary scholarship often acknowledges race as an important factor to consider in the field, Writing Studies has yet to create a strong body of scholarship that focuses directly on race in WPA work or support systems for WPAs of color. In short, WPAs have yet to embed race as an integral criterion of their work. Staci M. Perryman-Clark and Collin Craig call for this in "Troubling the Boundaries: (De)Constructing WPA Identities at the Intersections of Race and Gender" where they write,

> As first time attendees of one of the CWPA conferences, we noticed the limited representation of people of color, and we were left to wonder why. When and where do we enter this conversation and how might we be more visibly represented in CWPA? (38)

Thus, we see ourselves heeding these calls for intersecting race and WPA research by applying an antiracist lens to the field's various methods. Our results show that writing instructors and WPAs of color feel they are most responsible for working on initiatives that change the perception of race issues in college writing programs while also feeling silenced by writing programs if and when they try to advocate for race-based initiatives.

Study Design

This multiple phase study is funded by the College Composition and Communications Research Initiative. This first phase is a survey-based study intended to demonstrate how race is currently perceived in WPA work. Our method of inquiry for this first phase is informed by Sally Barr-Ebest's work "Gender Differences in Writing Program Administration" where she discusses how she administered a survey that looked at gender disparity. We applied this form of inquiry to race and ethnicity.

With the goal of illustrating the perception of race in writing programs, we developed a survey that asked participants to review the effectiveness of their universities, their writing programs, and their own personal strategies when dealing with issues of race. With the understanding that there are many duties and aspects of writing programs, for the purposes of the survey, we decided that most consist of four basic areas: student support,

pedagogy, assessment, and faculty (Charlton et al.; Barr-Ebest). We created questions that focused on race in these four writing program areas.

We asked respondents to rate their institutions, their writing programs, and their own personal effectiveness when dealing with race and racism across all four areas of writing programs using a 1–5 Likert scale with 5 being extremely effective, 4 being very effective, 3 being moderately effective, 2 being slightly effective, and 1 being not effective all (Trochim). For example, we asked, "On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being not effective at all and 5 being extremely effective, how effective are the programs or initiatives in place at your institution to support racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student populations?" This was followed by a question asking participants to explain their rating. The questions did not ask about racism explicitly although we were inclined to think we would get those types of responses. The questions asked about the effectiveness of a strategy to address issues of race and ethnicity and relied on the respondent to explain the rating in narrative form so as to understand the context of race at their institution. We administered the survey online with our participants recruited via professional listervs such as WPA-L, the CCCC Latinx Caucus Listserv, and the CCCC Black Caucus Listserv. These listservs were chosen to target WPAs and writing instructors from various institutions and of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds. All surveys were anonymous.

In total, we had fifty-nine respondents. Participants consisted of WPAs, composition instructors, and graduate students working in college writing programs. There were eight full professors, eleven associate professors, fifteen assistant professors, seven lecturers, two adjuncts, twelve graduate students, and four non-tenure track WPAs and Writing Center Directors who responded. The survey asked respondents to self-identify their race, ethnicity, and professional rank. Forty identified as white/Caucasian, eleven as Latino/Puerto Rican/Mexican, three as black/African American, two as Native American, and three as mixed. For the purposes of our data analysis for this article, we coded results as responses by white/Caucasians and responses by people of color (POC). We use the term *people of color* not to conflate experiences of diverse groups but rather to contrast the experiences of embodied racialized academics to those of white/Caucasian academics. The aim of this article is to highlight these contrasting experiences and perceptions, but further work needs to be done illustrating the specific experiences of various racially diverse people who work in writing programs. We also find it important to intersect the issues of race with issues of labor. Future studies on this intersection would add another layer to how racial experiences are crafted by positionality within the writing department.

Survey Discussion

Although the majority of respondents rated strategies as moderately effective, we found that white/Caucasian participants were more likely to respond that their institution, writing program, and personal strategies were very or extremely effective in addressing issues of race and ethnicity in the four writing program areas. POC respondents, however, were more likely to rate these strategies as slightly and not effective at all. When we combined the Caucasian/white and POC respondents answers of moderately, very and extremely effective, the average difference between how respondents answered based on race became much clearer. We, therefore, charted the answers based on this analysis of the data in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1
POC vs. White/Caucasian Ratings of Strategies and Percentages

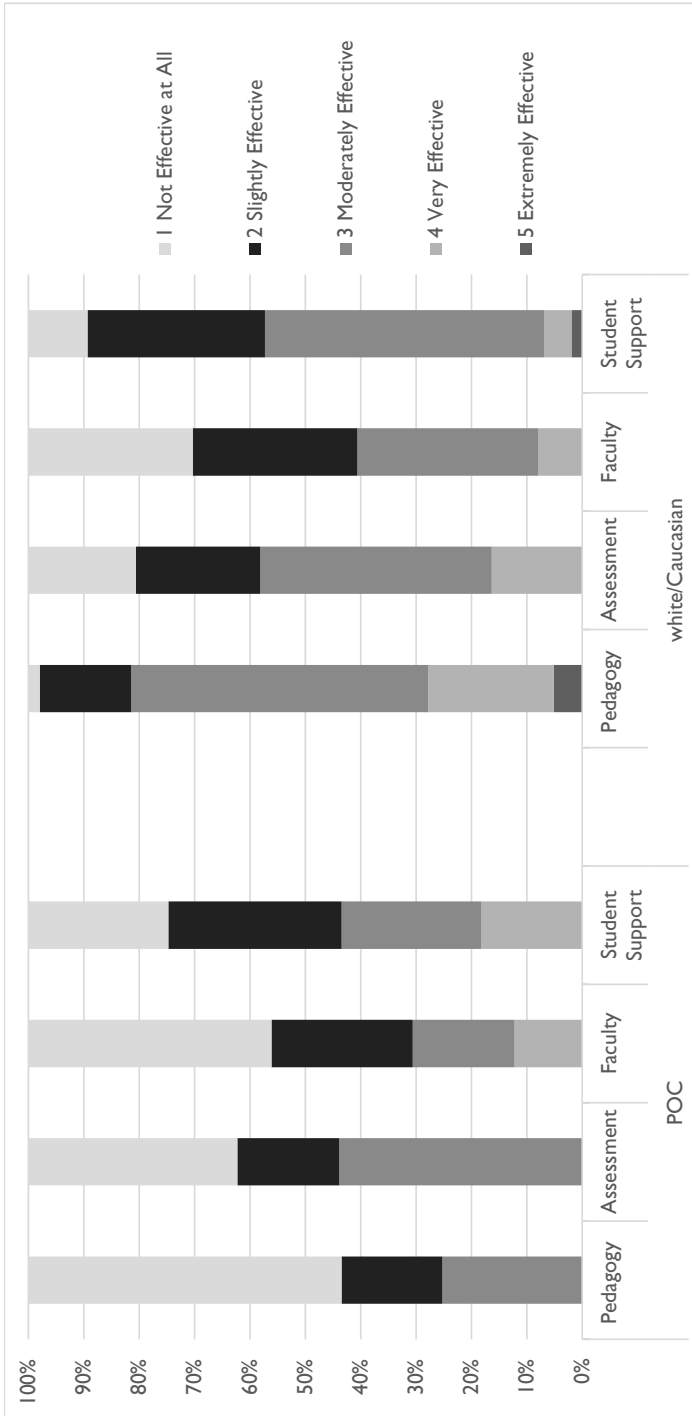|	Not Effective at All 1	Slightly Effective 2	Moderately Effective 3	Very Effective 4	Extremely Effective 5
POC					
Pedagogy	9 (56%)	3 (18%)	4 (25%)		
Assessment	6 (37%)	3 (18%)	7 (43%)		
Faculty	7 (43%)	4 (25%)	3 (18%)	2 (12%)	
Student support	4 (25%)	5 (31%)	4 (25%)	3 (18%)	
White/Caucasian					
Pedagogy	1 (2%)	6 (16%)	19 (52%)	8 (22%)	2 (5%)
Assessment	7 (19%)	8 (22%)	15 (41%)	6 (16%)	
Faculty	11 (30%)	11 (30%)	12 (33%)	3 (8%)	
Student support	4 (11%)	12 (33%)	19 (52%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)

Fig. 1 Percentage breakdown of POC vrs white/Caucasian ratings

When POC respondents rated a strategy as moderately to very effective, the narrative justification for the rating tended to explain the effectiveness as being a result of POC work on the strategy. This section is divided into the four areas of WPA work: student support, pedagogy, assessment, and faculty. In each part, we first describe the questions asked about each area of WPA work, then provide a percentage breakdown of responses given by white/Caucasian participants versus POC participants, and finally report some common responses.

STUDENT SUPPORT

The student support questions covered two areas: 1) effectiveness of institutional programs or initiatives to support racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student populations and 2) effectiveness of self-strategies in the comp classroom to support racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student populations. We asked these questions about racially and linguistically diverse students because POC students who use non-Standard English are often indexed racially:

> Even though there is no inherent link between race and dialect, when one dialect is both "read" as White and deemed more acceptable than other dialects, it becomes raced in the reader's mind and perpetuates Whiteness. [. . .] Racialized language use also racializes language users; however, Whiteness and [Standard Language Ideology] mask this process by simultaneously racializing [Standard Edited American English] and arguing that [Standard Edited American English] is unaffiliated. (Davila 198)

This race-based indexicality often affects POC students in complex ways due to the intersection between race and linguistic diversity.

Very few POC respondents rated institutional strategies as effective. One respondent addressed the lack of valuing diverse students:

> No support for domestic students whose first language isn't English. Little to no recognition of strengths multilingual students bring to campus or how to optimize them in classrooms to benefit all. Little recognition of the circumstances, interests, strengths, needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

Another POC respondent replied,

> We are very early into developing strategies in this area to promote the success and well being of diverse students in our classrooms, but

> I don't hold out much hope for the short term. We are at a loss for what we can do that doesn't single students out or ostracize them as being labeled at-risk.

Both respondents are addressing the lack of student support in ways that link linguistic diversity to race and institutional environments that index racially and linguistically diverse students as at-risk and ignored.

Some POC respondents replied that the efforts of POCs have contributed to the effectiveness of programs such as one respondent who said, "We have a strong Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Programs who is not white and who I work closely with to mentor students of color." If POCs working on these initiatives have writing program and wider institutional support, successful strategies can be instituted and sustained. One respondent names a few successful strategies at their institution:

> [There is] a diversity requirement for all undergraduates, a writing center that provides assistance for both undergraduates and graduate students as well as putting on workshops for faculty and students alike (staffed by undergraduate students who must have taken courses in tutoring and have a faculty recommendation before the students are hired by the Director of the writing center). Numerous courses, even those not designated as satisfying the ethnic studies or women and gender studies requirement, include works by non-European authors.

While some POCs talked about being supported by administrators, most suggested that POCs use strategies in isolation. One respondent said, "Minimal attempts have been made in combating racism in composition. And the only faculty who attempt to do so are the few minority faculty in the writing program." There were some respondents that stated that success was direct result of a POC administrator: "Given the recent death of the university president, who was Black, I see a return to 'administrative caution' when addressing racism and a tendency to rest on laurels (earned by that president)." In this case, the success of the black president is being taken for granted rather than seen as an important model for how to maintain a working system.

Interestingly, the majority of white/Caucasian respondents rated the institutional student support programs as mostly effective, but when asked to justify this, many of the narrative rationales conflicted with the rating. One respondent stated, "I have no idea . . . seriously. There are an abundance of identity-based student run groups at my campus." Another replied, "I worry [. . .] about the needs of American students of color because the campus population is overwhelmingly white and conserva-

tive" and another stated, "There's much discussion of embracing diversity on campus via social events and special lectures/presentations, etc., but academically, instructors don't exhibit this embrace in their teaching or assessment." In many ways, these responses do not align with the rating of effectiveness the participants gave, reflect a notion that student support only means a recognition of diverse groups, and reduces support to special groups and lectures. The responses do not illustrate anti-racist institutional practices that initiate dialogue beyond recognition of the racial and linguistic minorities as the outside other, suggesting that there is no clear understanding of diversity initiatives beyond what Barlow references as *celebratory multiculturalism* (419).

Some white/Caucasian respondents also equated POC student support to remedial courses even though no such link was made or implied in the question. For example, one person responded, "the school got rid of basic writing courses because they lost funding from the state" and another stated, "Our basic writing courses seem to do well at helping underprepared students acclimate to the demands of college writing." Again, the survey question only asked about support for students of color and linguistically diverse students. There was no question about basic writing or underprepared students. This dilemma leads us back to Prendergast's claim that diversity often becomes co-opted by appeals to basic writers and other nonsequitur metaphors for racial minorities situating in the linguistic environment described by Davila.

On the issue of racism, some white/Caucasian respondents made a distinction between explicit and implicit racism:

> While we do I think on the whole a good job of combatting overt racism, we are not always adept at addressing or recognizing microaggressions. This in part is due to the fact that our faculty is largely white, in part to lack of education about microaggressions.

Many respondents made this call for education in their responses, which in many ways intersects with the POC experience. *POC academics are asking to be heard while white/Caucasian academics are asking to be educated*. Both of these issues seem to be administrative concerns.

Despite some confusion and conflation by white/Caucasian respondents, there were some who justified their rating with concrete initiatives. One respondent stated,

> We have worked very consciously in the last 5 years to change our curriculum to meet the changing demographics of our students. We do lots of professional development and are now working on putting diversity and inclusion into our merit documents.

Another replied, "There is good work going on in student support services and athletics. The Writing Program actively engages in supporting students of color and from non-Standard and non-English backgrounds, including Generation 1.5 students." These responses suggest that programs and students benefit from race-based initiatives, and in order to be sustainable, race-based initiatives must have institutional support.

Pedagogy

We asked two questions about the effectiveness of strategies aimed at combatting racism at the institutional level and in the first-year composition teaching practicum.

POC respondents either felt the strategies were not effective or, when they did mark a strategy as effective, it was because of an effort on their part:

> There is no strategy specific to the composition classroom used to combat racism or colorism. But given that several of us teaching first-year writing are people of color and given that some of us have designed courses that relate to these issues (one faculty member looks at different representations of Martin Luther King, for example,), these issues occasionally arise in individual classroom discussions or between faculty member and students who seek advice or understanding from the faculty member.

Without systemic support from their programs, POC respondents were doing this kind of work in their classrooms. For the most part, however, POC replied that there were either no strategies or that when POC addressed issues of race, they were silenced. For example, one respondent said, "I think the dominant faculty and staff often think they know more about diversity than they do, but there is still some eye-rolling, etc. when actually diverse people want to talk or assert themselves." This conflict was a common theme in responses. The department wanted race-based initiatives, but when race was addressed explicitly by POC academics, they were ignored or aggressively silenced by white colleagues.

To the question of practicum, POC respondents mostly stated that race was never addressed or when it was addressed, it was problematic. One respondent said, "Mostly White people talking to other White people about race." Finally, POC tied the effectiveness of the teaching practicum to the kind of material covered:

> The teaching practicum required for graduate students includes many racially/linguistically oriented readings, including Royster's "When the voice you hear is not your own" and readings by Villanueva. Monthly staff development meetings, required for NTT fac-

ulty, have featured sessions on race and the classroom, "teaching controversial topics," and have offered a forum for voicing all kinds of concerns in the classroom/curriculum.

This response in particular gives a model for creating an environment that works to provide avenues of support for instructors working with race and ethnicity in the classroom. It was one of a few responses from POC academics that did not follow the narrative of silence but rather showed ways to combat that narrative.

Some white/Caucasian respondents were able to articulate very clear pedagogical initiatives their institution had put in place to combat racism and colorism; however, most were either not sure how to respond or felt as if they had little training or support in this area. Some respondents explained why initiatives were effective:

> The students of color (a substantive percentage of the student population) have strong support systems and a strong academic and social presence on campus. The issues of racism are explicitly addressed in the Writing and Communication program's extensive initial and ongoing orientation and professional development workshops.

Other white/Caucasian respondents were at a loss. One replied, "I really have no clue," and another said, "I don't know of any institutional strategies in place." Some respondents felt they were unsupported in their efforts or were faced with a volatile racial space. For example, one person replied, "Our institution has done very little officially to combat racism or colorism in the institution and so if it can't fight those fights outside of the comp classroom, how can it expect to fight them within it?" The majority seemed to understand that initiatives were there but were not sure how to employ them. For example, when one respondent said, "I address issues of perspective, but I do not know how to address issues of linguistic and rhetorical diversity in *writing*." The respondents, again, seem to be calling for this race-based work to be explicitly addressed in their departments. When this explicit addressing of race does occur, white/Caucasian respondents felt more able to answers these questions in concrete ways.

The white/Caucasian respondents' replies to the question about a racially aware teaching practicum were again conflicted. One respondent said, "I'm sorry. I don't understand the question," and another said, "There is no such training in place, nor required or suggested readings." One response said these initiatives were "virtually non-existent at our campus," and one said, "We include readings and discussion of theory during a few weeks of this course, and the conversations and intentions are honest. But theory and discussion in practice change." One respondent who discussed linguisti-

cally diverse POC students replied, "Training of graduate students to teach first year writing (FYW) prominently emphasizes working with multilingual students and readings in the relevant literature. That our FYW WPAs in recent years have national reputations on multilingual writing pedagogy has certainly helped." This affirms the notion that strong institutional support for race-based initiatives was the result of a fostered culture of talking about issues of race by scholars in the department pushing for these initiatives to be programmatic.

Assessment

In the area of assessment, our survey asked, "How effective are the strategies used for assessing the writing of racially and linguistically diverse students in the first-year composition program?" We found the answers to this question particularly interesting, as they were complex and vastly different answers.

Most POC respondents explained that they take great care in assessing students of color and students from linguistically diverse backgrounds. The effectiveness of the assessment then was linked to the POC's work on this issue while still suggesting that more people needed to continue this work:

> I, along with other faculty members, have been asked to speak to first year composition teachers and others concerning this assessment. One issue is that the research in this area is not exactly robust, and it should be something WPA takes on in a serious way. It's hard to convince others when the research is minimal.

This theme was common. In many responses, POC and white/Caucasian academics asked for more research to be done on race and assessment.

When POC rated assessment as ineffective, most replies suggested a lack of support or a hostile environment. One respondent replied, "We assess all students using the same rubric and criteria, and those are based in Standard English" while another said, "Even asking such a question is too difficult for those in power to contemplate. And as we know all too well, white feelings always trump the needs and aspirations of people of color." Again, the theme of POC silencing is addressed. In this case, the POC respondent describes white/Caucasian academics as lacking knowledge and allowing their emotions to prevent progress.

Some white/Caucasian respondents suggested that although the assessment strategies were not effective, the onus to improve these strategies should be placed on faculty of color. For example, one reply stated, "Certainly opportunities for improvement exist in providing better strategies to address the needs of these students. It might be useful to turn to minority

faculty to address this area more effectively." Finally, when a respondent rated the assessment practices as not effective, the personal context of the student was stated as one reason why. For example, one respondent had this reply:

> Our first-year writing courses are incredibly demanding and anxiety-producing on account of the stakes-bearing portfolio review system, and our POC-to-Caucasian student fail rate is grossly disproportionate. Our system seems to be failing POC, who often have major personal challenges and responsibilities outside the classroom that compromise their potential for academic success.

Without knowing the institutional context for such a claim, it seems the respondent is indexing POC students as overburdened with complex lives outside of the classroom in comparison to their white counterparts. POC lives are seen as a deficit and a threat to their education whereas white student lives promote academic success. In many ways, this creates a picture of the POC student as bound to fail from a system that is not made for their complexity. Rather than making programmatic shifts that allow for complexity, POC students are failed and punished for this while white students are rewarded for their standardness.

When white/Caucasian respondents rated their program as moderately or very effective, their replies tended to cite specific reasons why. For example, one respondent said, "Our assessment rubric was shaped specifically not to unfairly mark non-native speaking patterns or indicators of multilingualism." Another respondent explained the systemic ways assessment has been addressed:

> Instructors are well connected to the Writing Center staff and often have conversations about linguistic diversity and inclusion in terms of student writing. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds (who are overwhelmingly non-white) are also able to participate in a Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) prior to the start of their first semester, where they are encouraged to embrace and explore the rich literacy traditions they come from while preparing them for the kinds of academic standard Englishes they will encounter in college.

This response particularly speaks to the common theme of administrative and institutional support. When race-based initiatives are grounded in and sustained by an institution and administrators that values students of color and their linguistic histories, then students benefit; instructors feel prepared; and programs are more able to address race in writing programs.

Faculty

The final question on the survey asked, "How effective are the strategies your administration has to affirm racial and ethnic diversity among faculty?".

POC responses were similar but tended to focus on personal experiences as one of a few POC faculty members on their campus. One notable response outlined the respondent's entire experience:

> It is difficult to be only one of a few people of color teaching at an institution with a minority-majority. I sometimes hear from students things that happen in other writing classrooms (a girl who failed a course because she did not participate in class without the instructor understanding that English was not her first language, and therefore, there was both cultural and linguistic barrier that she was struggling to overcome). For me, the urgency to think about inclusion, difference, power, are very present, and I think we are missing opportunities for a better understanding of what it means to teach minority students (i.e., it is never discussed in any meetings, when I mention it off hand, people seem uncomfortable, when I try to speak in meetings, I often feel overlooked and/or ignored).

This response again suggests that the isolation and silencing of POC scholars directly affects their ability to push for race-based initiatives to help students of color.

Some POC respondents explained the inability of their institution's administration to effectively create strategies for recruitment and retention of POC. One reply stated, "Our administration has not taken an active approach to recruit faculty of color and seems to have no desire in doing so." Another respondent explained how they navigate the conflict between initiatives and reality:

> I would say they often say they affirm it, but what goes on behind closed doors is another story, especially when faculty of color (especially outspoken ones) are not included in the conversations. However, some administrators do listen to data and comparative analysis to more affirming institutions when it's presented to them that may contradict this supposed affirmation. I used this strategy a number of times (shaming them with comparative data), and it was the most successful means to helping them move in the right direction of affirmation.

While this respondent again affirms that POC scholars are devalued, the respondent also suggests that embedding arguments of the benefits of racial

diversity in scholarship helps quite a lot. Some POC replies discussed the hostile environment on campus. One respondent said, "Very few NTT and tenured faculty are faculty of color, and those who have been hired have left either to contracts not being renewed, or to poor pay/benefits, or to perceptions of a hostile environment/not being listened to" and another replied, "Administration lacks even the most elementary vocabulary for addressing racial diversity." The continued silencing of POC scholars and lack of a commitment to recruit and keep racially diverse faculty impacts students of color.

Common white/Caucasian responses to this were that faculty diversity was not an issue. For example, one respondent said, "Strong racial diversity exists in the campus leadership on all levels—chairs, directors, upper administration" and another said, "again not sure this is an issue." Some respondents didn't know how to answer. One respondent said, "I'm honestly not even sure how they do this, so I really can't answer this question competently. However, we only have two tenure track faculty members who aren't white," while another replied, "I honestly have no idea how to answer this question. I wish there was an option to have no opinion," and another said, "I have NO idea what the racial composition is of the entire university or faculty; in my program/department there's no diversity." Finally, some white/Caucasian respondents explained that while the programs were effective at recruitment, they were not effective at retention of POC faculty. For example, one respondent said, "Faculty of color don't stay long at our institution, and staff of color are very uncomfortable as well. It's a hostile environment."

Implications

Most participants in the study affirmed that POC students are not served well in support, pedagogy, or assessment and that there are no clear administrative strategies to combat racism and colorism; however, participants also suggested that they believe they are doing well in the classroom. Some participants were able to point to concrete methods they were using in their courses to address race, while others rated their strategies as effective but their narrative explanations conflicted with their self-rating. This conflict seems to suggest that some white/Caucasian instructors might have good intentions but lack the critical knowledge to address race and ethnicity. Many participants stated they don't have support by administration or the university as a whole with issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity efforts; that there is only minimal effort to make the faculty diverse racially and ethnically; and that when those recruitment strategies work, there is not a

support system for POC academics and, therefore, they leave. POC respondents repeatedly wrote about being silenced and devalued while white/Caucasian respondents asked to be educated on race-based initiatives.

On several occasions, there was a clear distinction between how POCs answered and how white/Caucasian respondents answered. There were a few instances where white/Caucasian respondents were at a loss for how to articulate responses to questions of race in writing programs. However, POCs often felt they bear the brunt of the work on race and ethnicity at their institutions and had to navigate hostile environments; nevertheless, when the participant, institution, and writing program put effort into researching how to address race and ethnicity; had comprehensive training in race issues; and clear systemic racial diversity directives, both white/Caucasian and POC respondents rated their institutional strategies as effective.

Conclusion

The history of race in writing program administration coupled with the data presented here creates a complex and pertinent illustration of how race functions in Writing Programs. While the sample of respondents is small and our findings cannot be seen as representative of the field as a whole, this study sets a precedent for this area of scholarship and shows the need for larger qualitative studies. When it comes to the consideration of race and writing program administration, participants argued that scholars of color often work in isolation, recognizing that programs lack effective strategies to systematically implement race-based pedagogy or examine specific institutional resources to help combat racism on campuses. Our survey suggests a perception gap between white respondents and people of color (POC) respondents. For example, we found that the lack of attention paid to race in WPA work creates undertheorized teaching models, curricula, and support programs that frustrate POC faculty who demonstrate a greater awareness of diversity initiatives or show that white respondents seem to be unaware of or complicit in ignoring diversity. To make matters more challenging, white respondents think diversity strategies are effective while in general POC do not, creating a clear disconnect in perceptions about how successful writing programs address differing levels of racial and linguistic diversity of their student bodies. This disconnect between white faculty and POC faculty, as our results show, should be attended to as it shapes WPA attitudes toward race that, in turn, shape the assumptions guiding writing program administration. The findings suggest that when writing instructors and institutions put resources and time towards researching and implementing race-based writing program strategies, POC students benefit,

POC academics feel supported, and white/Caucasian instructors are more able to address race in articulate and concrete ways.

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