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Writing Program Administration

Journal of the
Council of Writing Program Administrators

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Council of Writing Program Administrators

Guide for Authors

WPA: Writing Program Administration publishes empirical and theoretical research on issues in writing program administration. We publish a wide range of research in various formats, research that not only helps both titled and untitled administrators of writing programs do their jobs, but also helps our discipline advance academically, institutionally, and nationally.

Possible topics of interest include:

- writing faculty professional development
- writing program creation and design
- uses for national learning outcomes and statements that impact writing programs
- classroom research studies
- labor conditions: material, practical, fiscal
- WAC/WID/WC/CAC (or other sites of communication/writing in academic settings)
- writing centers and writing center studies
- teaching writing with electronic texts (multimodality) and teaching in digital spaces
- theory, practice, and philosophy of writing program administration
- outreach and advocacy
- curriculum development
- writing program assessment
- WPA history and historical work
- national and regional trends in education and their impact on WPA work
- issues of professional advancement and writing program administration
- diversity and WPA work
- writing programs in a variety of educational locations (SLACs, HBCUs, two-year colleges, Hispanic schools, non-traditional schools, dual credit or concurrent enrollment programs, prison writing programs)
- interdisciplinary work that informs WPA practices

This list is meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive. Contributions must be appropriate to the interests and concerns of the journal and its readership. The editors welcome empirical research (quantitative as well as qualitative), historical research, and theoretical, essayistic, and practical pieces.

Submission Guidelines

Please check the *WPA* website for complete submissions guidelines and to download the required coversheet. In general, submissions should:

- be a maximum 7,500 words;
- be styled according to either the *MLA Handbook* (8th edition) or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition), as appropriate to the nature of your research;

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- include an abstract (maximum 200 words);
- contain no identifying information;
- be submitted as a .doc or .docx format file; and
- use tables, notes, figures, and appendices sparingly and judiciously.

Submissions that do not follow these guidelines or that are missing the cover page will be returned to authors before review.

Reviews

WPA:Writing Program Administration publishes both review essays of multiple books and reviews of individual books related to writing programs and their administration. If you are interested in reviewing texts or recommending books for possible review, please contact the book review editor at wpabookreviews@gmail.com.

Announcements and Calls

Relevant announcements and calls for papers may be published as space permits. Announcements should not exceed 500 words, and calls for proposals or participation should not exceed 1,000 words. Submission deadlines in calls should be no sooner than January 1 for the fall issue and June 1 for the spring issue. Please email your calls and announcements to wpaeditors@gmail.com and include the text in both the body of the message and as a .doc or .docx attachment.

Correspondence

Correspondence relating to the journal, submissions, or editorial issues should be sent to wpaeditors@gmail.com.

Subscriptions

WPA: Writing Program Administration is published twice per year—fall and spring—by the Council of Writing Program Administrators. Members of the council receive a subscription to the journal and access to the *WPA* archives as part of their membership. Join the council at http://wpacouncil.org. Information about library subscriptions is available at http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sp/journal-subscriptions.

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I am a white, first-generation woman academic teaching at a newly designated Hispanic-serving institution with experience leading first-year writing programs at multiple institutions of varying size and scope.

I am Filipina Canadian, currently acting as a WPA and professor at a public liberal arts institution that serves a large number of first-generation students. I come from an immigrant community and a fundamentalist culture and some days none of these things seem to construct me, but some days they really, really do.

Afterword

I am a cisgender, able-bodied Black Feminist educator, agitator, and dreamer who currently lives and works as a professor, former WPA, and descendent of Enslaved Africans on the lands of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.

Bibliography

Introduction

Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racist Projects in Writing Program Administration

Sheila Carter-Tod and Jennifer Sano-Franchini

We begin with a land acknowledgement. We have worked on this special issue from Virginia Tech, which occupies the traditional homelands of the Tutelo/Monacan people, who have a continuing connection to this land. Contributors and others who have worked on this special issue are situated at postsecondary institutions across the United States, which was established through colonization, forced displacement, and genocide of Indigenous people. Virginia Tech also sits on former plantation land worked by enslaved Black people including the Fraction, McNorton, and Saunders families amongst numerous others, who contributed to the creation and emergence of Virginia Tech as a major land-grant university. Although a land acknowledgement alone is not enough, we offer it to make visible the history and ongoing effects of systemic inequality in our society. With this recognition, we commit to educating ourselves about the local histories of the places we occupy, contextualizing our learning by deeply engaging with Indigenous and Black intellectual traditions, and attending to the impacts of our actions and our work on Black, Indigenous, and other minoritized communities.

This special issue brings together a range of perspectives on how the global Black Lives Matter movement and other anti-racist efforts have affected the administrative practices of writing program administrators. As Christina Stanley and Marilyn Mobley suggested, university administrators can and should play a significant role in dismantling institutionalized racial injustice. In their August 2020 article, "'Time to Get Real': What Black Faculty Need from White Faculty and Administrators to Interrupt Racism in Higher Education," they state that "Substantive change begins earnestly and cross-culturally when White faculty and administrators, with access to the tower and its benefits, relinquish the propensity to guard and protect others from entering and begin to engage in the serious work of connecting intellectual heft with the emotional intelligence this moment demands." In their list of actions that would lead towards this "earnest change" they list two actions that we see as particularly pertinent to the work done by writing program administrators: (1) reflecting on how scholars of color are used to advance research and (2) breaking silence by speaking the truth. As two

mid-career women of color academics (one African American, the other Asian American) who are also experienced writing program administrators (one of a first year writing program, the other of a professional writing program), and both of whom are working during a time of racial unrest, protest, and calls for change, we are positioned to take on a range of interconnected roles, with responsibilities for and to a network of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, university administrators, and local communities. Writing program administrators of color may find negotiating these interconnected roles professionally and personally challenging as we try to figure out how to enact change, advance our own scholarship, and speak truth, while supporting the people in our programs.

Historically, *WPA: Writing Program Administration* has published several symposia and articles that have been instrumental in taking up race and writing program administration. The 2009, "Symposium on Diversity and the Intellectual Work of WPAs," included articles that dealt with race as it "purposefully engage[d] diversity as an area of intellectual administrative work" (163). In the subsequent 2010 "WPAs Respond to 'A Symposium on Diversity and the Intellectual Work of WPAs,'" Collin Lamont Craig and Perryman-Clark narrated and challenged racialized practices in writing program administration in their article "Troubling the Boundaries: (De)Constructing WPA Identities at the Intersections of Race and Gender," where they presented a "framework for understanding an identity politic in WPA scholarship that is constructed along an axis of multiple intersecting identities" (53). Six years later, the 2016 "Symposium: Challenging Whiteness and/in Writing Program Administration and Writing," explored "a variety of topics, addressing race-based issues pertaining to WPA work such as supporting faculty and graduate students in writing studies, choosing textbooks, de-normalizing whiteness, and in general, becoming more thoughtful and attentive to issues of race as administrators" (7).

Outside of symposia, the journal has published specific articles on race. For example, Inoue's 2016 CWPA conference's plenary address, "Racism in Writing Programs and the CWPA," challenges attendees to consider and address "the problem of whitely ways of administering writing programs and judging the languages of non-white others" (151). In that same issue, García de Müeller and Ruiz's "Race, Silence, and Writing Program Administration: A Qualitative Study of US College Writing Programs," addressed the ways race functions within and writing programs, and García de Müeller's "WPA and the New Civil Rights Movement" challenges WPAs to ground their administrative practices in "work [that] must be relocated in an activist context aimed at advocating for the rights of students of color" (36). A key underlying theme in all of this work has been giving

voice to racialized practices in writing program administration as well as WPAs being agents for change.

In summer 2020, as Black Lives Matters protests resurged, this time across the globe in response to the unjust murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and too many others, we saw many professional organizations making efforts to speak out against anti-Blackness and racist police violence. That fall, the editors of *WPA* invited Sheila to edit a symposium that examines race and the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement possibly complementing, critiquing, and/or building upon previous publications. Sheila then invited Jennifer, who was at the time director of the Professional Technical Writing program at Virginia Tech working on anti-racist efforts within the program, to co-edit the symposium with her, in the hopes that the issue might be inclusive of anti-racist perspectives in technical and professional communication as it pertains to program administration. Together, we were excited about continuing with the two themes of giving voice to racialized practices in writing program administration as well as WPAs being agents for change. We articulated this point in our call, which we shared widely in late September 2020. In addition, we hoped to hear from WPAs in a broad range of programs across writing studies and from diverse institutional environments. With this in mind, we crafted the call in such a way as to be as inclusive as possible. We acknowledged a range of statements by various writing studies professional organizations, while also acknowledging the absence of material actions and curricular and/or policy changes writing program administrators have taken to make Black Lives Matter within writing programs. Our goal was to curate a collection of pieces that addressed this absence.

The response to our call was incredible. With almost 60 submissions, we found it almost impossible to consider how we would select the limited number of submissions given the number of words we were allotted for the symposium. We began brainstorming other possibilities for publishing the pieces that we would have accepted, if given more publication space. Thanks to the journal editors Lori Ostergaard, Jacob Babb, and Jim Nugent proposing (and the CWPA Executive Board approving) a special issue, we were able to expand our acceptances—crafting a more expansive and inclusive project. We are thankful to the journal's assistant editors, Eric Brown, Emily Jo Schwaller, and Katelyn Stark, for facilitating the peer review process, as well as to the editorial board members and all others who participated in the review of submissions. Their assistance was crucial because we wanted to ensure that each article was able to go through the process of double anonymous peer review.

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Reading across the many essays and vignettes included in this special issue was not only educational, but it also helped us to see just how many WPAs are wrestling with, reacting to, challenging and changing institutionalized responses to the ongoing racial injustices that WPAs have historically reinforced. From programs based in HBCUs, HSIs and PWIs, the submissions in this issue show WPAs proposing, instituting and reflecting on anti-racist work—professionally, curricularly, pedagogically and collaboratively. We looked across the entries for emerging themes. Then, much like a research project analysis, we began grouping the pieces based on what we saw as six emerging themes:

- centering Black perspectives in anti-racist writing program administration
- anti-racist leadership and representation
- anti-racist programmatic and professional development
- anti-racist curricular work
- anti-racist classroom practices
- anti-racist collaborations, resources, and support

While many of the pieces in any one of our categories could easily fit into another as there are a range of topical intersectionalities, our goal with this arrangement is to highlight key areas of writing program administrative work that require anti-racist interventions.

We begin the special issue with essays on centering Black perspectives in anti-racist writing program administration. In this section, authors offer perspectives from a range of positionalities about the ways that WPAs "interested in Black studies, and cultural rhetorics might begin to rethink the work of writing programs," as David F. Green and Michelle Bachelor Robinson explain. In their essay, "Writing Program Administration 'For Us, By Us': Two HBCU WPAs Testify," Green and Robinson share their experiences performing the role of WPA in environments that historically focus on Black and Brown students. Utilizing Black feminist research and pro-Black praxis, Natasha N. Jones, Laura Gonzales, & Angela M. Haas's essay "So You Think You're Ready to Build New Social Justice Initiatives?: Intentional and Coalitional Pro-Black Organizational Leadership in Writing Studies" makes the case for anti-racist organizational change through pro-Black ethics of community and care. Next, moving to the embodied situation of Black female tutors facing sessions where their tutees challenged their authority and knowledge, Zandra L. Jordan's essay "Flourishing as Anti-Racist Praxis: 'An Uncompromised Commitment' to Black Writing Tutors," chronicles decolonizing practices to create anti-racist tutor training in writing centers. To encourage students to understand and challenge racial, and

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power structures, Trent M. Kays' vignette, "What James Baldwin Taught Me About WPA Work" situates his anti-racist work in Baldwin's writing and his direct approach in his FYC course to get his students to consider the relationship between language, access, and perceptions of reality. This section concludes with James Eubanks' vignette, "Am I The Problem?" which reflects the author's anxieties about his ability to enact anti-racist change as a Black graduate student WPA in a English department at a predominantly white university in the South. He describes the experiences that have shaped why he wants to be a WPA and how he hopes to further enact change in that role.

We follow these essays with perspectives on anti-racist leadership and representation and the need to directly redress the problem of low numbers of faculty of color—and even lower numbers of administrators of color in postsecondary institutions. Considering the broader issues related to the discipline and broader themes of racial representation, Sheila Carter-Tod's essay "Why So Few of US: Addressing Larger Issues of Systemic Exclusions that Limit the Numbers of Black Writing Program Administrators" narrows in on two structural challenges that limit the numbers of Black faculty in academic positions: racism in hiring practices and epistemological exclusion, which relates to hiring as it influences how hiring committees evaluate scholarly research in ways that disproportionately affect Black faculty in particular and faculty of color more broadly. Also related to the issue of hiring and representation of faculty of color in leadership positions is Al Harahap's "The Promise and Perils of a Disciplinary and Organizational Pipeline," which draws on his experiences as a WPA-GO chair of color to analyze the challenges associated with the pipeline metaphor when applied to WPA-affiliated graduate students and early career scholars. As the numbers and venues for FOC in WPA positions are limited, Octavio Pimentel's vignette "The Push for the 1974 Statement . . . Once Again" reiterates the need for a larger presence of FOC as WPAs as he historicizes the problem. Moreover, Pimentel points out the need to seriously consider the important contributions of faculty of color who have firsthand experience of the impacts of racism and white supremacy and how they are so needed to lead the creation of anti-racist and Black Lives Matter efforts across universities in writing programs. However, advancing the idea that the burden of change should be shared, Stephen Monroe's vignette "White Supremacists and Urgent Agency: Memories from a Writing Program Administrator" challenges all WPAs to be prepared programmatically to respond to crisis moments when acts of racism have dangerous and violent consequences.

The next set of essays consider how anti-racist programmatic and professional development are necessary parts of the work writing program admin-

istrators can and should do to advance anti-racist teaching and learning and to appropriately prepare graduate students and faculty of color for leadership positions. As an update to their 2016 *WPA* symposium essay "The Role of Composition Programs in De-Normalizing Whiteness: Programmatic Approaches to Anti-Racist Pedagogies," Tyler S. Branson and James Chase Sanchez's essay "Programmatic Approaches to Antiracist Writing Program Policy" goes on to argue for pedagogical interventions to "combat normative whiteness." Similarly, Michelle Bachelor Robinson's vignette "A WPA Reflects on Assessing Black Women's Writing During Intersectional Pandemics" is her meditation on her work to invoke a pedagogy and a practice of compassion as a WPA at Spelman during COVID-19. Extending this theme of programmatic change to consider faculty professional development, Amy J. Wan and Christopher John Williams' vignette "Beyond Crisis Moments: Mediating Instructor-Student Conflict through Anti-Racist Practice" discusses how as BIPOC WPAs, they negotiated the tensions that come when working with mostly racialized students and mostly white contingent faculty. Prioritizing the need to "minimize immediate harm to students" while also supporting their contingent teachers, they discuss their focus on helping teachers "reflect on and ethically inhabit their power in the classroom." Further considering the role of professional development in creating and sustaining anti-racist efforts, Gabriel Morrison and Kathleen Tonry's vignette "Racism in the Margins" identifies margins as sites of vulnerability for students, and the places where faculty reveal assumptions about the intellectual superiority of "standard" English, which are rooted in racist ideologies and disproportionately affect students of color. Similarly considering sites in which students of color are systematically harmed, Joe Cirio and Heather McGovern's "Countering Equivocation: The Moves Used to Thwart Anti-Racism Work" documents their institutional efforts to implement program-wide anti-racist classroom policies. As does Bradley Smith's vignette "'I'm Just Following the Policy': The Last Line of Defense for 'Standard English'" where he reiterates the point that WPA efforts towards programmatic linguistic justice is difficult ongoing work as he reflects on his own actions and reactions to enact change.

While programmatic change is important, unless the institutionalized racist practices that are inscribed into curriculum are challenged, sustainable change can not occur. Connecting faculty development with anti-racist curricular change is Rebecca Hallman Martini and Travis Webster's "Antiracism Across the Curriculum: Practicing an Integrated Approach to WAC and Writing Center Faculty Development," which provide strategies for faculty development across which overviews writing assignments, language choice, evaluation/assessment, and peer work. Lucy Del Col, Ana

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Fowler, Sabrina Mohamed, Dylan Nordstrom, Alex Onuoha, Sarah (Raph) Raphael, Emily Tamkin, Celia Tolan, Cherrysse Ulsa, and Stephanie Wade's "Do Something!: Forging Constellations of Curricular, Co-Curricular, and Community Opportunities for Anti-Racist Writing Pedagogies at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine" outlines a co-curricular effort to facilitate campus wide conversations about racism, with a discussion of the roles of allies in systemic structural change and student reflections on their experiences. Katherine Fredlund and Angela Morris's essay "Collaborating Toward an Anti-Racist Writing Curriculum" chronicles their efforts, at the University of Memphis, to revise their first-year writing curriculum to better reflect Memphis's Black language and celebrated cultural traditions, while Daniel Summerhill, Kelly Medina-López, and Sam Robinson's essay "Confronting the Comp Classroom: Implementing Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Navigating Opposition" explores curricular change in a stretch course by redesigning their FYC curriculum using anti-racist practices and culturally sustaining pedagogies. Next, narrating their experiences instituting a race and ethnicity requirement at a PWI, Cynthia Pengilly and M. O'Brien's "Telling It Like It Is: A Narrative Account of Designing a Race and Ethnicity Requirement at a PWI in the Middle of Black Lives Matter" describes the varied responses to the proposal and new requirement, some of which were positive while others more resistant. They outline three types of responses that reinforced a race-neutral status quo: hands in the cookie jar, same ol' same ol', and not enough melanin. Similar to Pengilly and O'Brien's vignette, Erica Cirillo-McCarthy and Erica M. Stone's vignette "Recursive Interventions: A Coalitional Approach Anti-racist Pedagogy at Middle Tennessee State University" is a narrative of their attempts to institute pedagogical practices that decenter whiteness at a PWI.

Understanding that change at all levels—programmatic, curricular, and classroom—Felicita Arzu Carmichael's essay "Teaching Anti-Racist Reading Practices in First-Year Writing" argues that WPAs and FYW teachers need to create policies and pedagogy that allow students to develop awareness of systemic racism and social injustice. Next, Sherri Craig's vignette "Your Contract Grading Ain't It" problematizes the tendency to treat contract grading alone as an anti-racist instructional effort. Sonya Barrera Eddy, Katherine Bridgman, J. Ione Matthews, Randee M. Schmitt, and Autumn Brooke Crane's "Narratives from a Writing Center: Actively Engaging in the Process of Anti-Racism" furthers this discussion using multiple narratives to describe and reflect on their experiences of taking their writing center practices online using an anti-racist approach during the pandemic. Melvin Beavers's vignette, "Reimagining the Possibilities: A Narrative Account of a Journey Toward Anti-Racist Administration,"

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describes his journey as a Black WPA faced with his own personal and professional reactions to the Black Lives Matter movement, and his mindful approach to ensure that students better understand language diversity beyond conventional approaches. These accounts are followed by Kathleen Turner Ledgerwood's "Interventions Foregrounding and Honoring Black Language in FYC from a HBCU/PBI Perspective," wherein she describes how she, as a WPA at an HBCU in the midwest, has revised their writing program to address students' feelings of failure. In her essay, she discusses how through rhetorical listening and collaborating with students they are beginning programmatic changes that foreground and honor Black Language in the first-year writing classroom.

The final group of essays span anti-racist collaborations, resources, and support. First, Meghan Kwast, Jolivette Mecenas, and Yvonne Wilber's "Aligning Practice with Belief: Bringing Anti-Racist Information Literacy and Writing Instruction to an HSI Lutheran University" chronicles the collaborative efforts of a writing program and the library to create and implement, anti-racist curricular revisions. Similarly, Mara Lee Grayson and Siskanna Naynaha's "Collaboration at the Center: Anti-Racist Writing Program Architecture at California State University Dominguez Hills" co-narrates their collaborative experiences developing an "explicitly anti-racist writing program architecture" at California State University, Dominguez Hills. While WPA, Megan McIntyre's vignette, "Curating a Place to Begin: Creating Resources that Center the Work of Black and Indigenous Scholars and Other Scholars of Color," explains her anti-racist curatorial practices, which she sees as, "critical, anti-racist praxis because it offers a starting point for those new to anti-racist teaching and administration without burdening Black scholars and other scholars of color who are too often asked to do the time consuming and uncompensated labor associated with this work."

We have concluded this issue with two pieces both responding to the larger national issues around Black matters and the more local disciplinary discussions. Patti Poblete's blog post, "How to Respond When You're BIPOC and Your Organization is Called Out for Racism," insightfully addresses her personal response to the ongoing debates and discussions around racist practices within CWPA and *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. And, Carmen Kynard's afterword, "'Troubling the Boundaries' of Anti-Racism: The Clarity of Black Radical Visions amid Racial Erasure," historicizes Black matters in writing program administration while questioning if the field will utilize the present as a time for real reform. Taken together, these essays, vignettes, blog post, afterword, and bibliography provide resources and multiple strategies for taking action in the service of

anti-racist writing program administration from a number of positionalities and institutional and regional contexts. We are confident that readers will find these perspectives as enlightening, informative, and empowering as we did.

So much has changed since we began the project. Attention has been drawn to the inherent structural and systemic racism within the Council of Writing Program Administrators as well as the journal. It was important for us to thoughtfully consider the discussions, and calls to action, while also respecting our work and honoring the work of the many authors included in this issue. With this in mind, we reached out to contributors for input, insight and guidance. We have both greatly appreciated the thoughtful consideration, and feedback we received. We agreed with our contributors in acknowledging the importance of this publication, especially in light of recent events. We also agreed with our contributors' recognition of the inclusive nature of the special issue and the ways in which many of the essays speak directly to the concerns expressed in Asao Inoue's reasons for the boycott. With this feedback in mind, we decided to move forward with the publication of this special issue of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. With this decision, we are making distinct efforts to distinguish the work that we see being done by and through the publication of this special issue. To identify this publication as outside the normal boundaries and scope of the journal we have done the following:

- worked with an artist, Alvin Miller, to design a specific cover that speaks to Black Lives Matters and anti-racist projects (his cover art contextualizes black racial issues nationally and more locally in the "ivory tower." As he describes, "The cover art has hidden meanings and "read between the lines" elements incorporated . . . But it also screams the problems with America upon first glance.");
- included Patti Poblete's thoughtful response to the situation;
- included reflective positionality statements, in the table of contents, for each issue entry; and
- compiled a bibliography on Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racist Projects in Writing Program Administration.

While we are aware of the need for change and the challenging journey ahead for CWPA and *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, we both honestly believe that this special issue speaks to and provides insight that will guide this journey forward.

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Sheila Carter-Tod is the incoming executive director of writing and associate professor of English at Denver University. She has chaired the NCTE's Racism and Bias committee, and held leadership roles on CCC and CWPA's executive boards. She has published works in *College Composition and Communication*, *Enculturation*, *Composition Studies*, *Council of Journal of Writing Program Administration* and oth-

ers. Her research/teaching/service/outreach focuses on writing program adminis-tration, race and rhetoric(s), composition theory, and writing pedagogy.

Jennifer Sano-Franchini (she/her/hers) is the incoming Gaziano Family Legacy professor of rhetoric and writing and associate professor of English at West Vir-ginia University. She co-edited *Building a Community, Having a Home: A History of the CCCC Asian/Asian American Caucus,* which documents the contributions of Asian/Asian American teacher-scholars to NCTE and CCCC since at least the 1960s. Her work has also appeared in *College Composition and Communication, Technical Communication, Rhetoric Review,* and *Enculturation,* among others. She serves on the CCCC Executive Committee and is an at-large member of the Con-sortium of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition.

Centering Black Perspectives in Anti-Racist Writing Program Administration

Writing Program Administration "For Us, By Us": Two HBCU WPAs Testify

David F. Green, Jr. and Michelle Bachelor Robinson

Testimonials have long represented an important genre of storytelling for race conscious scholars, as they build on the African American concept of "bearing witness," that is the role of relaying narratives that affirm, challenge, or inform discussions about the truth of an experience or event. In recent scholarship, Black scholars have frequently reflected on and engaged in conversations around moving through the world and performing various scholarly and institutional tasks while existing in the bodies given by the universe—verb-ing "while black." And so, we consider what it means to language and compose while "young, gifted, and Black." In *Articulate While Black*, H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman assert that "in American public discourse, language is often overlooked as one of the most important cultural tools that we have for distinguishing ourselves [black folks] from others" (3). Yet, writing programs nationwide invest so many resources in trying to teach the Black language, expression, and cadence out of our students. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are therefore uniquely positioned to celebrate Black language and cultivate learning environments that value what students bring. The authors, WPAs from two prominent HBCUs, discuss what it means to perform the various roles of a WPA in environments historically invested in the success of Black and Brown students. In her blog post "Towards a Black Composition Studies: BLACK AS GRAVITAS (PART I)," Carmen Kynard calls for a "Black composition studies" that values Black legacies and Black futures as models for the way composition studies, and WPA work more specifically should engage difference. This essay offers a few perspectives on the ways compositionists interested in Black studies and cultural rhetorics might begin to rethink the work of writing programs and the types of environments that shape student writing experiences. Below we both testify to the work of our respective programs, and to the work we imagine as essential to rethinking the gatekeeping mechanisms that have persisted since composition's inception as a university-wide course requirement.

Michelle

Serving as the WPA at a Historically Black College exclusively for women requires hyper-awareness of the fact that it is a space where race conscious writing and Black feminist ideology are comprehensively integrated into most aspects of the curriculum. In a vignette included in this special issue, I provide an account of a conscious decision by Spelman College's Comprehensive Writing Program to restructure a graduation requirement for our students, as a result of the impact of the intersectional pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice. In this essay, I offer an account of an additional programmatic, race conscious practice situated in faculty development. Our students need to be liberated from white supremacist practices in writing programs. Period. My tactical approach is to simply remix the microaggression and quietly push my colleagues toward a more inclusive pedagogy, through the professional development opportunities I offer annually.

As director of the writing program and chair of the Writing Intensive initiative, I offer an annual workshop to faculty in departments and programs across a variety of disciplines on how to write effective writing prompts. In this one-hour session, I suggest ways to construct writing prompts that most effectively guide students into and through composing content rich essays. One of the many tips I provide to instructors is to avoid assigning prescriptive formulas for organization. Though I acknowledge the value of a genre-centered writing pedagogy, I also acknowledge that in order for Black students to do writing, they must be allowed some agency in the doing. Prescriptive templates for organization stifle creative expression and limit the way Black students can language. Encouraging faculty to move away from these practices, which are rooted in the mainstream, and therefore resistant to cultural expression, fosters greater creativity and diversity in the writing experiences, resulting in a stronger final outcome. In this case, race conscious pedagogy is micro and resistant to standards that were developed, driven, and cultivated in white race supremacy (Kynard Part I). The CWP at Spelman fosters and supports pedagogy situated in outcomes that allow students to exercise agency in choosing to embrace as well as resist disciplinary standards. Engaging in these professional development conversations with faculty members is just one of the ways that the work of our writing program is necessarily race conscious. And though I acknowledge that this approach is a conservative one (baby steps), I am inspired by Kynard's "Towards a Black Composition Studies . . . (PART II)" and aim to shake some things up in 2021.

David

Similar to Michelle, I engage in a variety of duties that center training, observing, and assessing the work of writing faculty and student writers at Howard University. Because of Howard University's position as an African Diasporic centered research university, there is a pronounced emphasis on both culture and service as guiding principles of the research and teaching at the university. Thus, there is always a desire, on my part, to incorporate an approach to and appreciation for cultural rhetorics research, and very specifically African American rhetorical research into my WPA tasks. Theories of language and culture that animate my own pedagogy, often inform the way I reason through faculty and student perspectives about writing. I've struggled and debated about our use of grading rubrics, common assignments, and common texts, largely *because my* orientation to writing program administration *is uniquely* shaped by a nuanced understanding of Black English, and subsequently the study of African American rhetoric.

My experiences as a racialized subject within composition classes over the years has demonstrated for me the numerous ways rubrics, common assignments, and common texts can be used to maintain and press racist and antiblack assumptions on students due to their speech, language habits, or cultural worldviews. And yet some of the most transformative experiences I have had in the classroom have been in courses in which I could move between structure and improvisation with instructors. In these sequenced courses, I have been able to follow, and diverge if I chose, the trajectory of intellectual goals and tasks provided to me by different instructors across a set of related or linked courses. Thus, much of my thinking around antiracism and critical race analysis in WPA work has been largely around the types of experiences I see ambitious students respond to, as well as the types of teaching that tends to lead them toward a longview of writing as a part of their critical thinking process.

Collaborative Witnessing: Michelle and David

Kynard's blog post "Toward a Black Composition . . . (PART I)" suggests a need for reimagining composition as a site and resource that centers insurgent Black identities as central to the study of language, space, time, intellectual engagement and embodied performance. After one particular anecdote about her institutions processes, Kynard notes that, "*Black composition studies always recognizes the micro and yet overdetermined white supremacist processing of our schools and programs and imagines time, space, and possibility differently.*" Interwoven into the ways we ask students to understand themselves through their writing, are larger legacies and traditions they are

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always carrying with them. We agree with Kynard and continue to actively reflect on the ways that writing is situated as an overdetermined micro-aggression toward student performance.

In response to Kynard's call that we reimagine composition separate from its exclusionary (and explicitly racist) roots, Cedric Robinson's work provides a useful understanding of authority and order as fixed and unquestioned concepts within U.S. culture. In *Terms of Order* for example, Robinson explores the binary ways in which authority and order are defined, and how these definitions often override and banish different visions of structure and purpose in an effort to disempower individuals, and to normalize the ways institutions manage those individuals. At the core of his studies into disciplines and disciplinarity[1] is a complex explanation for how the elision of culture and tradition from administrative work can severely alter the imaginative capacities of our students and the range of students that are served by our work.

Our attention to language remains vital for reimagining our work as displacing the numerous discriminatory attitudes embedded in many assessment approaches to student writing. In many ways, language helps to order and rearticulate our thinking, as it exposes the hidden value judgments layered into particular statements, policies, and pretense. With this understanding we ask, "What might a raciolinguistic approach to understanding student language practices offer WPA work and scholarship generally?" Toward this objective, Awad Ibrahim's discussion of differential treatment as an invisible component of our administrative processes is insightful. Differential treatment highlights a pattern of bias that is primarily expressed through the limiting of choice, and the strategic use of authority to coerce fast paced and uncritical decisions unevenly across different identity groups. Differential treatment is often implemented through the strategic use of language on professional documents and often presents professional opportunities or intellectual possibilities in vague or limiting ways. Such treatment highlights a significant way that black, or any culturally situated expression may be limited or surveilled and coerced out of classrooms, lesson plans, or compositions.

Thus for our purposes, Black Composition Studies provides an umbrella term for examining and rethinking how black experiences are employed in our discussions of program policies and philosophy, how black experiences are privileged or enhanced instead of diminished by our processes, and consideration for the ways that race and racism saturate many large portions of our exchanges with students and faculty.

Conclusion

As WPAs at Historically Black Universities we are placed in positions in which tasks such as assessment and professional development provide pathways toward situating the identity of our programs within a unique understanding of the Black tradition, but it also places responsibility on us to reconsider how we might draw from a Black rhetorical tradition, to challenge assumptions about the types of multimedia writing students are asked to produce, as well as draw on unique analyses of race to help us think differently about the ways biases are expressed through language, policies, and procedural practices in ways that suppress or stifle certain student identities. As WPAs at HBCUs we are in unique positions to both identify and reconsider the policies and approaches to faculty development that maintain legacies of differential treatment regarding race and culture.

Note

1. In Robinson's *Terms of Order*, his expressed goal is to understand how Western political thought has come to dominate the very ways we are able to imagine almost all conceptions of politics or social movements. However, the implications of his studies highlight the various ways that language is used to limit the very ways people are able to imagine order, or even the function of processes for different groups and bodies.

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So You Think You're Ready to Build New Social Justice Initiatives?: Intentional and Coalitional Pro-Black Programmatic and Organizational Leadership in Writing Studies

Natasha N. Jones, Laura Gonzales, and Angela M. Haas

Social justice initiatives require the same amount of (if not more) care than any other research project or activity we undertake. Treating social justice efforts without care is white supremacist and upholds anti-Black racism and misogyny, as doing anti-racist work in the academy is regularly and disproportionately delegated to Black women without appropriate institutional support, recognition, and compensation. Drawing on our organizational leadership experiences, we present a framework for intentional and coalitional pro-Black programmatic and organizational work in writing studies. We posit that making anti-racist organizational change requires a pro-Black ethic of community and care, deep engagement with Black Feminist research, and pro-Black praxis of "doing the work"—which requires fostering honest conversations and building tangible, sustainable commitments to the Black people in our community.

Toward a Pro-Black Ethic of Community and Care

Recent racial uprisings in response to the state-sanctioned murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many other Black people in the U.S., accelerate attention to the longstanding, dire need for anti-racist action in all facets of academia, including writing studies programs and organizations. In response, many organizations and programs (in writing studies and beyond) published statements that condemned racism and/or committed to "avoiding racism" or working toward anti-racist praxis. Although these statements name "racism," they often do so without directly addressing anti-Blackness, white supremacy, and their violent social, economic, political, and community impacts. If programs and organizations want to support our Black colleagues and communities, we must move beyond statements toward coalitional, pro-Black praxis.

Anti-Blackness permeates all communities, including writing studies communities and non-Black communities of color. Releasing statements and making promises for anti-racist change while simultaneously erasing the very anti-Black exigencies that led to the statements in the first place—

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by ignoring, forgetting, or otherwise failing to name anti-Blackness and its white supremacist roots—participates in anti-Blackness.

How do Black lives matter in our writing studies communities? Education scholar Bettina L. Love (2019) writes, "for dark people, the very basic idea of mattering is hard to conceptualize when your country finds you disposable" (p. 2). For writing studies organizations and programs, the first step, then, is to not position Black people as disposable to or in our work. With all the expertise in cultural rhetorics, usability studies, transfer and uptake, and more in writing studies, we can do better and more to develop and grow a pro-Black ethic of care that works toward ensuring that no one in our community feels disposable. This effort requires everyone in our communities, and not just Black people or other people of color, to take up the work of redressing anti-Blackness.

A pro-Black ethic of community and care understands that there is no anti-racist future in our world, much less our organizations and programs, without the liberation of Black women, trans and non-binary folx, femmes, and other marginalized Black identities. In "A Black Feminist Statement," the Combahee River Collective (1977) makes clear that until the world focuses on the freedom of Black people, and Black women specifically, "racism" writ large cannot be addressed: "if Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (p. 215). Thus, a pro-Black ethic of care understands that none of us are truly free until Black women are free—and that true liberation doesn't come from reforming systems, institutions, programs, and organizations designed by (predominantly) white people for (predominantly) white people. Instead, taking a note from Afrofuturist epistemologies, we must work together to imagine new, justice-driven approaches to institutional leadership structures. This means necessarily challenging institutional structures as they currently exist.

It makes sense, then, that a pro-Black ethic of community and care requires that we center Black experiences, knowledges, and perspectives in and beyond the work we do in writing studies. McKoy et al. (2020) define Black technical and professional communication (TPC) as "including practices centered on Black community and culture and on rhetorical practices inherent in Black lived experience. Black TPC reflects the cultural, economic, social, and political experiences of Black people across the Diaspora. It also includes the work of scholars in the academy and the contributions of practitioners" (n.p.). Centralizing and amplifying the needs and voices of Black scholars is just the start, though. We must also work in and beyond

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writing studies on redressing anti-Blackness and calling anti-Black racism by name.

To do this work, coalitions are important, as redressing anti-Blackness in academic programs, professional organizations, and beyond should always be the responsibility of *all* community members. Diversity and inclusion work, and anti-racist work more specifically, is a community responsibility and should not be outsourced to a single committee in a department or organization. As Jones (2020) explains, "Coalitional learning can emphasize the justice work across disciplines and across-justice-related interventions that we develop to address intersectional oppressions based on race, gender, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, and more" (p. 517). As writing studies scholar-teachers work to reaffirm commitments to being an anti-racist, and specifically pro-Black, it's important to build coalitions of community and care that centralize the desires and experiences of those most oppressed—Black communities, and in particular, Black women. This means that non-Black members of our organizations need to look beyond their own needs and desires for our organizations, and think beyond "how we've always done things" or how things have always been to "how can we do better" and how can we reimagine our organizations.

No Anti-Racist Action Can Happen Without Engaging with Black Feminist Research

While many are just coming to terms with the need to engage in anti-racist praxis, it's important to remember that Black women have spent their lives researching and built their careers publishing their scholarship on anti-racist and pro-Black approaches to teaching, literacy, and writing studies for decades (Love, 2013; Royster, 1996; Richardson, 2003; Smitherman, 1997). Given this, it's arrogant, at best, and violent, at worst, to assume we can prepare our programs and organizations to engage in anti-racist work in a few short days or weeks or even months.. It's not enough to listen to a Kendi lecture and then skip straight to the task force. It's not enough to read a book, build or join a book club, or invite a Black scholar to guest lecture.

Instead, it's important to ask: What expertise do I/we actually have in doing anti-racist work? What expertise do we need in order to address the anti-Blackness that has been present in our program or organization from the start? Anti-racist work, and more specifically pro-Black and liberatory work, should be preceded by the necessary research to do said work. Just as it is common practice to start new research projects by engaging deeply with the literature in the specific area of study, refining key concepts, devel-

oping a methodology, and establishing frameworks for coding, analysis, and assessment, so too must this long-established trajectory apply to anti-racist research, programming, and practice in our profession.

When Black scholars are invited to contribute their expertise to our organizations, institutions, and programs, it's also important for these institutions to do the work to ensure that events, lectures, and projects will not perpetuate anti-Black racism. For example, how are Q&A sessions being facilitated at these workshops and conferences? What infrastructures can be put in place so that experts sharing their work are not exposed to micro-aggressions in the form of "well meaning" or "devil's advocate" questions? When we think about providing compensation for guest lecturers, it's important to compensate Black scholars not only for the time spent delivering and preparing a lecture, but also for the emotional labor that they undertake to share their experiences in spaces that continue being white-supremacist. These are just a few of the considerations that organizations, institutions, and programs can account for when working to redress anti-Black racism beyond posturing and performing.

Doing (and Not Just Performing) the Work

In academia and in all facets of society, Black folx are policed through white-supremacist processes and protocols established under the guise of neutrality (Baéz & Ore, 2018; Kynard, 2015). For example, Black instructors are consistently policed through settler colonial heteropatriarchal infrastructures like student evaluations and faculty promotion and ranking systems that code Black faculty as "angry," "loud," and "aggressive." These same systems that sponsor anti-Black surveillance and bureaucracy are now being mobilized to supposedly address racism and anti-Blackness by way of forming diversity & inclusion committees and anti-racist taskforces, distributing anonymous surveys, and facilitating "listening" sessions—all of which often puts more labor on already-marginalized students and faculty. Instead of building these initiatives within the same institutions of power while maintaining the same systems of power, white and non-Black POC can further advocate for Black faculty, students, and staff by leveraging personal and coalitional privilege and power in material, tangible ways.

So, what does doing anti-racist work entail for writing studies?

- **It must be coalitional**, engaging diverse stakeholders and community members across ranks, as well as across the organization, department, or program.
- **It must be reflective and reflexive**, allowing community members to reflect on ways that they are complicit and/or resistant to anti-Blackness and providing spaces to redress injustices and complicity.

It's also important to acknowledge the role that not only white people, but also non-Black people of color, can play in upholding anti-Blackness. The fact is, the closer a person aligns with whiteness, whether in appearance, ideologies, and/or actions, the better the chance they will be welcomed and included in academic institutions and organizations. Thus, it is the responsibility of non-Black POC to work intentionally to redress anti-Blackness and combat white supremacy (Black Latinas Know Collective, 2020).

- **It must be pro-Black and intersectional**, which includes: rejecting the re-centering of whiteness and other non-Black experience; acknowledging not just the ways in which our positionality may marginalize us, but also the ways in which it positions us in relation to power and privilege (and whiteness); and recognizing how positionality, privilege, and power change in relation to proximity to place and space and impact an individual's margin of maneuverability (Walton, Moore, Jones, 2019).
- **It must be iterative**, insisting that community members continually gauge how actions, policies, and procedures can better resist anti-Blackness. When an action, policy, or procedure no longer serves a community, it should be done away with, rather than adhering to "tradition" or the status quo.
- **It must be sustainable and permanent**, rather than *ad hoc* or in the moment, with an explicit anti-racist and pro-Black commitment in values and practice from leadership and broader department, program, or organization community.
- **It must grapple with power dynamics**, acknowledging (recognizing) the ways that positionality and privilege may silence and overlook certain groups. Community members must work to reject and dismantle policy and procedures that silence and marginalize and replace these systems with more transparent and open means of engagement, providing protection to those who are less privileged and inhabit more precarious positionalities (Walton, Moore, Jones, 2019).
- **It must not rely on labor from Black colleagues and community members** and instead harness the labor of those with more privilege and power. If Black colleagues and community members are called upon to help, this labor should not be considered obligatory and must be recognized, valued, and compensated.
- **It must be transformative**, meaning that working against anti-Black racism and oppression must permeate every aspect of the work of the organization, department, or program. This work must be evident in policies, procedures, hiring, curriculum, service, research, interper-

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sonal relationships, and professional development. In addition, strategic plans and objectives must be imbued with anti-racist values and meaningful outcomes. The culture of the organization, department, or program must be transformed to engage in anti-racist and pro-Black work.

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Flourishing as Anti-Racist Praxis: "An Uncompromised Commitment" to Black Writing Tutors

Zandra L. Jordan

Until a problem arises, we may be unaware that our well-intentioned tutor training practices expose some tutors to harm. This does not mean, however, that we are helpless until a trauma occurs that reveals the need for change. A proactive commitment to identifying and redressing policies that enable some trainees to thrive while others flounder can help us ensure that all tutors have equal opportunity to flourish. This is the commitment that I made after discovering an emerging pattern among Black women writing tutors attempting to enact a longstanding practice for tutors-in-training.

The practice, established prior to my appointment as director of a PWI writing and speaking center, requires prospective writing tutors enrolled in a training seminar to complete "tutor takeovers." Peer and graduate writing tutor trainees show up for already scheduled writing tutorials and ask the student for permission to facilitate the session in the veteran tutor's stead.

Thankfully, for most tutors-in-training, tutor takeovers have been positive experiences. As observed in their weekly reflections, by in large they feel more empowered as novice tutors, having applied their burgeoning knowledge and reaped in turn growing confidence in their abilities. Additionally, the veteran tutor who remains in the session can offer advice and encouragement to trainees often trying out for the first time the principles that they have learned. Despite these benefits, it is also the case that tutor takeovers presume the absence of bias and the presence of good will—this is a dangerous assumption.

Whereas students have readily welcomed white trainees into sessions and trusted them with their writing needs, Black women tutors do not always experience the same welcome and presumption of competence. From my office, I have overheard trainees in the hallway making their appeals to takeover tutorials. Regrettably, some Black women tutors are not granted admission as swiftly as their counterparts. After an initial failed attempt, they linger outside of tutoring rooms, waiting for another opportunity to repeat their appeal or, having been rejected and unable to wait for the next tutee to arrive, they try again another day.

In the end, all trainees succeed in completing the assignment, but I am troubled by this emerging pattern of aggression toward Black women writing tutors that the structure of tutor takeovers allows. In the most egregious instance, a white male tutee permitted a Black woman trainee to facilitate

the tutorial and then, with seeming malicious intent, proceeded to belittle her at every turn. He ridiculed her questions, dismissed her suggestions, and denied the virtue of her approaches. Utterly demoralized, the highly qualified Black doctoral student, who was strongly recommended and had substantial prior writing tutoring experience, contemplated quitting. As she relayed the ordeal, she astutely recognized that the student's hostility and denial of her abilities was in response to her race, gender, and status as a Black woman trainee. When reflecting upon the experience in her weekly seminar journal, she posed this poignant question: "What does it mean to guide individuals through any academic endeavor who recognize you as a visible body in a space while simultaneously deeming you as invisible by negating your competence, experience, and training?"

The trainee's takeover experience and subsequent question has spurred my own critical consideration of flourishing as anti-racist praxis. As much as I would like to believe that the violence she endured was aberrant, as a Black woman WPA I know better. Like Kynard who writes powerfully about her positionality as a Black WPA and the "psychological assaults of working with those committed to the demise of the black body" (38), I know firsthand that such encounters are all too common for Black women in the academy, having suffered microaggressions of my own over the years and consoled both students and colleagues experiencing the same. And while the degree to which offenders consciously inflict harm varies, the outcome for Black women is still one of violent "erasure." Bailey and Trudy reference this phenomenon in their discussion of *misogynoir*—disdain for Black womanhood that perpetrates violence against Black women (763–64; Trudy). Although Bailey first coined the term and Trudy theorized its function, others have appropriated *misogynoir* without due attribution (763–64). The refusal to credit Bailey and Trudy respectively for the "creation and proliferation" of the term and failure to cite their contributions is an "erasure" of their originating work (762, 765) and an example of the "anti-Black racist misogyny" that misogynoir names. The point I hope to make here is Black women tutors are vulnerable to both misogynoir and erasure in the writing center, just as they are in other "interpersonal, social, and institutional" contexts (763). As WPAs diversify their tutoring staff, it is also incumbent upon us to take up the decolonial project of negating Black women tutors' erasure and protecting their flourishing. I use the word decolonize to acknowledge the ways in which tutor takeovers rely upon a colonial embodiment of white privilege that disadvantages Black women.

In decolonizing the tutor takeover, I embrace the womanist commitment to Black flourishing exemplified in Rev. Dr. Gina M. Stewart's sermon, "An Uncompromised Commitment." Stewart's exegesis of the Old

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Testament narrative of Shiphrah and Puah (*Bible Gateway*, Ex. 1.15–21), midwives ordered to kill every male child born to Hebrew women, subverts their erasure in biblical proclamation and illuminates their central role in resisting oppression. Stewart explains, Scripture often reflects patriarchal societies of the time; therefore, when women appear in biblical texts they are typically "background" characters, "extras in the story" and very rarely "the stars," but Shiphrah and Puah deserve recognition for their refusal to carry out the king's infanticide edict. Their reverence for God saved a nation and paved the way for later figures, like Moses, whom God used to deliver the Israelites from bondage. In essence, Shiphrah and Puah valued the higher calling of midwifery—ushering new life into the world—above the demands of empire that denied the women's personhood and exploited their labor. Stewart challenges her listeners to act like the midwives, to embrace the ethical responsibility to preserve life by intervening in systemic oppression. Midwifery becomes a metaphor for disrupting institutional policies and practices that delimit or altogether deprive marginalized people of the right to flourish, to grow and develop in a world that cultivates and celebrates, rather than erases, their existence.

I am calling on WPAs to make a commitment to Black women tutors' flourishing by interrogating taken-for-granted policies and replacing them with practices that position Black women tutors to flourish. This is a serious matter deserving of our ongoing attention. To hire more racially diverse tutors without also critiquing our practices is to deny the ubiquity of racism and its deleterious effects. That denial can result in de facto tokenism, dismissal of Black women's presence and voice (Kynard 33) even as we benefit from the diversity they add to our rosters. Of course, we cannot prevent every racist encounter, but we can at least begin with the structures we impose and can also encourage and support Black women tutors' own "proactive mechanisms of resistance," such as "celebration" of Black culture and language, cultivation of Black "joy" in the midst of an increasingly anti-Black world, and prioritization of "self-care" that preserves Black women's spirit and well-being (Marshall Turman). Measures like these can help Black women tutors enjoy the greatest degree of "freedom, justice, and equality" (Floyd-Thomas 11) as valued members of our centers.

The first opportunity to decolonize tutor takeovers occurred when the COVID-19 pandemic forced our primarily face-to-face tutoring center fully online. The shift to remote tutoring was an apropos time to begin reimagining the old practice which was incompatible with online learning. In lieu of takeovers, trainees tutored one another and also took their own writing to our virtual center for tutoring. After each session with a veteran tutor, the tutors-in-training were asked to reflect upon the following:

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Jordan / Flourishing as Anti-Racist Praxis

- How the tutoring session enacts particular ideas or practices from our readings and class discussions
- The ratio of tutee to tutor talk
- How the tutor instructs the tutee, providing writing rules or explaining how or what to revise or add
- How the tutor asks guiding questions, reads aloud (or invites the tutee to read), or puts herself in the position of a typical reader
- Ways in which identity and discourse are reflected in tutor and/or tutee talk, in attitudes about language and/or genre expectations, or in other aspects of tutoring
- Opportunities taken or missed for engaging race or other differences meaningfully
- How the tutor offers praise, shows concern or sympathy, or confirms the tutee's ownership over their writing
- Nonverbal (body language) and verbal communication of the tutor and the tutee's reception

Since our training curriculum centers "race and other matters of difference and inclusion" (Jordan), these prompts invite all tutors to critically examine racialized tutoring politics. From the vantage point of a tutee preparing to become a tutor, they can observe and question how race(ism) functions in tutoring and interrogate what those observations mean for their own praxis. Similar to García who envisions tutors as "decolonial agents," "theorists of race and racism" with the ability to "transform" the writing center (49), I understand tutors as participating in a "reciprocal exchange of ideas" that holds the "possibility" for intra- and interpersonal "change" (Jordan). To do this work, tutors need to develop a "critical awareness of writing tutoring as a site of resistance" (Jordan); the new practice of taking one's own writing to the Center for tutoring and reflecting critically upon the interaction is one important part of this process.

While it is too soon to determine the full impact of this change, especially given the many difficulties and disruptions that the pandemic and rapid move to online tutoring caused, I am optimistic that the new practice, alongside peer-to-peer tutoring, discussion of video recorded tutorials, and interactive tutoring scenarios during the training seminar, better positions Black women for flourishing like their counterparts. The new structure does not make them the unsuspecting prey of interlocutors who do not share our Center's value for all bodies but admittedly also does not entirely remove the challenge of encountering someone who devalues their embodiment. They could face a writer who questions their credibility and resists their support, as a Black woman undergraduate writing tutor in her first

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quarter of tutoring shared with me. I scheduled an individual meeting with her to inquire about her joy during a particularly tumultuous time in the quarter. All things considered—pandemic, protests, political upheaval—she was thriving as a tutor. Despite encountering a writer whose distrust of her advice and dismissive behavior made her feel as her fellow Black woman graduate writing tutor did, "invisible," she was not defeated by the experience. Her understanding of the writing center as a site where racism and white supremacy are contested emboldened her resolve to continue on.

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What James Baldwin Taught Me About WPA Work

Trent M. Kays

I include James Baldwin's work in all my first-year writing courses. I have done so since I first began teaching as a MA student. I did not read any of Baldwin's work before I attended college, and my introduction to his essays was couched between the work of two critical pedagogues: Paulo Freire and bell hooks. I took a course on composition theory, and, at the time, my professor suggested that reading Baldwin was necessary to understanding the practice of critical pedagogy and not only the theory of it. As a college professor and critical pedagogue now, I am unsure if I fully agree with my former professor's suggestion, but I do understand what he meant. I do not think one needs to read Baldwin to fully articulate critical pedagogy, though it might be useful. The multifaceted nature of Baldwin's writing, character, and life show that one can both *practice* critical pedagogy and *live* critical pedagogy. To *practice* critical pedagogy is to consciously consider it, while to *live* critical pedagogy is to make it integral to one's very existence. To practice and to live are two different actions, and, given the vagaries of contemporary analog and digital life, students desperately need to understand the difference.

As a writing program administrator, I am first a teacher. In assigning Baldwin's work in my first-year writing courses, I noticed that some students do not understand the reality of his work and how it speaks directly to white supremacy. For some students, white supremacy is an illness of past generations and societies. Within the classroom, the most useful strategy is to create opportunities to understand and produce knowledge that challenges prevalent power structures (Freire 29–32). Baldwin's work forces students to acknowledge not only their own ignorance but also their own preconceived ideas of reality. For example, a short essay my students find illuminating is Baldwin's "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?" In the essay, Baldwin argues that "Language, incontestably, reveals the speaker. Language, also, far more dubiously, is meant to define the other–and, in this case, the other is refusing to be defined by a language that has never been able to recognize him."

My students enjoy reading and analyzing Baldwin's "Black English" essay because it challenges them to understand the role of language inside and outside the classroom. While rote memorization, grammatical study, and literary text once dominated the first-year writing classroom, contemporary writing pedagogy values the process of writing rather than the

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product of writing (Berlin; Crowley; Miller). This is what makes Baldwin so identifiable to students: They are learning about the role of language in their lives while Baldwin wrote about the role of language in his life. Students can partly identify with his perspective. To many students, the idea of dialect and vernacular is not foreign. They recognize that people from different backgrounds speak and write in different ways; however, students often do not recognize the inherent value in speaking and writing through their lived dialect nor do they recognize the outcome of when some are denied the opportunity to speak and write through a lived dialect.

Most useful to students is Baldwin's directness. He does not dance around a topic for the benefit of his audience. Instead, Baldwin articulates a vision of the world that is dangerous, violent, and hateful. Yet, he leaves his readers with a small sense of hope because it is through critique that humans can make the world a better place. There is often a sense of unwillingness to confront issues that are difficult or sensitive because of the perceived uncontrollable outcome of such conversations (hooks 39–41). Passion can overwhelm students and affect behavior or interaction. But, bell hooks argues that it is necessary for such passion to occur. It is through this learning that students can better understand the multiculturalism that can help confront white supremacy and change the boundaries of knowledge within the classroom (44).

In many first-year writing curricula, students are asked to write and respond to assignment prompts. Depending on the instructor, such prompts may or may not be abstract; however, I have always found that with a clear focus on identifying and dismantling white supremacy in the classroom, students are provided an opportunity to use the space of the classroom to create a world of understanding. Language creates space and space is social in nature (Lefebvre 130–133). Through the social space of the classroom, instructors and students can confront white supremacy in thinking, writing, and curriculum. Instructors can create a social space, a space for dissent, and a democratic space in which students can work toward an understanding of the pervasiveness of white supremacy within contemporary society. It is in this type of space that students can become fully aware of the world they inhabit. Baldwin sums up this point in his "Talk to Teachers": "one of the paradoxes of education was that precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society. It is your responsibility to change society if you think of yourself as an educated person" (685).

Within the classroom, instructors can assign almost anything that advances the learning outcomes of the course. The culture of the curriculum within the classroom becomes uniquely important because it drives the

use of and exploration of language. The curriculum and assessment of writing feeds into the power structures of the classroom, department, college, and overall university (Ball 370–79). Power structures are at the heart of Baldwin's writing and at the heart of the work of writing program administrators. In challenging power structures, writing program administrators find themselves in odd circumstances. Where Baldwin might attack such structures directly, writing program administrators might need to take a more covert approach. Still, there is much to be learned from Baldwin's focus on language and how it encourages or discourages us to create spaces of learning that confront white supremacy.

It is Baldwin's directness that writing program administrators should consider. Covert approaches to confronting white supremacy include tweaking curriculum to give stronger support to the cultural considerations of language. As a writing program administrator, I have a more global view of what happens in first-year writing classrooms. I review syllabi, course sheets, reading lists, textbook selections, and perform regular assessment. The space I inhabit as an administrator provides me with an incremental view of change within first-year writing curriculum. As a critical pedagogue, I want change now. I want action. I want movement. However, as a writing program administrator, I recognize that change is sometimes slow and significant action is often tepid. Such things do happen, but institutions are incapable of love and oft incapable of quick response to curriculum issues. Still, change does happen.

Baldwin's view to the world helps me strategize how to approach antiracist work within writing curriculum and assessment. I characterize his approach in three parts: 1. A directness to purpose; 2. An acknowledgement of harm; and 3. A belief in change. The goal of any pedagogy should be inclusiveness and a clear practice toward working for something better. The prevalence of white supremacist language and practices both inside and outside higher education shows that there is tremendous work to be done. James Baldwin taught me that, as a writing program administrator, it is my duty to help students recognize the role of language in white supremacy and to help faculty understand the imperative to address such roles in the classroom and reconsider the brutal necessity of language in confronting the ills of the world.

Small changes to curriculum can have an enormous impact. Encouraging instructors to include more diverse readings or suggesting specific readings that confront white supremacy is a first step. Writing program administrators can create reading lists for faculty, and they can plan workshop series that address white supremacy and writing curriculum. These are both direct and simple actions that can inject antiracist pedagogy and thinking

into teaching and curriculum. While I might personally favor more dramatic action, I must recognize that other faculty members require time to acknowledge the need for change. Incorporating Baldwin's work into the classroom and encouraging other faculty members to use his work is an easy step to do so.

James Baldwin's work is not the only work a WPA might consider in laboring toward freeing curriculum of white supremacy. I am drawn to Baldwin's work for a personal reason: his queerness. Baldwin so expertly separated his identities as a civil rights essayist and as a queer fiction author that one might not even know he was queer if only reading his nonfiction work. I find this separation familiar and, in some ways, akin to the separation between a faculty member and a WPA faculty member. It is true that the separation is not as stark as Baldwin's, but, as a first-generation queer academic, I am acutely aware of such a separation because I have spent parts of my career navigating between various and, sometimes, contradictory identities. In pondering the navigations of their own identities and the work of fighting white supremacy in curriculum, WPAs might read in more depth Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Paulo Freire, Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, James Boggs, and Grace Lee Boggs. These are a few teachers and activists whose work finds a place when I consider how first-year writing curriculum can be revised to better suit 21st century thinking and antiracist pedagogical work.

I draw inspiration from both teachers and activists for one reason: Writing program administration is pedagogical activism. To be a WPA in a world increasingly hostile to higher education and learning, one must be an activist. To work for change, to inspire, to aid, and to love are all pedagogically sound ideas, and all are necessary in writing program administration.

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Am I The Problem?

James Eubanks

For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.
They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game,
but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.

—Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dis-
mantle the Master's House" (99)

Whiteness has a way of permeating everything in academia. This is a notion that becomes clearer and clearer when you are Black in an English department in the South. To get to the English building, which until very recently was named after a segregationist Confederate general who was also a Grand Dragon in the Klan, I had to walk past locations where the slaves slept outdoors, or past a secluded monument that served as the University's official apology for its perpetuation of slavery. Whiteness was present in the way that the faculty often mistook me for one of the other two Black men in the department. Whiteness was there in the lukewarm reaction by the department and University to racism or discrimination in the classroom and beyond that made existing as a graduate student much more difficult.

Once, I said as much in a meeting on diversity on the eve of a white supremacist coming to campus to speak.

"We talk, and never do anything," I said.

I was told by a white peer that this time would be different.

It was not different.

It was that lack of support, coupled with considerations about professionalization that made spending a year as the department's graduate student WPA an attractive proposition. I was a teacher and a student who was affected by these issues of racism and also the fallout that was wrought by the subsequent inattentiveness of the people who were supposed to support us. I saw WPA work as a chance to build a more inclusive and supportive department, not just for me and my peers, but for the students of color in our composition courses, who also needed support.

I finished my year as a WPA generally feeling good about my time in the position. I would like to think that everyone else feels the same way. I learned a lot about the type of administrator I would like to be. But with the benefit of time, distance, and hindsight, I often wonder if I did enough. I had moments where I was one of those people whose motivations I was vocally critical of. Everyone means well and says the right things, but the

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talks about systems and hierarchies ultimately serve to pass the buck to someone higher-placed in that system. I did the same at times, almost without realizing. I give myself some grace, of course. I am a Black graduate student; I acknowledge that perhaps the odds were against me in terms of enacting all the changes I wanted to see. There is always a professional danger in being Black and possessing the temerity to speak out of turn. I was there as a WPA and my peers-of-color were demanding the same things of the administration that I had before I was a WPA, and I found myself trotting out the same sort of excuses that administration always did. "Things are moving behind the scenes," or, "we are working hard on a few things." And some things moved for the better, but I wonder still, had I just become part of the problem in the end? I was an administrator, with influence and things did not fundamentally change. That's the hardest part, I think. The fact that I'll wonder about whether or not I should have pushed harder for more change, faster change, will always stay with me.

I think about what I gained from my time as a WPA. I know how things move in administration. And I found that afterwards I was much more effective and tangibly successful as a student activist as a result of that knowledge. I have played a hand in creating lasting changes for the students who look like me, who will come after me. I founded a Caucus with a paid stipend for a graduate student coordinator, a position that will be there to advocate for teachers of color in the department long after I'm gone. And I know that it will because my time as a WPA taught me to get things codified so they are not subject to the winds of change or administrative capriciousness. That's a big thing. But it stirred up that old worry that I could have accomplished much more when I was an administrator. But, I know the type of administrator that I want to be, if I ever have the chance again.

But I'm left wondering, where can I be my true self? Am I more effective on the outside, or can I be more helpful working within the constraints of a system? And that leads me to wonder how many white WPAs are having to grapple with these questions. Then I think, as I often do when making decisions in academic contexts, of the students who will inhabit these spaces after me, and my choice is clear. I still want to be a WPA because this work for equality for students, teachers of color, for all oppressed people who come under the umbrella of a writing program has to be done.

I was part of the problem before; I won't be again.

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Anti-Racist Leadership and Representation

Why So Few of US: Addressing Larger Issues of Systemic Exclusions That Limit the Numbers of Black Writing Program Administrators

Sheila Carter-Tod

It is impossible to begin to quantify the trauma of the current national racial unrest.[1] Such unprecedented upsurges in accounts and coverage of racial violence both on and off campuses, in the past five to seven years,[2] have had multiple direct and indirect implications for students, faculty and Writing Program Administrators (WPAs). There have been a range of disciplinary-based responses from letters, panels and position statements to teach-ins, videos and resources designed to address anti-racist program-matic and larger institutional practices. Within these efforts many WPAs have evaluated the roles that race and racialized curriculum play in re-inscribing existing systems of white privilege. Yet, in the midst of all of these attempts at creating equitable learning spaces for students, few have considered the inequitable systems that exist for Black faculty as well as other faculty of color (FOC)[3] coming to and through institutions of higher education. When we consider the gradual attrition of Blacks from graduate study, to being hired to faculty appointments, to being tenured and pro-moted, and ultimately to being selected for administrative appointments, it becomes clear why there is a need for, as Staci Perryman-Clark (2016) put it, "interrogating how whiteness functions institutionally" (25). It is through first acknowledging, and then changing these inequitable systemic practices that real sustainable change can be made towards better disciplin-ary racial equity.

In this piece I examine two specific structural challenges faced by Black faculty. Racist practices implicit and perpetuated in hiring practices and racialized practices in the creation, and epistemological exclusion that hap-pens through the selection and evaluation of research/scholarly material are but two of the factors that clearly contribute to why there are so few of us Black WPAs. While these are only two practices of many designed to maintain majority structures of power, in exploring them, I seek to shed light on what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2015) called "the white inno-cence game.[4] Within this "game" lies the false assumption that disciplin-ary or institutional practices are somehow either isolated or neutral. When

this assumption is challenged by those experiencing discrimination, it becomes the individual's burden to describe, educate or change instead of casting the gaze more broadly to question discriminatory racialized practices systemically.

Our Limited Statistics

If we consider the statistics of Black faculty who enter, matriculate through post baccalaureate programs, and earn doctorate degrees, we begin with somewhat diminished numbers. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2018) reports that students of color (SOC) make up roughly 12%[5] of earned doctorates. When we further focus this investigation to consider Black faculty, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2018) reports that of all full-time faculty, in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, only three percent were Black males and three percent Black females. Even though there are more and more situations where WPAs are hired at various levels, when these statistics are examined in terms of traditional academic ranks, the percentages are equally as few with 73% white and 10% Black assistant professors, which then is reduced to 4% Black full professors—compared to 80% white full professors. These statistics simply give numbers for what we already know, and that is that the majority of institutions of higher education are made up of significantly larger numbers of white faculty than Black. This explains statistically why there are so few of us, but what it does not fully explain is why these statistics have been the same since 2011, while the statistics of Blacks students enrolled in and graduating from graduate programs have slowly increased.

Hiring Practices

One possible explanation for no real statistical change in Black faculty in institutions of higher education is the range of systemic discriminatory hiring practices cloaked in language like "fit" or "a lack of qualified applicants." There are many studies that have explored systemic discriminatory hiring practices. In their article, "'We Are All for Diversity, but . . . ': How Faculty Hiring Committees Reproduce Whiteness and Practical Suggestions for How They Can Change," Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAanglo (2017) examined how the stages of the academic search process are "illustrative [of] practices that serve to block greater diversification of academic units. They conclude that these practices protect the inherent Whiteness of HWCUs." In his article "The Facade of Fit in Faculty Search Processes," Damani K. White-Lewis (2020) explored the concept of "fit" which is often used to describe why one faculty member is chosen over another, in a hiring

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situation. They conclude that "the use of the term fit is problematic for two reasons: (1) its application to understanding and justifying hiring decisions is severely overstated, and (2) it obscures the abundance of idiosyncratic preferences throughout the entire hiring process, which perpetuate racial aversion, neutrality, and convenience" (850). Additionally, Ash, Hill, Risdon, et al. (2020) discussed the language used to evaluate faculty of color during the hiring process. They explain how "Deficit thinking is found in hiring practices when white administrators use the phrase "a lack of qualified candidates" when referring to people of color . . . Shifting the blame of hiring people of color away from the institution and placing it on people of color and their lack of being qualified . . . " (p. 12). They ultimately call for "shared power across racial lines [with]...all members enlightened to the awareness of systemic racism that has perpetuated systems that marginalize people groups based on race" (p. 23). Because the answers to addressing issues of hiring within institutions of higher education are as rhetorically situated as the culture of the individual institution, there is no "solution" for dismantling the systemic racialized institutional practices that continue to perpetuate existing majority structures. However, one step to addressing these matters lies in a conclusion drawn by Pauline E. Kays when she states that "if search committees are part of the diverse hiring picture, diversification of faculty . . . cannot occur without their eyes being opened to the various biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that influence their perceptions and judgments" (p. 69).

While many universities have checks and balances for hiring practices to make them more equitable, the issue described above, while systemic, can be basically viewed as the judgement of individuals who assume that the language used and decisions made are somehow neutral. Faculty often say that they are following the "regular," "normal," or "traditional" hiring procedures. Conducting searches in the ways that they have always done. Or committee members treat having attended their diversity training workshop as if it is an inoculation against discriminatory practices of the normal hiring process or against their own racialized idiosyncratic preferences. Unless consciously addressed directly, by each individual institution, by each individual search committee member, for each individual search, this false assumption of neutrality will mean hiring practices will continue to be systematic barriers to greater numbers of Black scholars entering institutions of higher education.

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Epistemological Exclusion

Directly related to hiring practices, because in the hiring process candidates are judged by their scholarly activities, is the concept of what is valued in terms of scholarship and knowledge and what is not. For many African-American faculty members, there is often a battle to have scholarship on race and/or scholarship that utilizes non-traditional research methods, structures for reporting, and/or publication venues recognized as legitimate. When we choose to engage in research subjects or use "nontraditional" methodologies that are empowering and transformational for ourselves and our communities, our work and chosen publication venues are structurally and systematically questioned and often devalued.

This experience of having one's scholarship questioned, devalued or even deemed illegitimate by members of the academy is known as epistemological exclusion,[6] and the work involved defending one's credibility and/or scholarship is a form of invisible labor for FOC that is particularly pernicious. In "Epistemic Exclusion: Scholar(ly) Devaluation That Marginalizes Faculty of Color," a "study [that] investigates the multiple ways in which epistemic exclusion occurs, as well as identifies some of the ways in which it creates negative outcomes for faculty of color," Settles, Jones, Buchanan, and Dotson (2020) describe the foundations of epistemological exclusion as "racial prejudice toward FOC who are viewed as illegitimate and without credibility as scholars. This is based in stereotypes of Black, Latinx, and Native Americans as unintelligent, lazy, and getting unearned advantages" (2). The insidious nature of epistemological exclusion is that it impacts all aspects of Black faculty's experiences in higher education from choices about subjects and approaches to research in graduate programs to hiring committees' evaluation of publication types and venues (as earlier mentioned often described in language of deficit), to internal and external reviews of scholarship in tenure and promotion.

Because epistemological exclusion is so tightly ingrained in the structure of higher education, Settles, Jones, Buchanan, and Dotson (2020) suggest that there is a two-part solution. One part is to review disciplinary biased and racialized practices. Next, with a great awareness of epistemic exclusionary practices,

> institutions can then work to shift their disciplinary and institutional norms and values, and subsequently their policies and practices. Institutions can make explicit the value and contribution made by scholarship on marginalized groups, communities, and global populations and acknowledge how scholarship that addresses social problems is

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core to the mission of higher education. Doing so would then neces-
sitate a shift in policies and practices, particularly those concerning
performance reviews, tenure, and promotion. (p. 12)

While some journals in writing studies, rhetoric and writing, and writ-
ing program administration have been working to disrupt disciplinary
biased and racialized publication practices there is still such a long way to
go. Accepting a few non-traditional, or racially-based publications does not
change the ongoing perception that this work is either not or not equally
as "scholarly" as what has been established as the "tradition." What needs
to be done, articulated in the CCCC Black Technical and Professional
Communication Position Statement is the disruption of practices of episte-
mological exclusion by "advocating for their [Black Scholars] inclusion in
the body of mainstream disciplinary literature; and carving out the meth-
odological, theoretical, and practical space that will enable other Black
scholars in the field to see and do such work (https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/
black-technical-professional-communication). This concept was further
developed by Cecilia Shelton, in a Black Technical and Professional Com-
munication panel, where she advocates what she calls a techné of marginal-
ity which she describes as:

> a methodological framework that through its notions of work and
> workplace, expands the field of vision for technical communicators
> [and I would add more broadly scholars in writing studies, rhetoric
> and writing, and writing program administration] solving twenty-
> first century problems, and embraces cultural rhetorical practices as
> valuable ways of knowing and doing . . . .A techné of marginality . . .
> offers theoretical and methodological resources . . . to move beyond
> cultural awareness and even cultural competence toward the integra-
> tion of cultural . . . .[It] is more than a collection of topical inquiries
> into issues affecting Black people [but also includes] doing theoreti-
> cal, methodological and pedagogical work . . . . So that work like
> ours that has been excluded in the past, can be centered and ampli-
> fied moving forward. (1:30 PM Eastern [0:43:44] transcript https://
> vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/101571/BlackTech-
> Comm%20Transcript.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y)

Conclusion

In 2019, as part of the *WPA: Writing Program Administration* forty-year
reflection, I wrote a piece that reviewed the journal's publications on or
about race, gender, ability, language diversity, and sexual orientation. I
ended that piece by stating that "there are still gaps in inclusivity—little has

been published that directly explores the intersections of . . . the racialized assumptions pervasive in WPA work and perspectives of WPAs of color" (102). In reflection, I would correct my concluding statement to not only focus on addressing the gaps in the research and perspective of WPAs of color but also to more broadly focus on systemic racial practices..

NOTES

1. The documented dehumanizing, traumatizing, and even lethal injustices recently represented by the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd along with the many, many other undocumented accounts, as well as the national and international responses to these events.

2. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education has a running list of Campus Racial Incidents from the present and dating back well before 2014—https://www.jbhe.com/incidents/ Recent Campus Racial Incidents in the News: A Bibliography (Last updated 2016). https://www.du.edu/diversity-inclusion/media/documents/campusracialincidents_bibliography.pdf. See also: "After 2016 election, campus hate crimes seemed to jump. Here's what the data tell us." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/After-2016-Election-Campus/242577. The American Council on Education's "Campus Inclusion and Freedom of Expression: Hateful Incidents on Campus" https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/To-The-Point-Hateful-Incidents.pdf

3. While I am focusing this piece on Black faculty, I am fully aware of the fact that the points that I describe are also true for a range of faculty of color. I address some these issues to more broadly include faculty of color in "Nothing New: Systemic Invisibility, Epistemological Exclusion and Faculty and Administrators of Color," which is forthcoming in the edited volume *Making Administrative Work Visible: Data-Driven Approaches to Understanding the Labor of Writing Program Administration.*

4. According to Bonilla-Silva (2015), "The white innocence game begins with the assumption that these spaces are racially neutral, but that assumption is false! HWCUs were 100% white institutions until very recently and that white history shaped them in profound ways."

5. It is important to note that not all faculty have earned PhDs and also that not all PhDs go into faculty positions. Two other considerations that should be acknowledged is that not all WPA positions are situated as faculty nor are they all in tenure-based trajectories. My goal in these statistics is to provide some sense of the numbers and percentages at various stages of the educational "pipeline."

6. "imported from Black feminist theorists to feminist philosophy, epistemic exclusion questions normative beliefs about what forms of knowledge (epistemol-

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ogy) are valued and which producers of knowledge are deemed legitimate . . . "
(Settles, Jones, Buchanan and Dotson 2).

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The Promise and Perils of a Disciplinary and Organizational Pipeline

Al Harahap

Figure 1. A 2009 Official White House photograph, "Hair Like Mine," shows then-President Barack Obama bending down and 5-year-old visitor Jacob Philadelphia touching his hair. (Photo by Pete Souza)

Barack Obama's 2008 election to the US presidency brought with it a social justice high that inspired marginalized groups with ideas of hope and possibility. Forty-three US presidents, so-called "leaders of the free world," before him had belonged to its dominant racial group of "white people," a category whose social construction and usage rose in line with the nation's own need for "structuration," production, and reproduction of whiteness at the top of the social hierarchy (Guess, 2006), while early in its ideations of power and in the absence of a caste or class system that other societies had long established. Obama's rise to this seat of power became a symbol whose idealistic message insisted that we are a democracy and, no matter

our identities, have the capacity to be fair. Unfortunately, such a romanticization of the moment placed many of us on a plateau of complacency and postracial fantasy.

Of many iconic public media moments during Obama's two-term presidency, one that stands out as perpetuating this narrative was captured early on in White House photographer Pete Souza's iconic 2009 photograph dubbed "Hair Like Mine," in which Obama is bowing down so that 5-year-old Black boy and White House visitor Jacob Philadelphia could touch his hair. Lore quickly built around the picture: The boy wanted to feel if the President's hair was just like his. And we consumers of news media and re-producers who echo these narratives on social media soon projected our own consensus of the event: In a highly unequal system oppressing marginalized groups, the moment is an inspiring one that captures the power of seeing someone who looks like us in a position of power. But how is Jacob Philadelphia to go from this little boy to the heights of the man in front of him, navigate home and social life, personal and professional obstacles, succeed throughout his schooling and career, all within social systems that have been designed to exclude him—i.e., various institutional pipelines?

The widespread use of the pipeline metaphor began in the early 2000s by social scientists to describe the institutional ecology that led to alarming, unjust incarceration rates of Americans of colour, especially of Black Americans, starting with the term *schoolhouse to jailhouse track* (Browne, 2003) and later by an NAACP report using the more popularized term *school-to-prison pipeline* (2005).[1] Although this process has its roots much earlier, in the late 19th century, and arguably as a continuation and mere evolution from the fallout of the US Civil War, into that of attempts to perpetuate racial segregation through Jim Crow laws enforced at sites like separated bus seating, drinking fountains, public restrooms, restaurant dining areas, even socialization and marriage. When these laws were struck down, racial segregation as a social force needed to take on another guise, this time a return to the indentured servitude of slavery but in the acceptable legal structures of a post–Civil War USA.

The pipeline metaphor has since been borrowed and repurposed to describe other social-institutional processes such as the more positive school-to-college pipeline intended as a social safety net to prevent, or better yet to transform, who are perceived as juvenile delinquents and truants at risk of failing out of the intended preparation to be productive contributors to society. In the work of social justice efforts, the more positive pipeline has been used as an ideal process that encourages more accurate demographic representation in positions of authority and power. That is, if the position of the US presidency has mostly been held by able-bodied,

cisgender, publicly heterosexual, white males of Christian faiths, how can we ensure more adequate representation of the US population with more disabled, non-binary, out queer, people of colour, women of other faiths or the non-religious? The same representation project is thus also conducted throughout all levels of political office from the local to the global, as well as in various other spheres including academia and its various guises in college institutional and departmental governance, full-time and tenure-track position systems, journal editorial teams, and conference and organizational representation.

In spring 2013, I was nominated and urged to run for the Council of Writing Program Administrators' (CWPA) relatively new Graduate Organization (WPA-GO) office.[2] Not only was I elected by a graduate student body of around 200, but I was also appointed[3] as the incoming Vice Chair who would in turn take on the Chair position. This position not only came with the burden of being the first WPA-GO Chair of colour, but with it also came access to another echelon of governance in its automatic placement as an ex officio member of the CWPA Executive Board, a historically white space that, up until my time, had only been transgressed by two other previous scholars of colour as a member, Chet Pryor and Raúl Sánchez, who by then were no longer in its ranks, thus with no overlap in our service. Operation Black Vote, a British not-for-profit organization that seeks to enfranchise Black and other racial minorities in Britain to vote in their elections, coined the term *snowy peak syndrome*[4] to describe institutional structures that advocate for racial diversity but remain disproportionately white at the top while becoming more inclusive only in subordinate areas of the hierarchy. And both the CWPA's and WPA-GO's leadership strata at the time were disproportionately white. For me, there was no Jacob Philadelphia moment. I had no figure to show me the potential of what I could become, no one as a benchmark of hope and possibility. What I experienced during my time in this position is a cacophony of inspiring and discouraging truths that I hope might be of use for those of us doing relevant organizational work.

During my term as WPA-GO Chair and CWPA Executive Board Member, the two bodies worked collaboratively, through their respective Diversity and Inclusion Committees, to identify that the systemic root of the lack of representation at the top must be addressed from early on in the academic pipeline, ideally cultivated from even as early as students just beginning in undergraduate writing studies programs around the country that had been increasing in number, and that creating such a pipeline toward an eventually more inclusive CWPA, among many other organizations and subfields of Rhet/Comp, was one main charge of WPA-GO.[5] I

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want to acknowledge the great work that the CWPA did and has done since then. Mirroring WPA-GO's own equity efforts, Susan Miller-Cochran's presidency during 2015–17 began a more proactively inclusive recruitment of officers into the Executive Board, which has become aspirational, if not always realized, for officer elections since then. At least in terms of Board representation, today's graduate students now have a better chance at having figures, our figurative Obama bending over for a touch of the hair, in the CWPA leadership to whom we can relate.

Ironically, these efforts have not been sustained at the WPA-GO level, which I attribute to the fleeting, temporary nature of graduate student status and work, with subsequent officers constantly reimagining and restructuring the organization's structure and activities in ways that deter long-term sustainable efforts such as maintaining pipelines. This lack of continuity between administrations then contributes to a vicious cycle, rendering attempts at a pipeline a Sisyphean task, and resulting in an unrealized mechanism intended to cultivate inclusivity at the top. This year, the organization experienced a crisis of homogenous leadership that necessitated special elections, and I have to wonder if we (previous administrations) are doing all we can to document the importance and weight of proactively seeking out a diverse pool of applicants because our marginalized colleagues do not necessarily have the self-confidence to nominate themselves. Likewise, there is the question of how much, or if at all, subsequent cohorts do all they can to consult organizational history to find and continue these efforts. It is unfair to us that our inclusion be reduced to the ghettoized space of special elections because inclusive efforts in the periphery means that they are not working effectively to deconstruct systemic racism and marginalization.

Yet this tangible structural problem is more easily addressed than some of the more systemic, cultural issues. As a dark-skinned Asian Islander leading a group of majority white officers in WPA-GO, two white peers constantly challenged my authority with the reasoning that I was not being progressive enough, and not understanding let alone acknowledging the difficult balancing act of presenting radical ideas from the mouth of an intimidating Brown body. Just as disturbing to me is that other white peers in this space, during these moments, took no actions and remained passive bystanders of this systemic racism. This attempted coup and lack of ally support hindered our efforts to create long-term pipeline mechanisms of inclusivity within the graduate organization toward the parent organization and greater field. They are all still dear colleagues and friends of mine, and my speaking out about this issue while we remain so shouldn't come as a surprise. I share these complex, personal thoughts and framing because

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I want white scholars to know that this kind of emotional repression is a frequent burden that their colleagues of colour must carry in order to seem agreeable and less threatening as a strategy to stay within academia.

As well, it was a lonely experience when seeing the activities of our peer organizations in the NCTE and CCCC as models of what is possible. For instance, when their various caucuses responded against police brutality by an Arizona State University Police Department officer upon our Black colleague Ersula Ore through releasing public statements (Kuebrich et al, 2015; Perryman-Clark and Craig, 2019), my urging the CWPA Board to release our own in solidarity was met with bureaucratic resistance under the guise of policy, reminiscent of what the recent Outcomes Statement Revision Task Force has claimed as their roadblocks. That moment served not only to devalue the lived experience hardships of scholars of colour but also, through the dismissal of my concerns, to keep me divested from the field and discouraged me from ongoing participation, creating a kind of blockage or even break in the figurative pipeline.

These two experiences—one at the entry point and the other within the pipeline—show that these spaces, at least at the time, were hostile environments for the lone scholar of colour.

Academic-cultural critic Sara Ahmed, in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) observes that, in European-colonized societies, the emotions of white male nationalists have the privilege of being acknowledged as legitimate, while the emotions of immigrants, people of colour, and women are dismissed as irrational and therefore illegitimate. My concern here is that the CWPA, WPA-GO, if not other academic organizations and academia itself in general are subject to white nationalist discourse in our attempts to cultivate the pipeline. If my holding authority within traditionally-white academic structures and my attempts for recognition of the injustices against a fellow scholar of colour are delegitimized, then our idealized pipelines cannot function properly. In her later work, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012), Ahmed continues at the more explicit site of academia by identifying a performative culture in our institutional enunciations of diversity efforts, which might include antiracist statements, faculty diversity book clubs, land acknowledgements, and mandatory diversity training. She thus calls for a commitment that must move beyond performance and to fill the gap between performative and non-performative commitment as the rarely tread space we must inhabit (140).

My hope for CWPA, WPA-GO, and all rhet-comp and writing studies academic organizations, in efforts to establish and maintain effective inclusive pipelines, is that we do so by officially documenting our successes and failures within the racist and exclusive structures. Perhaps more impor-

tantly, the mentoring of those entering the pipeline by parent organizations and established scholars would greatly benefit by integrating an understanding of how to navigate and negotiate these complex organizational histories and corresponding systemic issues. The early scholars at the start line are increasingly more diverse than the population of established scholars. That is, we are not all so lucky as to have mentors who represent a possible future for ourselves. And so, beyond programs and conference events merely pairing mentors and mentees, we might also consider the explicit training and preparation of mentors to better deal with issues their mentees may be internalizing and unwilling to bring up with those who don't look like them or share their life experiences.

I urge all scholars of colour and marginalized groups to keep account of any language, microagression, moments that are clearly and explicitly, or at times feel subtly, exclusive. Document them. These efforts burden more labor upon us in our mission to be more inclusive and representative. But doing so will enable each of us to write and share our truths to willing audiences when opportunities arise, like I have here, in order that future agents of change—ourselves included—in these spaces may consult them toward the transformation we seek with the benefit of time and renewed empathy.

Notes

1. This document is no longer available to the public but is quoted and cited in and as early as Heitzeg (2009) and Evans & Didlick-Davis (2012).

2. By a white peer, Kenneth Walker. I would not have done this myself, as academics of colour, especially graduate students and early career, often are not equipped with the self-confidence to strive for such positions in our field(s).

3. By then-Chairs Laurie Pinkert and Brian Hendrickson.

4. Introduced to me by Robyn Tasaka, University of Hawaiʻi.

5. With the help of existing mechanisms as an official CWPA mentor for the WPA-GO in the Past President (then Rita Malenczyk) and a CWPA Mentoring Committee (then comprised of Michele Eodice and Joseph Janangelo).

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The Push for the 1974 Statement . . . Once Again

Octavio Pimentel

Pues . . . ¿qué te puedo decir?[1] Even as a Chicano full professor at a major university, I experience more racism in one day than most people do in their entire lives. That said, I often think how awesome it would be to live in a world where everyone is treated equally. Who would not want that . . . besides the people who have power? It would be so nice to attend a school where people (administrators, teachers, students, et al.) did not judge people because of the color of their skin, ethnicity, nationality, or the language they spoke. Attending a school that treated everyone equitably would be a dream come true. In this utopian school, the curriculum and pedagogy would represent all students' voices. Students would read material from all perspectives, and ethnicities, and the curriculum and teachers would encourage students to be open minded. Schools would encourage and accept all dialects and languages that students speak in their home environments. All this would be so nice. But hold on a minute. These hopes sound exactly like the "Students' Rights to their own Language" statement that was printed in *College Composition and Communication* back in 1974. It read:

> We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. <https://prod-ncte-cdn.azureedge.net/nctefiles/groups/cccc/newsrtol.pdf>

Since this statement was made in 1974, thirty-seven years ago, one would hope that all universities, guided by their Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) have had enough time to implement this policy. And although I understand that in some cases WPAs have done an exceptional job creating a writing program at their OWN university, this has not been the case across the nation. Unfortunately, there are still many university writing programs across the nation that, either purposely or not, continue to

oppress people of color and other marginalized groups. Currently, and with the strong support of the Black Lives Matter Movement, there is once again a strong interest for pushing universities and their WPAs to create an Anti-racist/Black Lives Matter curriculum (EAB, 2020; Love, 2020).

My 1974

Mi hijo . . . mi hijo. Ya levantate. Ya es tiempo para ir a trabajar.[2] I was 7 years old, 1974, my hard working family were all farm workers. It was the peach picking season (late June to early September) and we were living in Marysville, California. I know that because I use to hate this season. Not only was the daily temperature over 100 degrees, but there was always an abundance of pesticides on the peaches that made my skin itch and get huge welts. It was plain torture. Mom was always the first person up at 3 am. The four of us lived in a tiny house, not more than 600 square feet. Despite mom trying to be as quiet as possible, she almost always waked us up while making our daily food *para el jalé.*[3]

At seven years old I was not officially given a *costal*[4] to pick fruit. The *patrones*[5] thought I was too young. So, what I did was picked peaches from the ground and took them to our bin. When lucky, I would find an old, torn-up *costal*, that an adult field worker had discarded. When I found these *costales,* I thought I was grown up. I thought now I can really help *mi familia*[6] fill the peach bin, which would pay us $3.75. On a good day, between 2 adults and 2 kids, we would fill 9 bins and get paid $33.75.

Both my parents having to work so much, and me having to go to work with them, caused me to miss a lot of school. The school did not care that there was no one that could take me to school, so therefore I could not attend. The only thing they cared about was that I missed school, and as a result, the state of California was not paying them my daily student fees. For this reason—the schools were always mad at my family.

Consequences of My 1974

When I entered high school, my counselor looked at my grades and classes and told me that I was not college material. She told me to find a profession where I could use my hands and not my brain. As a result, for my freshman year in high school, she enrolled me in "welding," "metal shop," and a Future Farmers of America (FFA) science class. Not knowing better, I did not object.

Four years later, as a special admit, *via* the Education Opportunity Program (EOP) office, I was admitted to California State University, Chico. Unfortunately, since I did not have a strong academic background, I was

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forced to enroll in one year of remedial classes, which I struggled with. Luckily I met a Dr. Tom Fox, an Assistant Professor at Chico State at that point, who cared a lot about making the first year composition curriculum a lot more accepting to diverse students. Considering this was back in 1986, I have no doubt that Dr. Tom Fox was a pioneer in his attempts to make the first year writing experience a lot more inclusive to ethnically diverse students. After graduating with my bachelor's degree, the rest was just routine because I had gained the confidence to excel academically. Soon after graduating with my bachelor's degree, I graduated with my Master's, and then my PhD. Once Texas State University hired me, I flew through the ranks. Six years after I was hired by Texas State University, I was tenured and promoted. Five years after, I was promoted to Full Professor. Ya . . . the once labeled special education student was now a "FULL PROFE".[7]

Antiracist/Black Lives Matter Movement

Flash forward to 2020 (BGSU, 2020), and there is a strong interest in creating an Antiracist/Black Likes Matter curriculum across the university, and especially in writing programs, which are often housed in Departments of English. It is important to note that scholars of color and allies have been advocating for these changes for many years—even before 1974. But because this problem had not been given the national attention that it is now getting, thanks to the Black Lives Matter Movement, the push for an Antiracist/Black Lives Matter curriculum was often not supported by the masses. But now, since being an Antiracist/Black Lives Matter Movement is trending, many scholars are now supporting this movement while also claiming their expertise in systematic racism. To those of us who have lived through these experiences, and have been writing about systematic racism for 20+ years (mostly scholars of color), and have been ignored at best, we are a bit frustrated because it was not until these "new" scholars (mostly white European American scholars) started to pay attention because this movement made national news.

The point that I am getting at is that although it is important to create an Antiracist/Black Lives Matter curriculum across universities, and especially in writing programs, it is more important to have the right people leading these programs. Universities need individuals who are truly invested into making these changes. That said, universities need people who have experienced painful discriminatory incidents that fuel the need for the curricular/pedagogical transformation. What the writing field does not need are people who simply want to help create an Antiracist/Black Lives Matter curriculum because it will further their career opportunities. I understand that some people who have not experienced this pain may have

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the understanding and motivation to make these changes, but those individuals are the anomaly and not the norm.

Unfortunately, the majority of writing programs across the nation are being led by scholars, although great people and fine colleagues, who truly do not understand the need to push an Antiracist/Black Lives Matter Curriculum. These writing program administrators have read many books and theories that tell them that this need is very important, but unfortunately the majority of them have not had the experiences that can really fuel this interest. I understand that in most cases, these WPAs are doing the job to the best of their ability. But that is the concern—"their ability." I also understand that in many cases a university/program may have to hire an individual who may be book smart, but does not have actual experience in dealing with issues of race and ethnicity. In these cases, I suggest that the WPA seeks partnerships with people who do have experience dealing with issues of racism. Although I 100% support an Antiracist/Black Lives Matter Curriculum, I also push the need to have the right people leading these efforts. Without a doubt, there are many scholars of color who would excel in running these programs, but for some reason, universities often have a difficult time hiring them. I am hopeful this will change.

Notes

1. Well . . . what can I tell you.

2. Son . . . Son . . . wake up. It is time to go to work.

3. For the job

4. Fruit picking bag

5. bosses

6. My family

7. Full professor

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White Supremacists and Urgent Agency: Memories from a Writing Program Administrator

Stephen Monroe

As a WPA, I return again and again to Micciche's idea of slow agency. When things get tough, I remember Micciche's advice to slow down, to defer action, and to think things through before racing to meet every request or to solve every problem (73). For me, such deliberation is always calming and productive. It is always a pathway towards better results. In January 2019, however, I was faced with an urgent situation that demanded urgent action. White supremacists announced plans to visit our campus.[1] It became a chaotic few weeks with potentially violent consequences, and I was forced to suspend my reliance on slowing things down. I improvised a new approach that might be called urgent agency. I worked in bursts, remained alert, and accelerated my decisions and actions. It was uncomfortable but necessary, and I learned something new about myself as a writing program administrator.

At first, I did not believe their rally would directly impact our department. Rumors were swirling and news stories followed. The white supremacists were pursuing publicity and talking openly about their plans. Like others on campus, I was worried, but I certainly did not expect to be involved. This was a matter for high-level administrators, not for a WPA. As the date for the rally approached, I began to eavesdrop on Facebook as the brash leader of these neo-Confederates broadcast oddly mundane video planning sessions. Their hateful rally would be held on a Saturday, not a class day, so our students and faculty would not be forced into harm's way. I was disturbed but not yet alarmed. That soon changed.

On one of his nightly broadcasts in February, the white supremacist leader began by reading aloud tweets from Trump and offering admiring explications. He then talked of violence and brandished weapons. He was speaking angrily before a confederate flag. He cussed our students and faculty. As I listened to his intense rhetoric, I remembered his coffee mug from a previous broadcast. It read, "Nobody Needs an AR-15? Nobody needs a whiny little bitch either but here you are" ("Time is getting close"). I was now alarmed.

That night, I sent my concerns up the ladder to the dean. He responded quickly. It seemed that our central administration was preparing a response. Law enforcement, including the FBI, was in the lead, and campus officials were working in lockstep with local government partners. This news was

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very reassuring, and I defaulted to the familiar WPA position of liaison. I shared facts with my department, fielded questions from worried colleagues, and tried to provide tempered reassurance.

Then, with the Saturday rally just days away, the aforementioned leader posted a disturbingly specific video. Enraged because students were now planning a counterprotest for Friday to begin from Lamar Hall, the home building of our department and writing center, he yelled, "We are gonna crash their little party at Lamar Hall on Friday!" Repeatedly, he asked his followers to converge on our building. I noticed that 1,600 people had viewed the video.

By Friday morning, students and parents were reacting with fear to portions of the video circulating on social media. Our teachers were hearing from students afraid to come near Lamar Hall. Parents were telling them to skip class. My inbox was full. I called the chair of the other department housed in Lamar. He was equally concerned and hearing similar worries. He and I decided to close our offices and encourage everyone to stay away. On one hand, this was a difficult decision. We did not have approval from above. Class time would be lost; research would be disrupted. On the other hand, this was an easy decision. Our building was suddenly a focal point for external hatred. There was no time to wait. Emptying the building guaranteed some safety and reassurance.

By noon on Friday, the building was empty, save for a few wandering police. I stayed behind to answer phones and to watch out my window. It turned out to be an anticlimactic afternoon. By 5 p.m., I thought that perhaps I had been overly cautious. Perhaps emptying the building had been the wrong decision. Later, though, I checked Facebook. The white supremacists had posted a video shot that very afternoon. The aforementioned leader was joyriding through campus. His car slowed, and I saw our building in the background. "Hey! There's Lamar Hall!!!," he yelled. He smiled creepily, reached toward the floorboard, and pulled up a battle axe, posing with the weapon. Behind him, I could see our office windows, our front doors, our bike racks, and our usually crowded sidewalks. I thought of the many colleagues and students that could have been nearby in that dangerous moment. I found peace in our unauthorized and urgent decision.

As WPAs, we will likely face increasing external intrusions, threats, and perhaps even violence. We cannot assume that such conflicts will impact only deans, provosts, or presidents. Some of our faculty and students will be dragged into danger. Normal protocols and timelines will prove irrelevant. Such moments of crisis are unpredictable and dynamic. WPAs need to be ready. There are not many roadmaps. Leadership approaches like Micciche's slow agency will remain essential most of the time, but we will

also need approaches akin to urgent agency for moments of crisis. We will need to steel ourselves for confusing and chaotic episodes. As we pursue nuanced antiracist projects in our teaching and research, we must also be ready to confront moments of dangerous and dire racism. During complicated and volatile times, our work as WPAs will become more difficult—and more important.

Note

1. For the full context and a comprehensive history of this period, see Ellie Campbell's excellent essay, "A Week in the Life of Ole Miss: February 2019 and the Fight to Take Down the Confederate Statue," in *The Activist History Review.* December 16, 2019. https://activisthistory.com/2019/12/16/a-week-in-the-life-of-ole-miss-february-2019-and-the-fight-to-take-down-the-confederate-statue/.

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Programmatic Approaches to Antiracist Writing Program Policy

Tyler S. Branson and James Chase Sanchez

In our 2016 *WPA* symposium essay, "The Role of Composition Programs in De-Normalizing Whiteness in the University," we discussed discouraging statistics about degree attainment for students of color, despite an overall increase in enrollment nationwide. We proposed that one way to reach these students is through efforts to combat normative whiteness and by working to "cultivate, nurture, and support curricular innovations or other pedagogical interventions that make room for nontraditional and/or disadvantaged minority students in the writing classroom" (49–50). But, as García de Müeller and Ruiz wrote in "Race, Silence, and Writing Program Administration" two years later, many white WPAs don't even perceive race to be an issue in their programs in the first place. García de Müeller and Ruiz 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" (25). Therefore, while the pedagogical innovations we argued for in 2016 are important, it is clear that fundamental change cannot happen without deliberate antiracist writing program policies that prioritize antiracism at an institutional level. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement has shown that change will not happen until police departments accept comprehensive policy changes, so too must WPAs intentionally integrate antiracism into their programs to create a culture that both supports and incentivizes faculty and graduate students to pursue antiracist initiatives.

According to the Anti-Racist Digital Library, antiracism can be defined as "the active process of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate individual and systemic racism." In order to *change the values* of racism in writing programs across the country, it is imperative WPAs facilitate not just passive agreement with antiracism but widespread participation in explicitly antiracist initiatives. One challenge for implementing antiracist policies, though (and there are many), is a lack of literature on race and WPA work. For example, while there is research in writing studies more broadly on ways to analyze race as it relates to writing instruction (see Clary-Lemon or Prendergast, for instance), it is also the case that many of the interventions our field has

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made with regard to race are thanks in large part to the unequal labor of scholars of color (Kynard). Moreover, as critical race theorists have worked diligently in our field to interrogate these inequalities (Smitherman and Villanueva; Gilyard; Jones Royster and Williams), and others like Inoue and Poe or Perryman-Clark and Craig have done very important work in this area, it is still the case that, as García de Müeller and Ruiz write, "discourse about race in writing programs has been very scarce" (20). And this dearth of scholarship has led to some unfortunate realities in the lived experiences of WPAs of color throughout the country. García de Müeller and Ruiz's survey, for instance, asked participants to reflect on their institutions, writing programs, and "their own personal strategies when dealing with issues of race" (23). Many respondents indicated that while they knew of institution-wide initiatives focused on combating racism, they were at a loss with regard to implementing them in their own writing classrooms due to a lack of departmental and/or programmatic support. Moreover, respondents indicated that strategies for combating racism in writing programs happened more or less at the *individual level* as opposed to extending out of explicit, formalized practices. Thus, we want to reiterate that it is important for WPAs to make a distinction between work done by individuals to combat racism and formal, program-wide policies that are explicitly focused on achieving antiracist goals. To us, the most important antiracist policy recommendation that programs need to change is in curriculum development. However, we see this as only the beginning of what we hope becomes a larger, more comprehensive list of policy recommendations.

One of the most fundamental components of fostering a programmatic approach to antiracism is to decenter whiteness within the freshman writing curriculum. Even in the most diverse and progressive graduate schools and writing programs, people still emphasize whiteness. Often there are no insidious motives or an explicit intent to promote it; rather, we teach what we have learned. For decades in our field, people did not prioritize other voices and that lack of priority is demonstrated in the institutional structures in many departments around the country (see, for instance, Ruiz and Baca). Therefore, to move forward, we cannot simply rely on individuals to change their course materials. We need to implement changes via policy decisions.

Curriculum policy changes can happen in a few different ways. First, WPAs could start mandating specific antiracist readings in their first-year composition courses, or they could ask all instructors to include a certain number of readings from people of color in their materials. The premise of such an exercise is not that mandating diversity changes attitudes. It often doesn't. However, it does reflect the values of the program. It also initiates

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students to materials they would not necessarily read outside of such provisions, and it leads instructors toward (re)considering what materials they choose in their courses. Such policies can also function as a reflexive nudge when students/instructors are stressed, or less contemplative, or focusing on other aspects of their courses. We can look to the Antiracist Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Toolkit from Syracuse University as an example of this work. While the toolkit is a list of *tools* and not policies per se, we are inspired by its explicit focus on subverting what they describe as an "academic discourse that upholds white supremacist ideologies of language." Included in their sample syllabus is an extensive reading list of potential course materials, as well as links to websites of Black-owned bookstores and other businesses in which students can economically support Black communities. In particular, Syracuse's WAC toolkit is designed to open up a space for teachers to "rethink pedagogical assumptions about writing and confront implicit biases that can emerge in writing assignments and assessment." What makes Syracuse's antiracist WAC toolkit a model example of the kind of work we are calling for is the way it frames antiracist writing pedagogy in terms of broader shifts in program values, not just a set of innovative teaching strategies.

In addition to working with course curricula, writing programs and writing program administrators need to make more concerted efforts on explicitly antiracist professional development. Consider, for instance, antiracist writing pedagogy workshops that focus on developing and integrating more diverse texts into the curriculum. These workshops often focus on what texts we value and devalue, the importance of multicultural texts, how to use diverse readings in classroom activities, and more. Most importantly, by formalizing these workshops in faculty orientations, program-wide colloquia, and other mechanisms by which WPAs work to develop writing curriculum, writing programs would signal antiracist values to the community and further support faculty and graduate students in implementing antiracism into their composition courses. And there are already some wonderful examples throughout the country of these kinds of antiracist writing pedagogy workshops, such as professional development events at the University of Washington, Michigan State University, Middlebury College, Loyola University at Chicago, and more. Specifically, the most promising professional development initiatives that enact the kinds of goals we propose are the ones that stress *action* and include multiple stakeholders, like, for instance, the Writing and Rhetoric Program at Middlebury College, who invited antiracism expert Frankie Condon to give a alk about "actionable anti-racist commitments" for all teachers of writing.

While it may seem obvious that professional development can help faculty and graduate students implement antiracist initiatives, García de Müeller and Ruiz's research indicates that these kinds of practices are not as widespread as we may think. Or worse, workshops on race and pedagogy exist in a reactionary capacity, developed in response to the most recent racial atrocity. Our point is simply that when antiracism becomes a matter of policy, professional development can be more intentionally designed to support the "challenging" and "changing" of values that is so crucial for antiracist agendas. It integrates antiracism into a broader program-wide commitment, normalizing antiracism as part and parcel of its program features—in other words, it's baked into the program ethos.

It is also important to note that these kinds of formalized, structural changes to writing curricula are not easy to make. For many WPAs around the country, it is easier merely to *suggest*, *align with*, or vocally *support* such curricular improvements, rather than pushing the envelope or risking upsetting colleagues and upper administrators. Yet, as Frankie Condon and Vershawn Ashante Young state, "So long as racism persists in any form—from the micro-aggressions of racism 2.0 to implicit and explicit structural forms of disenfranchisement—those of us who teach and who are committed to the creation of an increasingly just society will need to choose whether and how we address racism in our classrooms" (10). Maybe the most privileged of us, especially those on the tenure-track, and/or those of us who don't wear the pain of racism on their bodies, can choose the painless route and rationalize it as "easier" or by telling ourselves, "I'll do better after I get tenure." We are here to state, unequivocally: Choosing such a route is a form of complicity. WPAs need to step up to do the work of antiracism. These kinds of broad, program-wide administrative decisions to alter, mandate, and/or change the curriculum to better suit 21st century students are bound to be controversial, but it is imperative. If we don't take this approach, we risk failing all of our students and instructors, and we risk further alienating and isolating minoritized students and colleagues who have already been doing this kind of work without institutional support.

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collections *Bad Ideas about Writing* and *The Cambridge Handbook of Service Learning and Community Engagement.*

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A WPA Reflects on Assessing Black Women's Writing during Intersectional Pandemics

Michelle Bachelor Robinson

Spelman College boasts a proud herstory of a comprehensive and interdisciplinary writing program. Designed and cultivated by the unmatched Jacqueline Jones Royster, the program continues to thrive on that foundation. As an integral part of that design, the Spelman College Comprehensive Writing Program (CWP) assesses portfolios for both first year and final year students. First year students are also enrolled in a year-long course, African Diaspora in the World (ADW), that requires critical essays as culminating experiences at the end of both semesters. One of the signature initiatives for the CWP is portfolio assessment of selected writing from first-year students, which consists of a detailed reflection letter, a critical or argumentative essay, and a critical or argumentative essay that includes at least 2 sources. Portfolios are typically collected during the month of April and assessed during the first week of June. The CWP recruits between 14–18 readers from Spelman faculty across all disciplines, at least 1 reader from outside the college, hires a consultant to norm readers and facilitate the event, and hosts a week-long assessment reading. Receiving a passing score on the FYW portfolio is a graduation requirement, and each student has 3 opportunities to fulfill the requirement: 2 opportunities for assessment of the portfolio and if students are in need of additional support and resources, a 3rd opportunity of enrolling in a course that provides additional composition instruction.[1] At every stage of this process, supportive language is employed, emphasizing that Spelman College does not want to penalize students but instead wants them to have access to all the necessary resources to be effective writers for the balance of their time on campus and in their professional lives beyond.

In March 2020, when COVID-19 was identified as a serious threat worldwide, students and faculty were notified that Spelman would complete the semester remotely, and we have yet to return to campus. Meaningful traditions and ceremonies were cancelled, and student morale sank. By April 2020, the assault on Black bodies from COVID-19 and nationwide incidents of racial injustice and brutality was palpable and consuming, and as WPA, I knew I needed a curricular response to this historic and cultural moment. I still felt fairly new to the WPA position and was still cultivating and shaping my administrative identity. My position had been open for two years prior to my arriving at Spelman in the fall 2017. Many of the poli-

cies and practices I was supporting were adopted by my predecessor. I was on research leave at the onset of the pandemic, and my Assistant Director alerted me to the escalating anxiety of our faculty and students. My leave essentially ended with the onset of COVID, as I wanted to respond to this moment with my own ideological and pedagogical sensibilities, sensibilities that were centered on an acknowledgement of the stressors and crises that our students, our Black women students, were navigating. I wanted to invoke a pedagogy and a practice of compassion in this moment. Our instructors and students were catapulted into remote learning in March of 2020 with little warning and preparation. Faculty were stressed and concerned about how to prepare students for such a high stakes academic exercise from afar, and students were stressed over performing this task amid the myriad of physical, mental, and emotional threats on their lives.

Spelman is a place where a compassionate response to extraordinary circumstances should be the norm, where students should be able to scream "I am not okay!" and be heard. President Mary Schmidt Campbell often refers to "The Spelman Difference" in her speeches, a phrase that articulates the nature of our students' experiences within our unique cultural context. I needed an accommodation demonstrative of this difference. After consulting with senior administration, I adjusted the portfolio submission schedule. I sent email notifications to first year students, giving them the summer to prepare their portfolios, announcing a series of workshops in the early fall to help with preparation, and scheduling the reading in early October. I offered virtual workshops in September to almost 300 students and met with more that 100 students in one-on-one video conferencing to offer support and guidance on portfolio submission. In those moments, I fielded questions about what to submit, listened to them share the ways COVID had impacted their lives, and offered support and suggestions for how those emotions and experiences could become content for their reflections. It was absolutely the most exhausting work of my professional life, but I knew the postponed schedule meant these students were no longer enrolled in the classes for which they had completed the writing, and they needed a sounding board and guidance. The CWP sent out reminders for how to make virtual writing center appointments and reminders of other virtual resources. Finally, I invited 13 of our strongest readers from previous assessments, hired Dr. Sheila Carter-Tod of Virginia Tech to norm and facilitate, and hosted our first virtual assessment reading. For our norming session, I asked Dr. Carter-Tod to make space to discuss the nature of trauma and duress as part of the cultural context for work in which we were engaged. Though this discussion did not in any way alter the standards or

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adjust the rubric, it gave readers a deeper understanding of the content of the portfolios.

These accommodations resulted in our highest pass rates ever, approximately 90%, up from 85% in the previous year, which reflects a marginal gain from the year before after instituting revisions in the portfolio guidelines. In the debriefing and exit surveys, our readers expressed how thoughtful and critical these portfolios had been. Of the 12 readers who completed the survey, 5 had served for more than 10 years, 1 had been a reader for between 6 and 9 years, and 6 had read for between 2 and 5 years. All exit surveys reflected on the quality and intentionality of these portfolios in comparison to years past. The readers commented that the reflection letters were more "authentic," "moving," and "developed" than in the past, and others acknowledged an increase in the level of "creativity in expression." Several readers reflected on the ways the students reflected on this moment, facing a multiplicity of pandemics, COVID and the public, televised, and desensitized killings of Black bodies by the police, and many students expressed an appreciation for the support of faculty and the writing program for offering the additional resources to accomplish this academic milestone.

Experiences like this one led to collective conversations about how the English Department might be more intentional about supporting our students. These conversations revealed effective strategies and accommodations from so many of our colleagues that we formed an *ad hoc* committee to develop informal policies and practices and pedagogical frameworks that might best support our students. We adopted the framework of "compassionate pedagogy," defined as "ensuring that our teaching and interactions with students and colleagues are based on kindness, and followed through by actions and practices that alleviate suffering and promote wellbeing . . . it allows students, teachers and all involved in universities to become a humanising voice which listens to and hears the realities of the marginalised and excluded."[2] We crafted a shared digital space to collect all the ways that our colleagues were engaging in compassionate pedagogical practices. We looked for intersections and began exploring scholarship and shaping language for a theoretical model and shared practices. Our preliminary draft of compassionate pedagogical practices are as follows:

1. Include a statement in our syllabi explaining that we are committing to a compassionate pedagogical approach and that by taking the class, students are expected to abide by the articulated principles of compassion when they are engaged in class-related work.

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2. Bring to our classes a specific project, assignment, lesson, or discussion that bring awareness to this project.

3. Offer compassionate practice as a way to help students live in the world more peacefully and more conscientiously. Articulate that compassion does not preclude a commitment to rigor, standards, or deadlines but that compassion does require expectations to be rooted on non-arbitrary or strictly punitive grounds.[3]

The department hosted a virtual town hall at the beginning of the spring semester which gave our students the opportunity to talk with us about their needs during this perilous time, but it also gave faculty an opportunity to share their own vulnerabilities. The town hall was a pivotal moment, where students and faculty acknowledged the reciprocity involved in invoking compassion. Our *ad hoc* group is now discussing next steps for implementation, considering more complete policy development with greater visibility to the larger campus community and possibly academia writ large. What we have preliminarily concluded is that this small accommodation in the Comprehensive Writing Program mattered; the deployment of a pedagogy of compassion worked, especially with Black women whose lives are under constant assault in our current socio-political climate. When students are heard and supported, even in the most adverse of circumstances, they show up, and consequently show out!

Notes

1. For a more complete profile of comprehensive writing initiatives at Spelman College, see Lockett, Alexandria. "Critical Reflections on Spelman College." *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration*. CCCC of NCTE, 2019. pp. 116–119.

2. The University of Westminster, Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation. Dr. Kathryn Waddington, Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. http://cti.westminster.ac.uk/compassionate-pedagogy-what-is-it-and-why-is-it-important/

3. The Spelman College English Department's draft of pedagogical practices. This initiative is still in the development stage. The committee is currently drafting language to adopt.

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Beyond Crisis Moments: Mediating Instructor-Student Conflict through Anti-Racist Practice

Amy J. Wan and Christopher John Williams

Recently, a busy semester was complicated by the same appeal from multiple instructors: *Help me with this unresponsive or confrontational student.* As WPAs, we support our instructors facing this common student-teacher conflict by helping them figure out how to productively manage feelings of defensiveness when encountering resistant students. However, we noticed a pattern. In most cases, the instructor was a white woman and the student a person of color, almost always a man, mirroring the demographics of our program and college: a public urban institution with a majority-minority student population and mostly white teaching faculty.

As BIPOC WPAs, we've endured our own micro- and macro-aggressions that inform our complex reactions to such conflicts. Years ago, Chris' student announced during class: *It's a fact that Black people are more criminal.* Though immediate denouncement would have been justified, Chris wondered what had led this usually respectful student to confidently share a racist statement in the presence of a Black professor. Chris had just concluded a mini-lesson on weak claims using the example of a homeowner who believed that "Black people are thieves" after being once robbed by a Black person—the student's outburst, though problematic, had not come out of nowhere. After regaining his composure, Chris felt confident enough to abandon his planned lesson and teach from this charged moment. He guided the class to interrogate the evidence, reasoning, and warrants underpinning the student's claim, and worked with them to identify possible counter-arguments to expose its speciousness. This productive experience informs how Chris wants our instructors to approach these conflicts: lead with genuine curiosity, resist assuming ill intent, and consider what might have led the student to that moment.

In these ways, we bring our own histories and positionalities to our WPA work. When Amy once mediated a session between a scared instructor and "hostile" student, she immediately felt a shift in her understanding when the emergent bilingual student expressed frustration about communicating effectively in English. Hostility from the perspective of the instructor was likely the student's attempt to be assertive when he felt powerless about a grade, questioning whether he, as a racialized student with a perceived accent, was being fairly seen and heard by the instructor, a cis white woman. Yet, Amy also recognized how gender dynamics created an intimi-

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dating situation for the instructor, a first-year graduate student. Amy's perspective was informed by her own language-brokering experiences in an immigrant family, by seeing those kinds of language struggles up close, and by her own past experiences teaching as a young woman. Our histories provide us with insights that complicate common assumptions about "trouble students." At the same time, we are conscious that our own positionalities could make our mediations seem biased or "racially charged," that we could be seen as siding with students and not supporting contingent faculty.

As WPAs, we knew our program could not effectively address instructors' biases around race, gender, age, and language use during the immediate crisis moments of student-teacher conflicts. We needed to address them in more systematic and sustainable ways, but "How?" and "When?" were complicated by the labor conditions of our primarily contingent instructors and our non-existent budget to compensate for faculty development. Instead, we implemented implicit bias training where we were already guaranteed audiences—as part of new instructor orientation and the practicum. We've also worked to integrate these questions around bias and linguistic justice into all of our program policies and activities, including our recent assessment.

Despite our limited ability as administrators to "solve" deeply ingrained biases, our obligation was to minimize immediate harm to students. So, drawing on institutional resources, we worked with our campus Center for Ethnic, Racial and Religious Understanding. Having a diversity education center with experience building equity through "dialogue and undoing bias techniques" was vital as we strategized to support our instructors. Through deliberations about various scenarios like the ones we discussed above and within more typical faculty development sessions about assessment or facilitating class discussion, we created opportunities for instructors to rehearse moments of high-stakes conflict in lower-stakes spaces and learn about the practices of "listening and understanding with resilience," "recognizing our own social positionality," and differentiating between "safety and comfort" (CERRU). The goal? To help instructors reflect on and ethically inhabit their power in the classroom. Such training obviously cannot undo larger systems of racism and white language supremacy in educational spaces. But they can encourage instructors to anticipate how they might respond equitably in the classroom. Our approach attempts to reduce potential injury to students and underscores the importance of this work to our program, while we continue to make related structural, curricular, and policy changes.

By acknowledging our own complex responses here, we worry that instructors might hesitate to come to us. But looking at this problem straight-

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on is exactly what is needed to acknowledge how these implicit biases emerge in the classroom. In our case, we confront systemic racism and work towards linguistic justice in the face of our own positionalities and the overwhelming need for and challenge of doing such deep work with new contingent faculty.

All of these truths—the racialization of students, the exploitation of part-time instructors, the gendered experiences with authority in the class-room—can exist simultaneously. Our goal is not to accuse our instructors of privileges and biases but instead to provide space, policy, and tools for necessary and possibly uncomfortable acknowledgement and self-reflection, which allows for conversations that are more whole.

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Racism in the Margins

Gabriel Morrison and Kathleen Tonry

> *It was one of those papers where the professor tries to correct all the grammar. And it's covered in pen of different colors from multiple times. And so she's in tears, and essentially . . . what he told her to do is "go to the WC to learn English." . . . I don't even think you can think of yourself as a writer after that.*
>
> —Yasmine S., writing center tutor

> *One thing that I saw was one-word responses. "Unclear." "Disorganized." "Don't understand." . . . If someone sees the whole thing in red saying "unclear," "sloppy," "disorganized," "change"—just the word "change" or "remove"—that doesn't help anyone. That's not discourse. That's an order.*
>
> —Odia K., writing center tutor

Every tutor and writing center administrator can tell these stories, many of these stories, about the "everyday language of oppression" (Suhr-Sytsma & Brown, 2011) they have "overheard" in the margins of student papers. The Racism in the Margins project began as a way to put marginal stories at the center of antiracist languaging efforts.

The margins of student papers are crucial spaces, often documenting the most essential—and the most private—conversations between a writer and instructor. These conversations can demonstrate the best that university education offers—energetic, guiding exchanges that engage and wrestle with ideas and expression. But over the years, it became obvious to us that margins are sites of vulnerability for students, and the places where faculty reveal assumptions about the intellectual superiority of "standard" English, misguided notions about correctness, and oversimplifications of the language acquisition process. These assumptions are rooted in racist ideologies, and the damage done by these comments is unequal, borne most painfully by Black, Latinx, indigenous, Asian-American, and international students.

Our writing center's tutors pointed us to these marginal remarks, reporting them while still always carefully guarding writers' privacy. We heard the reports—and saw the distress and often anger of tutors—during private conferences, informal meetings, staff development sessions, and at the tutor staff break table. What happened on the margins for *some* student

writers never stayed marginalized in our center. Yet it was hard to name it, and harder to think of ways to redress it.

Indeed, the troubling comments reported by tutors never took on the dimensions of the racial assaults or derogations (Sue & Spanierman, 2020, as cited in Csizmadia et al., 2020) that make up the overt incidents most often publicized in campus culture. Instead, we realized, the racisms that get inscribed in the margins of student writing are more subtle (if no less damaging), more structural and institutional, more imbricated in the fabric of university discourse. The faculty comments often seemed innocuous out of context. "Go to the writing center" can be read as encouragement when directed toward many white students, but the same comment becomes loaded with racialized assumptions, a code for something else, when it appears next to underlined linguistic nonconformity.

Over the last few years, we have struggled to find the best way to intervene in these "invisible" (but not to us) forms of "everyday racism" (Geller et al., 2007). We realized we couldn't address this racism in tutoring sessions or staff development contained to the writing center—after all, tutors were not writing damaging things in the margins of student papers. Nor was this a problem primarily manifesting in composition courses that could be remedied through teacher development in our university's FYC program or by contributing to scholarship that would be read primarily by those in writing studies. The majority of writing instruction and assessment at our university (perhaps most universities) happens outside of composition classes in the academic disciplines, where teachers are unlikely to be exposed to scholarship focusing on issues of linguistic justice (Baker-Bell, 2020). An intervention, we realized, needed to touch all parts of our university.

Antiracism is about Action

> I think it's really important that [our antiracism work]
> isn't performative. . . . [We] want to take steps out-
> side of the writing center. . . . We need to make sure our
> work is also affecting academia and not just us.
>
> —Writing center tutor focus group

We could not look away from this problem of racism in the margins, but we did not know what to do about it either. For a few years, we read scholarship in antiracist pedagogy and higher education reform, we sought input from our writing center's tutors, and we reflected on what it would take to make meaningful change and what kinds of change should be prioritized.

Throughout this process, we took seriously the words of Diab et al. (2016), who write that "critique (in its many forms) should dovetail with opportunities to take action (also in its many forms)" (p. 20)—and also the words of tutors in our center, who emphasized that our responses to racism avoid being "performative." We felt it would not be enough to start a conversation within our center or among like-minded colleagues. Such conversations have been going on, robustly, within our scholarly associations and journals for some time now. Antiracism is about action (Kendi, 2019), and we felt the current moment called us to try to make systemic changes, using all the tools available to us.

And the most powerful tool we had was right there in plain sight: the observations and anger and advocacy of writing center tutors themselves. It was our center's tutors who had urged us to take on this problem, and who also knew that writers should not bear the burden of coming forward to show, explain, and stand behind their language choices—again. Tutors were already speaking for those writers, loudly and clearly, and simply wanted a way for their voices and observations to be amplified, to reach faculty, to create change. It turned out that familiar writing center practices that ask tutors to value writerly agency and voice also underscored the ways tutor voices and agency could turn into real advocacy.

In fall 2020, we applied for newly available internal funding allocated to supporting visions of systemic change across our university. We were awarded a substantial grant to inaugurate a multi-stage and multidisciplinary initiative we titled Racism in the Margins.

With the intention of revealing "racism in the margins," we began to offer a microphone to the tutors who told us about the racisms they encountered in faculty feedback. Their accounts were brave and bold. You can view a synopsis of some of their stories in a video called "Conversations from the Margins" on our initiative's website: https://ritm.initiative.uconn.edu/narratives/.

Those tutor voices coincide with the anonymous comments and overall findings described in the faculty-led Racial Microaggressions Survey conducted at our institution (Csizmadia et al., 2020): https://rms.research.uconn.edu/.

Both "Conversations from the Margins" and the Racial Microaggressions Survey powerfully attest to the revisions we need to make as teachers and administrators.

During the 2020–21 academic year, we hosted a virtual conference featuring Haivan Hoang, Asao B. Inoue, Mya Poe, and Vershawn Ashanti Young. The virtual format meant that it was exceptionally well-attended, and gained a national audience—but locally, too, we saw an excellent

turnout from faculty across the disciplines. The conference seems to have prepared a productive framework for faculty to come together and help us think about what kind of sustainable faculty-centered development initiative will gain the most traction across campus. We built on insights gained from the conference and from our archive of tutor voices as we convened faculty working groups to begin building faculty development programs, which we will pilot this coming fall. Tutors are helping us reassess the role writing centers—and especially their histories of advocating for writerly agency—might play as we move toward a more meaningful antiracist pedagogy across the disciplines.

Following in the footsteps of successful WAC-integrated initiatives like the Writing Across Communities model (Kells, 2018), we hope to grow the program into a faculty-led movement and an explicitly antiracist writing culture, widely adopted and practiced across our large, landgrant university.

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Countering Equivocation: The Moves Used to Thwart Anti-Racism Work

Joe Cirio and Heather McGovern

Stockton University's First-Year Studies Program (FRST), an interdisciplinary program that oversees first-year courses in writing, critical thinking and reading, and low-level mathematics, is considering implementing program-wide anti-racist classroom policies. Stockton is a public, 4-year, PWI. The majority of first-year students take two or more courses in our program, which has multiple full-time dedicated faculty members, although the majority of our course sections are taught by adjunct faculty members. Our courses have over 3,000 student enrollments per academic year. Our attention to re-imagining faculty's classroom policies—such as attendance, participation, and late work—is an attempt to move away from systemically racist structures like surveillance culture and to prevent withdrawals or failures resulting from course structure and design. Although moving towards an anti-racist program involves changes at every level of activity, re-imagining classroom policies seems like one important step towards dismantling the systemic ways students of color are harmed through, for example, higher rates of withdrawal/failure from program courses. As sample data points, according to the average over five years, 2014–2019, white students are 2 to 5% less likely than Black or Hispanic students to need to repeat the for-credit FRST critical thinking or writing courses after their first try—either due to withdrawing from the course or from earning less than the university-mandated C grade. Asian and white students are 4 to 6% less likely to need to repeat after their first try at our for-credit developmental-level class in math than Black or Hispanic students. These internal data points have documented racial disparities in our program and communicated the need for changes, but data is only one reason to implement anti-racist policies. While data can often be persuasive for some stakeholders, data should not be reason alone to prioritize and value anti-racism within a program. A program-wide commitment to anti-racism invites faculty to acknowledge the ways that classroom policies are always complicit in racial formations.

Indeed, the question of priority and commitment to anti-racism was at the core of our initial discussions among program faculty about implementing program-level anti-racist policies. Namely, this essay functions to briefly define the ways in which faculty pushed back or sought to resist the program-wide anti-racist project. We identify three major themes that

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have emerged during our initial planning discussions: (a) concerns about not preparing students for the habits and "positive behaviors" needed for college and professional success; (b) concerns about limiting faculty's flexibility and academic freedom; and (c) inquiries about how such moves can intersect with other inequalities. Resistance in each of these areas involved advocating for seemingly beneficial or widely accepted ideas, but in ways that practically served to dilute anti-racist efforts or to prevent the program from moving ahead with a proposed policy change. In other words, across these themes we see the co-opting of progressive values of freedom and fairness as a way to re-center whiteness. The following sections explore these concerns and offer initial responses.

Surveillance Culture and Punitive Punishments

Among the concerns posed by program members was that the overtures toward anti-racist classroom policies would elide policies that faculty felt encouraged "positive behaviors" from students. Program faculty worried that without punitive policies focused on attendance, deadlines and late work, the learning process would be disrupted, and students would not adapt to habits perceived as necessary for academic or professional success. These concerns are associated with politics of respectability (Higginbotham) that believe good manners and adherence to hegemonic codes of conduct can garner status for Black and Brown people. They are also associated with neoliberal notions of the university as enculturating students in what are perceived as the norms of the workplace, through classroom management that aims at having students internalize self-regulation of procedures that will make them well-suited for labor, especially in positions that value obedience (Agostinone-Wilson).

Policies that seek to modify student behaviors cannot be easily separated from a desire from faculty to surveil, micromanage, and control students' bodies. Certainly, Foucault has noted that schools primarily function to maintain discipline; moreover, such systems of surveillance have an outsized and disproportional impact on Black and Brown students. For Carla Shedd, the convergence of public education with the technologies of criminal justice generates a "universal carceral apparatus" that socializes Black people to expect the criminalization of their behaviors and to learn to navigate constant surveillance of their behaviors. Patricia Hill Collins likewise observes that systems of surveillance often produce differential racial outcomes where disciplinary figures—she points particular attention to teachers—are put in a position to exercise power selectively: "the power to see and overlook, to greet and ignore. . ." (66). Hill Collins is clear that this is

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an issue regardless of an individual teacher's intentions: the system of surveillance and discipline, itself, will reproduce racial disparities.

A movement towards anti-racist policies would, thus, necessarily involve dismantling policies that surveil student behaviors and discipline students for infractions. These policies reproduce carceral imperatives or what Jefferey Moro refers to more bluntly as "cop shit": "any pedagogical technique or technology that presumes an adversarial relationship between students and teachers." As Moro points out, "cop shit undoubtedly reaches its *sine qua non* in K–12 classroom" and indeed Shedd and Hill Collins are working within that context, but the desire for punitive policies persist in higher education. Compulsory attendance, total bans on any technology, embarrassing punishments (e.g. confiscating a phone or locking late arrivals out), and unnecessary penalizations for late work to teach lessons about deadlines contribute to coercive relationships with students and harm students of color who already navigate a world that surveils and criminalizes their bodies.

Flexibility and Academic Freedom

Faculty in the program also expressed the desire to offer flexibility in the rollout of program-wide policies so that program members can intermingle anti-racist policies with their own teaching philosophies and pedagogical approaches. Part of this line of thinking involved faculty members who expressed that if their policies seemed to work for them and their students in the past, they should be able to continue to use them—especially if there appeared to be no race disparities in their final grades. Similarly, in a more overt resistance to anti-racist policies, some faculty questioned whether anti-racist program-wide policies violate program member's academic freedom.

A desire for flexibility and acknowledgement of instructors' expertise are reasonable, generally speaking. Indeed, the CCCC Position Statement on Preparing Teachers of Writing acknowledges that programs benefit from writing instructors who can "contribute their disciplinary expertise to improve their departments and institutions." Certainly, an effective program will encourage program members to play to their strengths and share expertise to improve the program. The FRST program remains committed to such collaboration and faculty input. However, calls for flexibility and academic freedom can also function to give faculty license to continue to apply pedagogical approaches that seek to maintain white epistemologies.

Calls for academic freedom in this context are particularly untenable. Mary Boland, in her exploration of how the tenets of academic freedom apply to the administration of writing programs, notes that academic free-

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dom "relies, at base, on the notion of a subject matter about which knowledge can be pursued" and allows "scholars to professionalize by forming self-regulating 'communities of competent enquirers' engaged in the pursuit of knowledge within those particular communities" (Haskell 44–45 qtd in Boland 34–35). The problem, then, with calls for academic freedom in this context is that there is no (reputable) scholarly community or body of scholarship to call upon to support the idea of race-neutral classroom policies that invariably uphold whiteness.

Drawing upon the infamous pushback to UT Austin's English 306, "Writing about Difference" course, Boland observes that at the heart of the resistance was framing the writing subject as politically neutral, a belief that emerges outside of composition scholarship. Responding poignantly to these claims, Brodkey bemoans positions from faculty "who know nothing about the theory, research, and practice of teaching composition . . . " (Brodkey 186) and yet make ill-informed presumptions about the subject of writing. In fact, calls for "academic freedom" might better reflect *antiintellectual* sentiments that seek, as Susan Searls Giroux argues, to "[enable] (a still overwhelmingly white and male) full-time faculty to research and teach as they please, without critical regard for the normative, institutional, and politically consequential assumptions that inevitably issue from their scholarly activities" (321). In-field researchers, thus, must also be held accountable for anti-intellectual tendencies that seek to uphold race-neutral or post-racial realities in academia.

Intersectional Policies

As we discussed anti-racist policies, faculty members emphasized the need to expand our gaze because issues are also intersectional. For example, program members recognized that attendance policies that harm students of color should be changed, and that changing those policies would also benefit others, like students with children. We are still negotiating intersectionality as part of our anti-racist work. There was tension in the discussion between (a) pointing out that anti-racist policies can benefit many students (in part for rhetorical purposes, to pull other program members on board) and (b) prioritizing anti-racism.

For instance, the co-authors of this essay worked on a statement to frame online program discussion. We encourage faculty to, "Improve at identifying where our past or current policies or practices favor white, patriarchal, middle or upper class, able-bodied, and/or neurotypical epistemologies." As we drafted, one co-author added "introverted/extroverted students." The other co-author argued that "white, patriarchal, able-bodied

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epistemologies" would capture class and neurodiversity and suggested leaving out less cogent issues. We agreed that intersectional expansion diluted the anti-racism work, but we did not initially agree on whether to continue to list "class," for instance. This example illustrates how two program members grappled with how referencing intersectionality in its continued discussion would impact how the program conducted anti-racism work.

On one hand, how can we ignore intersectionality? Kimberlé Crenshaw's argument remains persuasive, "The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference . . . but rather . . . that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences" (1242). However, intersectionality discourse can also be used to derail or dilute anti-racist progress and be co-opted by neoliberalism, as argued by researchers like Sirma Bilge (407). Jason Rodriguez and Kendralin Freman, in "'Your focus on race is narrow and exclusive': The Derailment of Anti-Racist Work through Discourses of Intersectionality and Diversity," explore how whiteness was recentered, and people of color re-marginalized, when a campus anti-racism discussion became about diversity. As Bilge explains, "Those who argue that there is no need to argue about racial oppression because such oppression is never 'purely' racial are treating intersectionality in the abstract as a directive of universal application, for the specific purpose of suppressing discussion of racial oppression" (407). A program that seeks to move forward with anti-racist changes must resist the co-option of intersectionality discourse to derail action or re-center other issues.

To meet anti-racist priorities, we must center anti-racism work.

Conclusion

Much like Frankie Condon and Vershawn Ashanti Young in their introduction to *Performing Antiracist Teaching,* the co-authors admit that "rage tempts us" (7). We drafted this essay after a series of meetings where with every sign of progress, there came new moves to halt the efforts. Exploring these moves through writing this essay has been helpful to understand the contours of the problems we're facing—and how to address them. We can now recognize that our program's tactics of resistance seem tethered by a common theme: namely, the co-opting of seemingly well-meaning neoliberal conceptions of encouraging good habits, flexibility, academic freedom, and intersectionality to give license to inaction.

For Stockton's FRST program, some resistance was expected, yet the degree and kind of pushback to program-wide anti-racist policies in these initial meetings was surprising. At the close of the first semester of discussions, the push towards anti-racism in the program was at a standstill—it

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was clear that these discussions needed to be restarted, from the ground up, in the following semester. In preparation for renewed discussions, program members created a shared document with resources that included readings (both scholarly and popular), videos, and podcasts from which we encouraged faculty to read a selection during Winter break. At our next meeting, we also shared a list, from published scholarship, of ways in which people in higher education tend to push back against anti-racist efforts, in hopes of helping all program members reconsider the motivations behind and ramifications of their thoughts and actions.

We remain committed to collaboratively moving forward with anti-racist policies and we believe that reading from a shared corpus of texts may help program members develop a shared understanding of key ideas and practices related to anti-racism. It is too soon at this writing to tell if these or other tactics will be enough to help our program succeed in making program-wide anti-racist changes through consensus. Most faculty members have already identified specific changes they are making as individuals, but as others remain more resistant, especially to particular changes, we have delayed making a program-level policy change. Making needed anti-racist changes to program-wide policies based on the will of the majority, regardless of faculty resistance, remains an option; however, such a decision would almost assuredly strain everyday, interpersonal relationships among program members. Also, without seeking further buy-in among faculty, we could embolden those who aren't philosophically on board to ignore or defy any new policy in practice.

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"I'm Just Following the Policy": The Last Line of Defense for "Standard English"

Bradley Smith

At a professional development forum on teaching writing, a panel presenter reminded the attendees that Black English is a linguistic system in its own right and that, as Vershawn Ashanti Young argues, code switching is a form of linguistic segregation ("'Nah, We Straight'"). The presenter concluded, "saying that Black English is not appropriate for academic situations is saying essentially that African American thought and identities do not belong in academic settings" (Muhammad). Part of an ongoing series, this talk on Black English and code meshing was included on a panel with two additional presentations about language, culture, and writing pedagogy. The presentation drew a small crowd of maybe 15 writing teachers representing five or six institutions of higher education in our region.

As the presentation ended and the questions began, a tall man with straight, brown hair whom I didn't know raised his hand and politely addressed the presenter. "Well, first I'd like to say thank you for that presentation. But one of the things that concerns me about what you've mentioned is preparing our students for the world after college. If we don't ask our students to write in Standard English, how will they be able to do it when they are expected to do it in the workplace?"

The panelist replied that Black English is a language with regular rules and offered some examples of those rules in context. The man seemed to understand this answer but not accept it as a reason not to teach "Standard English." He continued to push; his questions were framed with further justifications for expecting White language practices in first-year writing: "I want students to value their own language, but where should we draw the line?"; "How do we incorporate code meshing into our grading rubrics and reconcile it with grading grammar?" until his justifications had all been exhausted by kind and quiet replies from the panel that pointed out the differences between grammatical error and the systematic nature of language. As his litany came to a close, he looked around the audience of mostly white women spread sparsely around the large classroom where the presentation was being held, until he saw me—another white man, one of the very few white men in the room. And once he had seen me, he started talking to me, solely to me, seemingly, ignoring all of the other faces in the crowd and the panel who was presenting. In that moment, he landed on his final excuse, the one last nuclear option.

"Well, unfortunately, I'm not able to offer my students the option of writing using their own dialect. Our program has a policy that requires writing in Standard English." He looked at me, expecting my support, as if surely I understood, as if I was a sympathetic ear. Policy. The rules. The law. The last line of defense in unconsciously racist thinking, a way to shift the blame for what's right onto a document and thus deflect anger and judgment onto that supposedly immaterial arbiter of success. An unconscious justification through misdirection, as if one was saying, "look, it's not my fault. I'm just following the rules."

As he finished and sat looking expectantly at me to answer, I repeated back what I'd heard. "It sounds like there is a policy at your school that requires you to grade students on their use of Standard English. Is that right?"

"Yes," he replied and perked up slightly.

"Well," I said, "it sounds like you need to change the policy."

He let out a small plosive sigh and sank back into his seat, his body language saying, "You don't get it."

This moment reminds me of the persistence of anti-Black linguistic racism (Baker-Bell). Upon reflection, it is clear that this evocation of the policy was just one more excuse for maintaining the primacy of white language practices in academic spaces. Such moments demonstrate the value of setting clear local policies tied to disciplinary scholarship and informed by texts like "Students' Rights to their Own Language" and "This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!" Doing so makes programmatic expectations clear to faculty and ensures that anti-Black linguistic policies don't serve as a last line of defense for white linguistic practices in the academy.

But this vignette demonstrates another important point for WPAs to consider. This is hard, strategic, long-term work, as the long history of scholarship and policy-making calling for linguistic justice demonstrates. A well-crafted policy, a single professional development presentation or workshop isn't enough to bring about systemic change. The demands laid out in "This Ain't Another Policy Statement!" make clear that, as a WPA, I must continually ask myself how I can meet the demand to "do much better in [my] own self-work that must challenge the multiple institutional structures of anti-Black racism [I] have used to shape language politics." And so ultimately, while this is a story about language policies, it is also a story about myself, a reflection about how I might do better in similar moments in the future to enact systemic change. It's a reminder that I need to be self-reflexive in my work and be mindful of the ways that inaction and things left unspoken aid racism. Because ultimately, this particular attempt was not

successful. Curious to see whether things had changed since this discussion, I checked the institution's website. The policy still exists.

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Anti-Racism Across the Curriculum: Practicing an Integrated Approach to WAC and Writing Center Faculty Development

Rebecca Hallman Martini and Travis Webster

> *English is my native tongue, however due to my extremely rural up bring and possible other underlining conditions for which I have not been tested, I am sometimes much less proficient then some would expect . . . [I] dread editing with my PIs because it feels as if they are removing me for the paper . . . . This is particularly frustrating because it seems as if the only problem beyond grammar was not with [the] message itself, but the way the words I used to disseminate it. . . . the most common justification for changes are 'it just feels a little off, let's try it this way. See doesn't that sound better?'. . . . I think, speak, and write in the same manner, which is not what most would consider to be proper English.*
>
> —Eli, Black Male Entomology Graduate Student

Faculty across disciplines teach writing in ways that are both implicitly and explicitly racist. Students are hesitant to name it so, as Eli's words suggest. His "[removal]" from written work with his PIs is more than just a consequence of linguistic diversity, but is, in actuality, enacting harm on his scholarly identity and, ultimately, on his humanity. And yet, this kind of material assault is often not named as such, likely due to an assumption that "racist" is supposedly too harsh of a descriptor for academia. In *How to Be An Antiracist,* Ibram X. Kendi urges us, however, to think of "racist" as "descriptive," since "the only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it—and then dismantle it" (9). Doing so requires a recognition that many white people have trouble acknowledging: "there is no in-between safe space of 'not racist.' The claim of 'not racist' neutrality is a mask for racism" (9). Instead, Kendi argues for the regular doing of anti-racist work via "persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination" as we continuously work to be people who support anti-racist policy through actions and words (23). By extension, most faculty development programs housed in writing centers (WCs) and writing across the curriculum (WAC) initiatives are "not racist." Thus, as two white

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writing program administrators (WPAs), we call for anti-racist faculty development work that encourages other white faculty teaching across disciplines and other white colleague administrators to recognize and act upon this reality. In doing so, we also recognize that anti-racist faculty development is often necessary for all faculty across a range of identity types, since so much of institutionalized education functions according to and within a white racial habitus, as Asao Inoue reminds us (*Ecologies*; *Labor-Based*). In this essay, we draw on April Baker-Bell's *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy* to reimagine how our everyday work in faculty development might change to become more anti-racist through an integrated—rather than one-off or statement-centered—approach.

Specific research into what WAC and WC anti-racist faculty development actually looks like is limited. Both the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum and the International Writing Center Association have anti-racism and social justice statements. WAC and WC scholarship have a tradition of arguing for anti-racist approaches to tutoring and administration, focused primarily, however, on work with students within their programs and tutor training (Greenfield and Rowan; Condon and Young; Hallman Martini and Webster; Riddick and Hooker). Similarly, Cameron Bushnell's recent WAC research argues for the value of recognizing WAC implications in international teaching assistants' experiences, but does not connect his conversation to faculty development. A notable WAC exception focused on faculty development is Mya Poe's article in *Across the Disciplines'* Special Issue, "Anti-Racist Activism: Teaching Rhetoric and Writing." Yet, Poe focuses on course content and raising awareness around stereotyping students.

Recent open-source projects have provided the discipline with concrete resources for anti-racist WAC work, however. Genevieve García de Müeller, for example, recently developed an "Anti-racist WAC Toolkit" that houses valuable documents and specific language for an integrated approach to faculty development. Similarly, we offer the chart below, which overviews writing assignments, language choice, evaluation/assessment, and peer work, in hopes that it will be a usable tool for faculty development across a range of disciplines. Our chart is inspired by Baker-Bell's "linguistic justice," which she defines as "an anti-racist approach to language and literacy education that seeks to dismantle anti-black linguistic racism and white linguistic hegemony and supremacy in classrooms and the world" (7). Given that "social justice" has become a buzzword, as Baker-Bell points out, we prefer to use linguistic justice because of its specificness to the use of words and language in writing. Baker-Bell offers ten framing ideas, of which we

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focus on five that we find especially relevant to WC and WAC faculty development. These ideas include:

1. critically interrogating white linguistic hegemony and Anti-Black Linguistic Racism;

2. naming and working to dismantle the normalization of Anti-Black Linguistic Racism;

3. rejecting the myth that the same language, White Mainstream English (WME), and language education that have been used to oppress Black students can empower them;

4. acknowledging that Black Language is connected to Black people's ways of knowing;

5. relying on Black Language oral and literary traditions to build Black students' linguistic flexibility and creativity skills (Baker-Bell 34)

In the following chart, we identify racist situations we have encountered with other white faculty alongside reactive approaches (direct responses) and proactive approaches (actions that anticipate racist situations and create programming to encourage anti-racism). The chart focuses on how white people can encourage other white people to be anti-racist in their writing instruction, but we understand that white-to-white action isn't the only means by which to enter this conversation, nor are white-to-white interactions the only contexts where these situations arise. However, we find it to be the most appropriate lens for two white administrators to engage in a short article.

In closing, we hope this situational chart continues WAC and WC faculty-focused work that "knowingly strives to be . . . anti-racist" (Kendi 23), and more closely aligns with Baker-Bell's linguistic justice call. As two white faculty administrators, we understand our responsibility to examine our own "non-racist" behavior and to call other white people to do the same through faculty development work. We are too privileged not to do so.

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Table 1: What does anti-racist WAC and WC faculty development look like among white faculty?

Racist Situation	Anti-Racist Reaction	Proactive Anti-Racist Response
Writing Assignments A faculty member heralds WME in both low- and high-stakes writing activities in a writing-intensive course	Call attention to Baker-Bell's arguments that Black Language is deeply ingrained in POCs' "ways of knowing, interpreting, resisting, and surviving in the world" (34); identify the classroom and writing activities as POC disempowering sites that aren't apolitical, neutral, or defaulted anti-racist.	Discuss the different purposes of low- and high-stakes writing and how to best encourage meaning-making across difference; look at examples of student writing that do not follow WME and their merit; model assignment prompts that encourage students to draw on diverse linguistic competencies and explicitly name them as valuable.
Language Choice A faculty member describes telling a student that they "write with an accent."	Ask the faculty member about how "accents" are both respected and disrespected culturally; discuss with the faculty member how word choice and WME makes its way into the classroom and enacts potential violence.	Invite a panel of writers and/or WC tutors to talk with faculty members about the kinds of teacher comments they (the writers and tutors) have received/seen; the panel could discuss how those comments negatively or positively impact writers of color.
Evaluation/ Assessment A faculty member grades with strict adherence to WME instead of content. Students lose points for using Black, home, native, or first languages.	Discuss Baker-Bell's WME theories, who benefits from them, and why; share an anonymous sample of student writing (with permission) and model how to read linguistic diversity as valuable, while also moving into a rich discussion of the essay's content.	Encourage faculty to write about and share their own worst experiences with writing and with the harshest feedback they have received in order to, in part, dispel the myth of a monolithic WME; discuss how these experiences can help shape writing pedagogy in ways that encourage positive feedback experiences; directly discuss the value of labor-based grading contracts that account for a wider range of experiences with, orientations to, and potential progress in writing.

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Racist Situation	Anti-Racist Reaction	Proactive Anti-Racist Response
Peer Work A faculty member runs a peer review workshop without preparing students for the work. As a result, Black students receive primarily sentence-level, correction-style feedback from peers.	Show faculty how to teach students about effective peer review. Create and share documents for these sessions that emphasize higher-order concerns. Encourage dialogue during peer review through which reviewers can ask writers to explain their word choices and decisions. Teach them the strategies of discourse negotiation and encourage a World Englishes approach to clarity and understanding (Matsuda and Matsuda).	Introduce faculty to alternative approaches to peer review that draw on oral traditions, such as the Troika Consulting method, where writers identify a problem or question in their draft, articulate it to peers, and then listen to their peers discuss how the writer might address the problem.

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Do Something!: Forging Constellations of Curricular, Co-Curricular, and Community Opportunities for Anti-Racist Writing Pedagogies at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine

Lucy Del Col, Ana Fowler, Sabrina Mohamed, Alex Onuoha, Sarah (Raph) Raphael, Emily Tamkin, Celia Tolan, Cherrysse Ulsa, and Stephanie Wade

During my interview at Bates College, Crystal Williams, then Dean of Equity and Inclusion, asked how I (Stephanie Wade) integrate equity and inclusion in my work as a writing program administrator. That I did not have a good answer illustrates one of the ways that racism has shaped me, my work, and the field of composition. While my dissertation research had included study of world Englishes and portfolios as anti-racist assessment tools, it ended without investigating code switching. Once appointed as assistant director of Writing @ Bates, a position that includes working with faculty on WAC and WID as well as hiring, training, and supervising writing consultants, I furthered my study to address anti-racism via the work of Vershawn Ashanti Young, Neisha-Anne S Green, April Baker-Bell, Stacy Perryman-Clark, and Asao B. Inoue, which illustrated the harm of assimilationist writing pedagogies and offered alternatives in the forms of code meshing, translingualism, and labor-based grading contracts. I participated in local conversations about racism and the roles of allies via a series of lunches sponsored by our Office of Equity and Inclusion, which taught me to focus my attention on addressing the systematic structures that disempower students of color—especially Black students—in this case in regard to anti-Black linguistic discrimination. In the short essay below, I describe three steps I have taken to do this, and I weave my descriptions of this work with reflections from the students who have participated in this work with me.

My colleagues, a group of peer educators, and I collectively built upon my initial research to design a workshop that we ran on Martin Luther King Day in January of 2019. Peer educators offered presentations that reviewed the history of world Englishes, illustrated the illusion of any Standard English, and demonstrated the relationship between conventional literacy pedagogies, colonialism, and racism. Small group discussions facilitated by the workshop designed provided opportunities for participants to apply what they learned to their own work as writers and teachers. You

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can find all of the workshop material here: https://spark.adobe.com/page/bgeZrQoZ2EnLX/. Drawing over thirty-five attendees and resulting in two campus publications, the workshop raised awareness of linguistic justice on campus and beyond and identified the Writing Center as a site for such work, as the excerpt in *the Bates Student* (our student newspaper) below indicates:

> Code meshing as a counter to code switching is the practice of moving between one or more languages or dialects in the same sentence or situation. Code meshing does not require the compartmentalizing of languages, and reduces the perpetuation of racism through language stigma. At Bates we ought to be committed to the encouragement of the use of multiple dialects and languages, but members of the workshop see places in the community where the commitment can be strengthened. If you want to get involved in promoting language diversity in the Bates community or elsewhere, get in touch with the Bates Writing Center. (Maintaining Our Wild Tongues)

We also used research on anti-racist pedagogy to redesign our practicum for writing tutors, decentering the whiteness of the professional staff of Writing @ Bates and framing the work of the writing center as inherently connected to social justice and racial equity by integrating texts by Neisha-Anne S. Green, Romeo García, Kefaya Diab, and Asao Inoue throughout the course, and having several of these scholars visit via Zoom. In addition to illustrating the harm caused by pedagogical approaches that reify conventional white language standards, our class material demonstrated the historical and linguistic integrity of translingualism and code meshing and offered concrete practices to follow, such as striving to listen across difference with a sense of humility, acknowledging the limits of what we can hear, mirroring, and asking questions rather than making corrections (Green 2016, Garcia 2018). You will find the full syllabus here: https://tinyurl.com/y7223yuj.

Cherrysse Ulsa describes her experience in this class:

> As someone who speaks multiple languages, the short term 2019 practicum allowed me to embrace my writing style by using different voices that my identity brings. Through writers such as Neisha Anne Green and Romeo García, I saw how different writing methods can serve as a tool to not only encourage writers to write in different voices, but also to diversify writing. This was important for me as a multilingual person since standards of writing have also been geared to favor individuals whose mother tongue is standard American English.

In this reflection, Cherrysse makes an important point, a point that scholars in the field of cultural rhetorics make, one that writing program administrators can use: teaching students to read texts in a range of voices and dialects—with particular attention to the intersections between aesthetics, epistemology, identity, and ethics—gives students the tools to push back against conventional, colonial, racist standards; to exercise their diverse voices; and to make spaces for their identities in academia (Powell and Bratta 2016). This means that Writing Program Administrators need to create structures that teach faculty how to do this and that provide ongoing support.

Our second community workshop built on and extended the first in several ways. Prior to Martin Luther King Day, students and staff helped facilitate workshops in the Office of Intercultural Education at Bates and at the Lewiston High School, thus putting research about translingualism, code meshing, and antiracist pedagogy into practice in co-curricular and community spaces. (Canagarajah, 2006; Young 2010; Bell, 2014) On Martin Luther King Day, Bates students shared their own research about and experiences with linguistic justice, and local teens shared multilingual poetry they had composed with their high school teacher and the support of Bates students. We concluded the workshop with a collaborative writing activity that encouraged participants to create multilingual poems. You will find workshop material here: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1oq 6Ge7Q7BOujNxhe9KbuGhhEVOXeF7nSWvuGURdS-yg/edit#slide=id. g6dd176b542_0_354

Three students reflect on this experience below:

> In high school and in college, many educators attempt to minimize the authenticity of a student's voice by implicitly communicating that their language or the use of the language is incorrect. The English language is important in the context of writing in American academic spaces. However, the use of phrases in Black and Latinx cultures should be allowed for students to add color to their language and to express their most authentic self. With this idea, students from Lewiston and Auburn public schools wrote their own poems that reiterated their exuberant backgrounds, languages, and cultures. They presented these poems that consisted of code meshing and multilingualism to the Bates and Lewiston/Auburn community. The experience was beautiful, a sense of community was created. — Alex Onuoha

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The aspect that had the most lasting impact was hearing from so many Lewiston students about their own cultures. Hearing the original poems gave participants the opportunity to see for ourselves how language can be used as a conduit for individuals to express their own experiences. The poems that they composed included pieces of their original languages and gave us a better sense of their identities. The experience of hearing them express themselves in a multilingual format helped emphasize the importance of linguistic diversity for equity and expression in modern academic and artistic works. We then tried our hand at the same exercise to explore how we would impart information about our identities using language and multisensorial detail from our own upbringings. This also helped native English speakers get a better understanding of the challenges involved in code-switching and the barriers posed by the academic English required in the academy. –Emily Tamkin

The second workshop acted as a catalyst for meaningful campus conversations, deeper community relationships, and further projects. Stephanie continued to create a foothold for language justice on campus and others followed suit. I was inspired to write my senior thesis on linguistic racism at Bates and how translingualism, as an anti-racist pedagogy, can be used in the writing center. We expanded our vision for the future and pushed forward with the momentum created by the workshop. –Sarah (Raph) Raphael

In addition to underscoring the point that Cherrysse made, these reflections also emphasize the impact of community listening and demonstrate the importance of community partnerships and co-curricular spaces as opportunities for anti-racist work (Garcia 2016). Writing program administrators can enact this by building in support for community-engagement and by directing faculty to co-curricular opportunities on their campuses. For example, upon learning more about linguistic justice from our workshops, our grants office and our Center for Purposeful Work have begun to attend to linguistic justice in the ways they review student grant applications and the ways they coach students through the writing of professional genres such as cover letters and graduate school application essays. In these ways, our curricular, co-curricular, and community efforts have begun to create a constellation of anti-racist practices to enact systemic change through an array of mechanisms.

In the spring of 2020, I choose the theme of language justice for my first-year seminar to introduce research about linguistic racism and alternative to students at the start of their college experience and to provide oppor-

tunities for socially-distanced community engagement. This class reflected on and shared our experiences with language; we analyzed a range of texts in diverse genres; we worked with multilingual high school students via Zoom; and we designed and shared research projects. The full syllabus is available here: https://sites.google.com/bates.edu/fys-514-f20/home

Three students report on their experiences in this class:

> Coming into college, I wasn't ready. As a first year I feel like you have so many things you're adjusting from making new friends, adjusting to being at PWI, figuring out how you belong in this community. As a first gen student, I think my FYS has helped me become more confident with my writing and has helped connect with my classmates. –Sabrina Mohamed

> I never thought much about writing and language justice before. Now I know that ignorance definitely has something to do with my privilege in society; it's also from a lack of being taught about language justice in school. As the class continued, I began to get more and more interested in the subject matter. After completing the class, I have found that I question society's set standard norms. Also, I have realized how elitist and classist our society is. –Celia Tolan

> Coming into college I expected the English classes to be similar to my high school courses with an accelerated pace of learning and more difficult material. However, Stephanie flipped the typical English course on its head in her course, immersing us in many scholarly essays, poetry and more, which broadened our horizons on language injustice. In addition, we became more metacognitive about the way we speak, write, and express ourselves. This is truly the foundation of human thought: expression of our internal feelings, emotions and thoughts. By providing us the context of language injustice in our world and the power of rhetoric, Stephanie gave us the tools to become more intentional. –Ana Fowler

These reflections echo the points above and underscore the importance of assigning translingual texts that employ code-meshing, of building community-engagement into our work, and of recognizing the overlap between curricular and co-curricular work, practices that allow us to build community in class and beyond, so students learn to take the work of anti-racism out of the classroom. As another student from that class put it:

> I found that with time, the reasoning for studying this material and topic began to change into something that was actually important to me, not just something I had to learn for school. There is a direct

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change from simply learning about something to actually wanting to make a difference and do something with what we learned. –Lucy Del Col

As writing program administrators, we are responsible for putting research into practice so that we, the faculty and staff with whom we work, our students, and our community partners are able to do something about structural racism. Merely assigning texts in individual classes and running workshops are not enough to enact structural change. But, the fact that these steps are not sufficient does not mean that they are not necessary. By centering research in our field about anti-racist writing instruction and by participating in conversations about racism on our campuses, we can identify a range of curricular, co-curricular, and community spaces for sustained, ongoing work to enact structural change. And by listening to and amplifying the voices of our students, we can make the impact of this work visible, and, perhaps, encourage others to do something as well.

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Collaborating Toward an Anti-Racist Writing Curriculum

Katherine Fredlund and Angela Morris

Following George Floyd's murder, the majority-black city of Memphis, Tennessee, like most of the United States, took to the streets.[1] At the protests, we heard Black Lives Matter chants that were common across the nation, but we also heard chants unique to Memphis. One such chant, "I Am A Man," began with the 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike that brought Martin Luther King Jr. to Memphis where he was assassinated. The Memphis sound we heard in this chant and others, a sound full of rhythm and cadence, call and response, testifying and signifying, has long been a fixture of Memphis culture, heard everywhere from the blues joints on Beale Street to the first intentional African American community of Orange Mound to the University of Memphis (UofM) campus. Yet despite the reality that Black language traditions are responsible for much of Memphis's celebrated culture, such traditions were conspicuously absent from UofM's first-year writing classrooms prior to 2016.

UofM is a state school located in Memphis, Tennessee, a city with suburbs located in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, and the university has an enrollment of 22,205 students. The first-year writing program consists of a two-course sequence. An average of 2,551 students enroll in the first course in our sequence per year and an average of 2,916 students enroll in the second course per year. Eighty-seven percent of the courses in the first-year writing program are taught by graduate students and full-time instructors, and the racial demographics of these groups is not representative of UofM's student demographic, a reality we find deeply problematic and know we need to address as part of our ongoing anti-racism initiative. In 2019, UofM's student body was 50.07% White, 32.05% Black, 5.31% Hispanic, 4.25 Asian, 3.62% multi-race, with the remaining percentage identifying as Other. Currently, 65% of our TAs are white, 18.75% identify as Other, and 15.63% are Black. Seventy percent of our full-time instructors are White, 19% are Black, and 15% fall into other race categories.

Scholarship highlighting the significance of Black rhetorical traditions, dialects, and speech dates back to the late 1960s with the work of Geneva Smitherman and James Sledd. Yet despite the adoption of the *Students' Right to Their Own Language Resolution* in 1974, a 2017 study conducted by Genevieve Garcia de Mueller and Iris Ruiz demonstrated that writing programs across the nation continue to fail to investigate the intersections

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of race, literacy, and power, and as a result, fail to support racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students and faculty. With this research and the local and national BLM protests in mind, the first-year writing program composed a statement in support of BLM and encouraged the University's divestment from the Memphis police in summer of 2020. In that statement, we made a commitment to redouble our efforts to craft an anti-racist first-year writing program, efforts we began in 2016 in response to earlier manifestations of the BLM movement, Vershawn Ashanti Young's scholarship, and Asao Inoue's 2016 CWPA keynote. To do this, we implemented a number of curricular and professionalization interventions including a language diversity initiative that included codemeshing workshops for instructors and TAs and the formal inclusion of African American rhetorical practices in the curriculum.

Encouraging Language Diversity First-Year Writing

While our initial efforts to create an anti-racist writing program involved creating a localized, Memphis-focused curriculum that includes more diverse voices and engages students in discussions of race, power, and literacy, the TAs challenged the program (and Katie, as WPA) to do more, asking for practical ways to encourage code-meshing and language diversity in their classrooms. In response, all of our Fall 2019 professionalization meetings focused on language diversity. Drawing on the work of Vershawn Ashanti Young and Neisha-Anne S. Green, the first meeting of the academic year introduced all the TAs to code-meshing by recreating the activity Green outlines in "The Reeducation of Neisha-Anne S Green: A Close Look at the Damaging Effects of 'A Standard Approach,' The Benefits of Code-Meshing, and the Role Allies Play in this Work." The activity asks students to create a concept map with themselves in the center and the discourse communities they belong to represented by circles that intersect with this center. Green then crosses out one of the communities to illustrate the intersection of language and identity. Students' responses to this deletion help them understand the inherent violence of rejecting someone's language. Using this activity as our starting point for the semester, we encouraged TAs to recreate this exercise in their own courses and to help students think about the ways they already code-mesh and how such code-meshing might help them compose for their courses, remembering Young's points that we all code-mesh but some of our code-meshed language is considered more acceptable than others. Since the first course in the writing sequence includes a literacy narrative, students could begin codemeshing in a genre where it might feel more comfortable, particularly because stu-

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dents read Young's work as well as a piece by Sandra Cicneros that merges multiple languages.

To continue encouraging language diversity, later meetings included a panel of linguists (both faculty and grad students in the English department) that considered how to respect and encourage students' home languages, including local Memphian dialects as well as the languages of international students. Other meetings invited faculty from our department's African American Literature concentration to discuss how to facilitate hard conversations about race and how to respond to student resistance. Finally, we held a meeting that invited faculty of different genders, races, nationalities, and classes to hold breakout sessions that discussed how the teacher's positionality impacted discussions of race and student-teacher interaction. Without the expertise and generosity of members from our department's different concentrations, the push to create an anti-racist writing program would have been nearly impossible; collaboration and conversation were key to our language diversity initiative.

Introducing African American Rhetorical Traditions

In addition to encouraging code-meshing, we piloted the teaching of African American rhetorical traditions in the 2019–20 academic year. While the curriculum already included readings by diverse authors, it relied only on Western rhetoric to teach argumentation, with its inspiration in the Classics. Following anti-racism's pedagogical call to not only celebrate diversity but also to investigate how race is constructed and how educational systems implicitly uphold racist ideology (Barlow, 2016; Condon & Young, 2017; Gilyard, 1999; Inoue, 2015; Pimental et al., 2017), Angela used a project in Katie's research methods class to investigate Geneva Smitherman's anti-racist work and subsequently challenged the program, and particularly the second rhetorically focused course, to incorporate African American rhetorical traditions. To do this, we paired the teaching of four Black rhetorical tools (narrativizing/testifying, call and response, rhythm and cadence, and signifying) alongside Ancient Greek classics (ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos), recognizing how an enriched rhetorical toolkit could improve students' writing, as evidenced by Smitherman's twenty-year study.

Relying on the work of Smitherman, Keith Gilyard, and Adam Banks, Angela and Sylvia Barnes, a student from the African American Literature concentration, co-wrote a chapter that introduces students to the four African American rhetorical traditions listed above. Heeding Aja Y. Martinez's contention that counterstories are key in investigations of race and racism, the textbook chapter historicizes the origins of Black discourse in the U.S.

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in order to help students understand how rhetorical strategies arise contextually—in response to rhetorical ecologies. Students are then challenged to utilize these rhetorical strategies in their own researched arguments. Upon completion of their first draft, students are asked to compose a reflective letter. One part of this letter asks students to address why they chose or did not choose to use Black rhetorical traditions in their argument, and since they are reflecting on a first draft, it also asks them to actively consider how using such traditions might improve certain parts of their paper when they revise. In peer review, students are directed to identify rhetorical moves associated with both Western and African American traditions. Peer reviewers are also asked to point out places where including African American rhetorical traditions could improve the author's argument. In learning about the differences between these two traditions and being challenged to use at least one rhetorical move from each tradition in their writing, students are better able to comprehend the social nature of writing while also being introduced to rhetorical tactics not afforded by classical traditions.

In Spring 2020, we conducted a survey in four first-year writing classrooms following a pilot that included instruction in Black rhetorical traditions as well as discussions and activities intended to help students codemesh in rhetorically effective ways. Of the 68 participants who responded to the survey, 34% were White, 27% Black, 22% Hispanic, 8% Multi-Race, 6% Asian, and 1% American Indian.[2] Sixty percent of respondents reported their cultural rhetorics/language had not been represented in previous English courses. Yet when asked if their cultural rhetoric/language was represented in the pilot course, 81% said yes. This 41% increase indicates that by considering our city's demographics and responding in kind, we were able to develop a curriculum that represented a much larger percentage of our student body.

While students of color who do not identify as Black may not see their own cultural rhetorics valued in this curriculum, they still found value in being introduced to multiple rhetorical traditions. For example, Hira Qureshi, a journalism student who participated in the pilot, was inspired by the curriculum and wrote about how the new curriculum impacted students for a local magazine, *Memphis Mirror.* After interviewing her classmates, Quershi's article discusses how Black students felt validated after investigating and reflecting upon Black language and its role in American culture. In her article, Quershi quotes a peer: "A lot of the typical coursework doesn't touch on race. It doesn't really touch on a lot of the present things that we go through revolving around our skin color. So, I think [the additional curriculum] opens that door, period, for everyone to discuss it." Other students shared how not "shying away" from the discussion of

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race and writing also encouraged them to use diverse cultural traditions to strengthen their work.

Our survey results indicated that we need to continue to work to ensure all 100% of students are seen and heard in our courses. While we cannot cover every rhetorical tradition in a first-year writing course, we responded to this need by adding reading responses and in-class activities to our custom textbook that ask students who may not see themselves in either of the traditions we focus on to do some research into their own cultural heritage and its rhetorical traditions. This custom textbook is also a collaboration, edited by Katie but with chapters composed by many TAs and instructors. At least at this moment, this particular kind of localized anti-racist curriculum would be impossible without that textbook. Further, without the work of the four TAs who volunteered to pilot the new curriculum and Angela's work in Katie's methods course and for her dissertation, this curricular change would have taken much longer and more students would have completed our first-year writing courses without investigating the benefits of multiple rhetorical traditions.

Continuing Our Anti-racist Work

As any WPA can attest, our work never feels done and it almost always feels like we should be doing more. When Katie began to consult the research on how to develop an anti-racist writing program, she felt overwhelmed by how much needed to change. Yet the anti-racist writing pedagogy discussed here was implemented in steps and continues today. Making a single change or intervention each semester can and will slowly build an anti-racist program. Further, these changes were made possible through both the generosity of other faculty who donated their time and expertise and through the hard work of graduate students teaching within the program. TAs in the department encouraged the program to make language diversity, code-meshing, and anti-racist pedagogy a priority by conducting related research for their class projects. They also created anti-racist classroom practices and activities that they shared with other writing instructors who might not have the time or expertise to take on such work. This continued into the Fall 2020 semester when the graduate students in the TA training and writing pedagogy course decided to create a labor-based grading contract for their class project, taking their inspiration from Inoue and others. In our final TA meeting of the Fall 2020 semester, they shared their contract and semester timeline with the other TAs in the program and encouraged them to adapt it for their own use. Other TAs requested that a Spring 2021 professionalization session be dedicated to learning the linguistic features of Memphian

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Black English so that they can better encourage the rhetorically effective code-meshing Young calls for and demonstrates in his scholarship. So while this anti-racist work— like all WPA work—never feels (or is) done, programs can start slowly, work in steps, and build momentum through collaboration. Anti-racist work is inherently collaborative, and WPAs should look to other members of their departments and ask for them to share their expertise in creating and sustaining a localized program that responds to the needs of their student body.

Notes

1. 64.11% of Memphis's population is Black, 29.23% is White, and 3.28% is other.

2. This survey participation slightly over-represents minorities as compared to our university demographics. That said, the respondents to the survey more accurately represent the demographics of students in our first-year writing courses since many of U of M's students have taken Dual Enrollment or transfer into the University and do not enroll in first-year writing courses.

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Confronting the Comp Classroom: Implementing Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Navigating Opposition

Daniel Summerhill, Kelly Medina-López, and Sam Robinson

Problem

Cal State Monterey Bay (CSUMB) is a relatively new university; we just celebrated our 25th Anniversary. We are a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with 45% Latinx student population, 53% first-generation students, and many from working-class backgrounds. Since its creation, CSUMB has been a campus dedicated to interdisciplinarity. Because of this we have a diffuse model for general education courses including our first-year composition (FYC) courses. FYC courses are currently offered by four different departments in three different colleges. Our program, Humanities and Communication (HCOM), offers approximately 70 to 75% of the FYC courses on campus.

In 2017 the CSU system issued an executive order (see EO1100 & EO1110) to eliminate noncredit-bearing remedial writing and math courses based on research showing that students of color were disproportionately, negatively impacted by remediation courses. Nearly 25% of students placed in remediation did not continue in college beyond their first year. This change required all CSUs to reconsider how students are placed in FYC courses and what support is offered to them. Despite offering the majority of FYC sections on our campus, HCOM was not included in our campus conversations about how to best serve students in accordance with EO1100. Instead, administrators and the director of the program that offered a former remedial writing course, created a two-semester "stretch" course to fill the gap in student support left by eliminating our remedial writing courses. Students earn credit for both semesters of work, but only fulfill the general education requirement after the second semester is completed.

Over time, HCOM has grown increasingly concerned about how students and which students are placed in the stretch model. We think the current practice reflects deficit-thinking about our students, while we subscribe to an assets-based approach. Because of this we have redesigned our FYC course and created a new support course grounded in anti-racist, culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP). We refer to our anti-racist FYC course, support course, and the related pedagogy, professional development materials, workshops, and trainings as our anti-racist FYC ecology. Below we discuss

how we built our ecology, and offer insight from our experiences for other administrators and programs interested in doing similar work.

Exigence

Beginning in the spring of 2020, Daniel, Kelly and Sam collectively decided to address the issues of linguistic racism and systemic coding of translingual students of color locally by transforming our current ecosystem of FYC courses and supports into an ecosystem based on anti-racist, asset-based and culturally sustaining pedagogies. We each had particular reasons for our work on the project:

Daniel: I reconsidered my approach to FYC after posed with the question, "what good is anti-racist writing if there's nothing to show for it?" As a Black scholar and proponent of language decolonization, this question became less about what I failed to do as a practitioner, but rather the consequences of neglecting to focus attention on anti-racism in the classroom. Because we've historically taught FYC based on the assimilation of standardized English, failing to subvert this practice is to promote white supremacy (Inoue, 2019, p. 377).

Kelly: As a translingual Latinx and Indigenous woman from Paso del Norte, I noticed discrepancies in how translingual students were coded as language deficient on the white-languaging Central Coast. In policy, the CSU moved to eliminate remediation, but remnants of Prop 227 remained entrenched in our institutional structures. My efforts to bring anti-racist practices to FYC had been largely curbed by institutional walls, 2020's shift in attention towards racial justice opened new doors.

Sam: I am frustrated by the prevalence of faculty and administrators showing deficit-thinking about our students. As department Chair, I realize how important it is for students to know they belong and can succeed in college. Using asset-based, anti-racist pedagogy in FYC courses will help with the sense of belonging and provide students with the writing and reading skills necessary to get their degrees.

Together, we have an understanding of the history of linguistic racism and deficit-based classroom pedagogies that exist across colleges. Furthermore, we understand the importance of establishing a more equitable and inclusive FYC program in the fledgling years of a university, such as ours.

Research

In our approach to the revision of our FYC ecology, we understood that one of the first tasks for seeking campus approval for our FYC revisions was grounding our work in a strong pedagogy. We knew that there was campus support for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP—see Gloria Ladson-Billings), and decided that Django Paris' (CSP) would both fit our needs and our campus culture. Paris, with H. Samy Alim, developed CSP as a pedagogy that perpetuates and fosters - or sustains - "linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling." (Paris and Alim, 95). Because CSUMB is a diverse HSI, CSP responds to both the student population and our goals as racial-justice educators. CSP was an easy "sell" because support for CSP already exists at our university: our center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment lists "Culturally Responsive Teaching and Assessment" as a professional development priority and provides resources on CSP.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges we saw with how and which students were taking which FYC courses at CSUMB was an entrenched White Language Supremacy (WLS). We wanted a pedagogy that was not only responsive and relevant, but that actively supported and sustained linguistic and literate pluralism without the hidden curriculum of educating students to be White-listening, White-speaking, and White-writing (see Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores). CRP, while laying the groundwork for maintaining heritage culture and language, does not actively guarantee that it will be sustained. CSP, however, while still being attached to a familiar campus pedagogy, is built on that very imperative.

Recognizing WLS as the motivator for how and which students were taking which FYC courses, we also wanted to link CSP to anti-racist assessment. We align ourselves with Asao Inoue when he says "If you use a single standard to grade your students' languaging, you engage in racism," and built anti-racist assessment—like labor-based grading contracts—into the foundations of our course revisions ("How do we language?" p. 359). By grounding our work in a pedagogy that was adjacent to one already broadly accepted at CSUMB and pairing it with anti-racist assessment practices, we created the necessary structure for building our ecology.

Solutions

Months before the courses were designed, Sam initiated a conversation with our interim Dean about our vision for FYC. The goal was to explain how our asset-based approach would encourage students to be bold and more meaningfully engage in their learning. Our courses provide a model

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of an optional workshop for students who want more support. This helps our campus to align with the CSU vision when it removed remedial composition courses from our curriculum. While he was warm to the idea, we knew we had much work to do. The courses needed to be structurally sound because of the broader campus context; we could expect pushback from administration, and another department that also offers writing courses.

Like other campuses, when we transitioned to remote instruction due to COVID-19, equity gaps became even more apparent. While this shift made collaboration on the project more difficult, it bolstered our commitment to the courses and the need for a new approach to FYC. Over the summer we asked Daniel to join the project and together, he and Kelly took the lead in designing the courses. Sam's work was to continue to promote the courses and the need for more courses like it in our curriculum to our Dean. We wanted his full support well in advance of the courses reaching him in the curricular approval process. With each of us realizing our project through our individual strengths and institutional roles, we were able to approach our redesign, with clear and tangible goals that included key stake-holders, administrative buy in, and curricular shifts.

As Daniel and Kelly got to work, one of their first goals in their curricular efforts to redress FYC was to combat WLS. Because language is inherently attached to our social identity and our identities are a result of racialization, language too, falls victim to racism. Forcing students to abandon their home language suppresses their identities and also establishes a level of false superiority in the language they are asked to assimilate to. To work against this, we've designed assignments aimed at supporting student voice, leveraging lived experience, and developing an arena for analyzing text in relation to culture, context and power dynamics.

Specifically, Kelly developed "Corrido-ing Composition," an assignment that engages students in community and oral history writing through corridos (Mexican folk ballads). Students compose corridos while considering genre, language, audience, community and cultural epistemologies, information literacy, and knowledge production all within the very real contexts of institutional power dynamics and "what counts" as university writing. Daniel designed a similar assignment, "Language as Culture," which asks students to consider the relationship between language and culture to develop attention to voice and authenticity. Through textual analysis, students develop an eye for audience, genre and voice, which naturally draws upon descriptive frameworks as opposed to prescriptive frameworks that reinforces white language supremacy.

To further support our anti-racist ecology, we also re-center student voice and experience by publishing a writing and research journal, *Writing*

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Waves (WW). WW is produced by students in a digital publishing practicum and publishes essays by FYC students. *WW* is the accessible, zero-cost course text for FYC. The final assignment in our course is to produce an article that students are encouraged to submit for publication. *WW*, as part of the structure of our anti-racist ecology, allows students to see their diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences as valued and valuable.

Considering anti-racist grading and assessment and moving away from the historically problematic nature of traditional grading systems based on WLS, we use grading contracts adapted from composition scholar, Asao Inoue. Since compositionists agree language and meaning are constructed, we understand there are multiple ways to to evaluate writing (Inoue, 2019, 384). By focusing on labor, rather than rank and measure, students are able to take risks and approach assignments creatively. By incorporating grading contracts, the idea of "safety" that surfaces as a condition for learning becomes a mechanism in which students feel supported and affirmed in their task of languaging. Daniel and Kelly worked together to distill their exemplar assignments, the development of *WW*, and anti-racist grading into the foundation for their course design.

Once these major curricular shifts were articulated in a mentor syllabus for each course, our courses went through a pre-review from our campus General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC). Interestingly, another department that offers FYC also proposed a new course, which uses more traditional frameworks and requires an additional support course. Unfortunately, this department continues to remediate students at levels disproportionate with the rest of the CSU. Both courses were pre-reviewed at the same time by a small sub-committee of GECC members. While the more traditional course passed through without revision, our GE course generated multiple questions about pedagogy and grading and required revisions to satisfy the sub-committee. We revised per the sub-committee comments and resubmitted for full review, where the course received approval. It's worth noting that because of the anti-racist components of our courses we had to jump additional hurdles to receive approval as compared to the more traditional FYC course. We received similar questions from the college curriculum committee even after the revisions.

Takeaways and Next Steps

Because redressing our FYC program is in large part, a cultural shift, it is important to acknowledge the urgency of our current cultural climate which prompted two of the largest governing professional bodies of composition, National Council of Teachers of English and Conference on College

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Composition and Communication to take stances against WLS in FYC. Justifying our changes through these two organizations allowed us to add weight and urgency to our arguments: the field supports these moves, the time for significant structural change is now.

And the changes we are institutionalizing now are very much structural: like all ecologies, the writing ecology we developed are networked across campus. No matter how strong our program is, these outside influences could make or break our ecology, and there are valid concerns with how our students are placed into FYC. Identifying key stakeholders and cultivating their support is a crucial, lengthy step. Leveraging our curricular leadership positions in the review process to advance the courses was also a key step. Despite this we still received more pushback than other courses that use traditional pedagogies.

Building the structure and support so all faculty who teach FYC are adequately resourced and prepared to meet our anti-racist outcomes is also crucial. Most administrators and academic leadership are familiar with traditional pedagogies, and less so with anti-racist, decolonial classroom practices. Reaching out early on in our process allowed us time to introduce them to new concepts and to tie our new FYC courses directly to student success, building pathways for success and support as we institutionalize our FYC ecosystem.

It is important to keep in mind that we *are* building an ecosystem, including cohorted professional development workshops for faculty teaching our revised model of FYC. Our workshop curriculum includes focus on syllabus and assignment design, grading and assessment as well as lesson planning. Faculty interested in teaching in our program must apply and commit to professional development, which they receive a certificate for upon completion. Through administrative support, advocacy, professional development programs and the revision of our FYC courses, we hope to evolve our ecosystem further and transform the way composition is taught at CSUMB.

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Telling It Like It Is: A Narrative Account of Designing a Race and Ethnicity Requirement at a PWI in the Middle of Black Lives Matter

M. O'Brien and Cynthia Pengilly

The 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and protests following the murder of Black individuals by law enforcement produced an immediate response across higher education, from the deluge of formal statements to attempts to include anti-racist practices. The responses from our primarily white institution (PWI) exemplify the fraught nature of these initiatives when undertaken by faculty of color. Even as institutions are compelled to assess their complicity in the systemic racism that undergirds violence toward Blacks, resistance to policy and pedagogical shifts remain palpable. We narrate our experiences here to identify the complexities of speaking back and initiating change at a PWI, and how a race and ethnicity (R&E) requirement revealed the disparity between the status quo and institutional commitments in the wake of BLM.

In the spring of 2020, we, two early-career, untenured, WPAs worked with a senior team of experts in diversity, inclusion, and ethnic studies to develop a proposal for an R&E requirement as one method of meeting institutional goals for diversity and inclusion.[1] The team was mostly composed of faculty of color, including ourselves (serving as WPAs in our respective programs of literature and professional writing). By harnessing our curricular expertise as WPAs, we proposed that all students would take a writing course with approved outcomes related to race, racism, and ethnic diversity prior to graduation.

We recognized that such a requirement is just a single step toward inclusion and remediating the long history of PWIs privileging Eurocentric and colonialist forms of knowledge. A race and ethnicity requirement alone does not decrease racism and increase anti-racist practices; however, its implementation acknowledges the roles that systemic racism, white privilege, and culturally-based prejudice play in marginalizing diverse experiences.

We viewed this requirement as a bureaucratically complex, but ultimately necessary move toward more inclusive pedagogical practices—practices that have been successfully implemented throughout the state and normalized elsewhere since the 1990s. Our proposal argued that such a requirement would be vital at our university, where "race and racism inform all encounters on campus and in our curriculum," and that following the

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institutional "emphasis on diversity and inclusivity as a method of attracting and retaining students" such a requirement is simply "overdue."

For some, this requirement was a logical step toward the diversification of knowledge. It would complement pre-existing writing courses in interdisciplinary ethnic studies programs and align with the work already accomplished by our mentors and colleagues. We remain tremendously grateful for these responses and commitments.

Our experiences fielding the other three common responses exemplify racial battle fatigue, which refers to the aggregate psychological and physiological stressors triggered by racism within institutions that center whiteness and devalue the work and expertise of faculty of color, particularly Black faculty (Smith 2004; Hughes 2019). We use racial battle fatigue as a framework to articulate the misalignment between widespread positive responses to BLM versus the limitations of allyship when the status quo entails disengagement from race-related issues.

We identify these responses as follows:

(1) **Hands in the cookie jar: immediate attempts by academic units without pre-existing experience or interest teaching in these areas to stake out a claim to race-based and anti-racist pedagogy rather than prioritizing the experiences of faculty already working in these areas (largely BIPOC); this extends not from an eagerness to learn about these topics, but from concerns about missing out on any possible revenue generated by this requirement.**

(2) **Same ol', same ol': the refusal to take the proposal seriously and creatively engage with its implementation, followed by comments that the requirement is too complicated, unnecessary, and expensive.**

(3) **Not enough melanin: the realization that the longstanding lack of BIPOC faculty and faculty who can instruct in these areas might actually be an impediment toward institutional progress (despite numerous climate surveys, institutional mandates, and working groups that previously identified this issue), and embarrassment that the homogeneity of the professoriate would be laid bare by the requirement's implementation.**

The proposal's development was atypical and informal, and developed on a volunteer basis rather than through a normative committee or formal structures. This approach was necessary due to the lack of a standing senate committee to address issues on race and diversity.[2] This glaring omission speaks to systemic issues and furthers the racial battle fatigue experienced by BIPOC faculty. As a solution to the above three responses and outcry

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over the R&E proposal's informal development, the faculty senate created a temporary task-force to consider the proposal alongside other antiracist strategies. This solution takes a weaker position (i.e. less official) to address the aggregate systemic issues identified in the original proposal, and risks undermining the research, advocacy, and expertise of BIPOC faculty and white accomplices involved in developing the requirement. The task force's temporary nature coupled with its membership criteria hampers their ability to address systemic issues both within the R&E proposal and beyond.[3]

We are left grappling with how this attempt to address systemic racism reproduced numerous racial stressors. For faculty of color, this process placed racial battle fatigue at the nexus of the institutional discussions and debates in the months to come. Many faculty, including white accomplices and experts, engaged with the R&E proposal thoughtfully during committee meetings, offering support and knowledge while deferring to expertise of BIPOC. Yet these contributions could not temper the suspicion, indifference, and uncollegial resistance that followed via informal complaints to upper administrators from the academic units who benefit from the status quo, nor the microaggressions that devalue the work of those who teach writing about race and racism at a PWI.

Our recommendation to other WPAs at PWIs would be to remain aware that academic and program proposals follow a very standardized and routine process through the institutional review structure, which is often reviewed by individuals lacking expertise and experiential awareness needed to foster antiracist initiatives. Working instead with higher level administrators who may, at the very least, see these initiatives as beneficial for recruitment and retention can potentially bypass these pathways altogether, or imbue these proposals with the authority necessary to disrupt the status quo and establish a new institutional ethos.

NOTES

1. CWU has received the Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award six out of the last seven years, with the most recent award in 2020.

2. A request for a standing senate committee of this nature was formally proposed in 2019 and never implemented.

3. As with other senate committees, this task-force is composed of one representative from each College. However, this standardized approach to membership is not equitable in this case when there is a profound lack of spaces where Faculty of Color can have their experiential knowledge taken seriously. It thus works to limit the participation of faculty of color under the guise of equality or equal representation.

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Recursive Interventions: A Coalitional Approach to Anti-Racist Pedagogy at Middle Tennessee State University

Erica M. Stone and Erica Cirillo-McCarthy

This vignette narrates the beginning of our anti-racist coalition at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). We are both fairly new in our positions at MTSU. Erica Cirillo-McCarthy is finishing her third year as the University Writing Center (UWC) Director, and Erica Stone started her new position as Associate Director of General Education English (GEE) in Fall 2020. Our outsider positioning helped us recognize the need for anti-racist programs in our academic units, and we were unaware of any programmatic history or interdepartmental or institutional politics that might have stopped previous attempts. As new faculty, we asked questions, built relationships, and revealed something important about anti-racist work: it is recursive, reflective, and requires intersectional coalitions (Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019, p. 133) that allow for snowballing efforts. As interpersonal connections are made and trust is established, a coalition's work picks up speed and space, gathering more collaborators, expanding not only its range but its power. Writing this vignette afforded us the time and space to consider our work up to this point and highlight the germane components of our coalition by sharing our stories with WPA readers.

Erica Stone's Story

Prior to moving to Middle Tennessee in July 2020, I'd spent four years organizing, researching, and teaching about Kansas City's racist housing policies, food access inequality, and unequal healthcare availability. After spending most of 2020 watching my city erupt in weeks of civil unrest over the deaths of George Floyd, Brianna Taylor, and countless victims of racist violence across the United States, I was even more determined to continue recognizing, revealing, rejecting, and replacing (Walton et. al., 2019) oppressive practices and policies as a teacher-scholar. Through this lived experience and positionality (and with quite a lot of privilege), I came to Middle Tennessee looking for ways to carry on my community-centered work in a new city and state with the understanding that place-based work is not immediately transferable and requires a relational foundation that is difficult to establish in the midst of a global pandemic.

As a brand-new PhD and first-time tenure-track faculty member, I joined the General Education English (GEE) team's remote planning ses-

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sions for our Fall 2020 Orientation and Curriculum Meeting and tried to contribute meaningful work without a contextualized knowledge of the GEE program's ongoing anti-racist work (e.g., directed self-placement; labor-based grading). As a community organizer, I recognize the power of precise and transparent language as an activist practice. During one of our planning sessions in May 2020, I noted the presence of anti-racist work within GEE, but identified an absence of precise language describing it. As such, the GEE team made a concerted effort to be more transparent in our language by creating anti-racist pedagogy modules in our GenEd English Online Community that provided specific instruction on contract and labor-based grading practices. Additionally, we added an online 'faculty lounge' where we invited faculty and graduate students to talk asynchronously about anti-racist readings and share resources. Even though the program was already working on anti-racist projects such as directed self-placement and labor-based grading, the GEE team agreed that the addition of explicit language describing our work as anti-racist would further promote equity and inclusion within our GEE professional development sessions and our decidedly anti-racist orientation to first-year writing and general education administration.

In addition to reviewing our programmatic goals and curricular expectations, our Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Curriculum Meetings featured workshops on anti-racist syllabus design, inclusive class content, microaggression intervention strategies, and labor-based assessment procedures, which focused specifically on our first-year writing courses (Perryman-Clark & Lamont Craig 2019; Cowan, 2020; Inoue, 2019). Our workshops leaned heavily on the lived experiences of our faculty and focused on intentional reflection and recursive interventions of our own (often racist) actions and beliefs as individuals. Following Kendi (2019), we reminded our GEE faculty (and ourselves) that anti-racist work is recursive and reflective, and most importantly, never complete. In response to the positive feedback we received about the anti-racist pedagogies workshop, we invited graduate students and faculty from across the department to participate in an anti-racist pedagogies reflection group in Fall 2020, which grew into an intersectional coalition within the English Department that aims to combat departmental and institutional racism through egalitarian, community-based, and feminist administration practices (Ratcliffe & Rickly, 2010); graduate student and faculty workshops on anti-racist pedagogies; equitable and qualitative directed self-placement processes; and review and revision of policies.

Erica Cirillo-McCarthy's Story

A screenwriting faculty member recently asked me if I was "one of those people who think grammar is racist," right before she told me her Black students simply cannot write. I wish I could say she was the only faculty to express this sentiment, but that's not true. I knew that I wanted to cultivate anti-racist writing center practices, but hesitated. "Can I do this as a junior faculty member? What will faculty like the screenwriting professor think?" Like many scholars, after the summer of 2020, it became clear: if white scholars don't explicitly engage in anti-racist practice now, when will they? I sent off a memo to my dean describing anti-racist writing center practice and my intentions.

Our weekly tutor education meetings started to focus explicitly on oppressive language practices, impressing upon tutors that higher education practices and pedagogies sustain and reproduce white privilege and white supremacy by centering white, middle class writing practices (Inoue, 2019). Many of them already sense that the elevation of one variety of English as the standard is arbitrary, anti-rhetorical, and serves only to punish students of color using other English varieties (Greenfield, 2011); however, tutors tend to see their tutoring role as one with limited power/agency. They have openly expressed to me that they have very little hope that change can occur within higher education. This is one way white supremacy works: it convinces everyone that they are powerless cogs in a machine so that no one fights to change the status quo. To that end, I develop ongoing tutor education that facilitates a shift in how tutors understand their role: from one that has no power and thus has no options but to capitulate to the status quo, to one that can—and in fact, has an ethical responsibility to—be explicitly anti-racist (Greenfield & Rowan, 2011). After reading the variety of ways BIPOC students experience writing centers (Green, 2016; Burrows, 2016; Epps-Robertson, 2016; Martinez, 2016), tutors critique tutoring practices that encourage students to erase or obscure linguistic variety just to get through one class or one assignment. Then, tutors identify practices that facilitate complex discussions with students about racist institutional structures, like higher education, while inviting students to consider ways they can rhetorically negotiate racist pedagogical practices.

I saw evidence of this shift last week when a panel of tutors presented on anti-racist tutoring pedagogy at our regional writing center conference. They are not 100% comfortable using the terms anti-racist pedagogy and writing center practices, but by talking about linguistic variety and white supremacy in assignments and assessment practices in such a public venue, I see growth in their understanding of the important role anti-racist writ-

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ing center practice serves in resisting and subverting oppressive language practices in higher education.

Anti-racist tutoring pedagogy resonates with undergraduate tutors who also take my tutoring pedagogy course, but writing center administrators also train English department graduate students who tutor as part of their assistantship. Literature graduate students tend to have internalized the concept of a standard English, so one hour a week of anti-racist discussion felt inadequate. Anti-racist graduate education implies facilitating paradigm shifts about diversity, language, and education, all which demand time, labor, and emotion (Ahmed, 2012; Micciche, 2016; Miller-Cochran, 2018). Thankfully, these graduate students enroll in a pedagogy course taught by our GEE director or associate director in their first semester, allowing the two administrators to amplify anti-racist concepts and pedagogy.

Our Coalition's Story

Ultimately, sustainable anti-racist pedagogy must be shouldered by more than one person or unit, and its pedagogical efficacy lies with students engaging with anti-racist concepts in multiple contexts. Because so much of our time was taken up with listening and relationship building, and all of the other things that take up new junior faculty time, we did not realize that each of us contributed to anti-racist programming in our respective units—units that are discrete and yet overlap in important ways. We now meet formally each month in the anti-racist pedagogy reflection group started by Erica Stone. She has expertly moved our reflective group towards the action stage, while also growing the group. Coalitioning, in our context, means actively identifying stakeholders and then growing the group through interpersonal outreach. Inviting people who have departmental history allows us to recognize and reveal racist historical practices. We also worked mindfully to avoid an all-white group of participants by personally inviting BIPOC colleagues to join. We knew, though, that we had to encourage their participation without making them feel like they would have to do the heavy lifting as BIPOC members of the group, an all-too-common (and admittedly goodhearted) mistake in anti-racist academic groups. To avoid this pitfall, we are committed to recursive reflection and evaluative feedback from our BIPOC coalition members, and we prioritize their lived experiences and concerns during our discussions. But we also understand that our eagerness and sincerity isn't enough to persuade our colleagues that this isn't just another anti-racist academic group, and so we work on expanding our definition of coalitioning to include multiple positionalities and various ways to coalition. Another issue of which we were

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mindful is the potential in these groups to do a collective reading but then stop short of action. We wanted to ensure we moved our coalition from reading and discussion toward ethical and policy-driven action, which is what we're focused on as this issue goes to press in May 2021. Then collaboratively, in a multivocal way that decenters whiteness, our ever-growing snowball of anti-racist practitioners can reject and replace racist pedagogy with anti-racist pedagogy and oppressive practices with inclusive policies.

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Anti-Racist Classroom Practices

Teaching Anti-Racist Reading Practices in First-Year Writing

Felicita Arzu Carmichael

Few in our field question that the first-year writing course is a space to theorize and practice writing and research, but, largely in response to the #BlackLivesMatter movement, many in the field also recognize that FYW is "inextricably implicated in histories of systemic racism" (CWPA, 2020). Building on scholars who demand for our field to reassess our oppressive past (Maraj, Prasad, & Roundtree, 2018) and who advocate for "inclusive and action-oriented" scholarship and pedagogy (Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019), I argue that it behooves us to ensure that our pedagogy, policies, and programs create the space for FYW students to develop a keen awareness of systemic racism and social injustices; this way, students can understand their responsibility to help dismantle those racist institutionalized systems and work toward effecting positive social change.

In this essay, I share possibilities for anti-racist pedagogy in FYW through attention to the kinds of literacy practices we privilege. In the sections that follow, I first discuss my investigation of diversity and inclusive practices in my department's FYW program. Then I demonstrate how I used that inquiry to design an assignment that teaches anti-racist reading, enacting Rembert, Harris, and Hamilton's (2019) call for us to be anti-racist educators. I argue that teaching anti-racist reading practices in FYW promotes awareness of linguistic violence and justice in literacy practices and allows us to be purposeful and explicit about our "responsibility to implement anti-racist practices" that "actively work to dismantle structures of white privilege" (CWPA, 2020).

FYW Program Investigation

In winter 2020, I conducted an investigation into my department's FYW program, specifically one of the general education courses.[1] The goal was to identify if and how the program was enacting inclusive pedagogy by promoting a diversity of perspectives and voices in the curricula. I paid particular attention to course syllabi, reading assignments, supplemental textbooks, and assignment descriptions for twenty-eight sections of our FYW general education course.

I recognize, as Shelton (2020) unapologetically argues, that "concepts like diversity pepper curricula" (p. 21). For this reason, I identified not only where attention to *difference* emerged but also how they were addressed through the work students were asked to do. What I learned was that explicit attention to diverse perspectives was not evident in most course materials. While I assumed that these issues emerged in instructors' classroom pedagogy, its absence in available materials was enough to heighten my awareness about the need for our FYW courses to be more intentional and explicit about centering linguistic, cultural, and racial perspectives. To demonstrate the explicitness of centering diverse perspectives in FYW, I designed my FYW courses with social justice, diversity and inclusion as foundational course values. One assignment that shows this approach is the "Literacy, Language, and Reading Habits Forum," assignment, which teaches anti-racist reading.

Teaching Anti-Racist Reading Habits

In preparation for a research project where I asked students to use a social justice lens to generate a list of questions about a topic related to their major, one student noted to me that these issues were unrelated to their major in biomedical studies. While this student's comment was not representative of all FYW students', it did signal to me that students might not have had the opportunity to consider how the perspectives of minoritized populations are relevant to the goals of their field of study; thus, anti-racist lens of studying and practicing rhetorical approaches to writing must be taught. To prepare students for this project, I drew on Asao Inoue's "Teaching Antiracist Reading" to design a forum assignment that required students to practice anti-racist reading. As Inoue (2020) persuasively puts it, when we read, we engage in language habits that are inherently tied to material social conditions. These conditions are influenced by factors such as race, class, gender, and other assumptions that likewise shape our language practices. Thus, insisting that my students engage in anti-racist reading helped them "develop a critical linguistic awareness" (Baker-Bell, 2020) that leads to recognizing and appreciating *difference* in the literature with which they engage and the work they will do beyond FYW.

This awareness is important because as Trainor (2016) reminds us, students have been conditioned to think positively, so when they read materials that involve characters who seem to not be positive, students look upon the real life and/or fictional characters negatively. In my own course, I identified evidence of Trainor's assertion. For example, when I asked students to discuss the relationship between the author's perspective on language and

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students' own views, a student shared that white people are "not as bad" as Douglass claims in "Learning to Read and Write" because his mistress and street friends, all of whom were white, helped him to read. Moreover, in sharing how larger dominant structures informed their interaction with text, another student recognized their white and socioeconomic privileges, noting that they were "fortunate enough to have ample financial support" for their schooling, which caused them to take their education for granted. This realization shaped how they "listened" to Douglass's experiences.

While most students focused on literacy's liberatory nature, some students challenged linguistic racism and shared how these problematic structures continue to normalize monolingualism and linguistic injustice. For example, when discussing what personal and social habits helped them grapple with the text, one student who was drawn to Tan's "Mother Tongue" shared that as someone who spoke English as a second language, they sometimes feared public speaking because they might say words "incorrectly" or need to speak slowly due to their accent. Like other students in class, this student expressed pride in seeing stories they were familiar with represented in course readings. Moreover, in response to my question about memorable words, many students elaborated on emotions they felt by words such as "broken," "fractured," "freedom," "wakefulness," and "silence." Recognizing the emotional harm that imposing "Standard English" causes to minoritized bodies, one student noted "I haven't really thought about how much it would affect my everyday life if I had to only use one [variety of English]." Baker-Bell (2020) talks about the importance for students to explore their linguistic identity and the intersections of language, racial violence, and power. I saw evidence of this value in how my students assessed their own language habits.

Aside from inviting students to analyze their own reading habits, anti-racist reading also allows students to think critically about how they read their own classmates' work. For example, in reflecting on anti-racist approaches to reading, a student shared that this activity helped them be more mindful of how they conduct peer reviews, noting that their peer review of classmates' work was "highly personalized" because they "automatically assessed [the peers' drafts] based on personal, subconscious criteria" of what counts as proper word choice, grammar and sentence structure.

These examples above show that when we ask students to investigate how they come to interpret text, they have the opportunity to recognize their own biases and problematic uses of literacy. Moreover, students can develop an awareness of whiteness and a "mindset of intellectual inclusion" (Shelton, 2020, p. 21), an awareness which can lead to them recognizing when they are perpetuating linguistic racism. What these experiences also

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show is that while anti-racist reading can educate, it can also empower. This empowerment is especially important for racially and culturally minoritized students, who endure the effects of racist systems whether knowingly or otherwise.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this assignment was for students to identify and analyze their own reading habits, including how these habits are social and structural (Inoue, 2020) and racialized (Vieira et al., 2019). I strived for students to do this work by reading the works that center the voices and perspectives of people of color in hopes that it can lead to achieving social justice (Martinez, 2020). Practically and theoretically, my academic training prepared me to navigate the FYW classroom. However, most writing programs are grounded in white language supremacy (Inoue, 2019) giving FYW oppressive roots and making it challenging for many instructors to critically engage with FYW curricula. Among these challenges included recognizing and acknowledging that anti-racist reading practices must not only educate students who are unaware of how they benefit from racist and institutionalized systems, but also empower those who bear the negative effects of these same systems. I hope that the approach I provide can inform programmatic decisions about how students study and practice writing. Within my own department, I plan to share findings of this IRB exempt study in a series of online teaching workshops to promote anti-racist reading habits programmatically.

When students leave the FYW classroom, "their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines" (CWPA, 2019). Thus, after our conference about how the health of all humans is essential but that historically, state-sanctioned violence against the bodies of racialized populations prevent them from getting the adequate care they deserve, the biomedical major student I referenced earlier went on to write a paper on how racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in medicine.

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Appendix: Literacy, Language, and Reading Habits Forum Assignment

Overview

In working toward the social justice and inclusion digital writing research project, throughout this week you will read and respond to texts that will prepare you to engage critically with a variety of writing styles, sources and perspectives. Choose 1 of the 4 PDFs below to read and discuss with your group in this week's forum.

- "Learning to Read and Write" by Frederick Douglass

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Carmichael / Teaching Anti-Racist Reading Practices in First-Year Writing

- "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan
- "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle" by Min-Zhan Lu
- "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldúa.

Instructions Part II

As you read the text, the goal is not primarily for you to interpret the author's arguments. Instead, the primary goal is for you to identify and describe *your own* reading habits and how these habits are social and structural. In other words, your reading of the text you choose serves as an inquiry into your own language habits and how these habits are influenced by larger dominant structural forces and influences (Inoue, 2020) such as race, gender, ableism, class, etc. You are not required to answer all the questions below; instead, select a combination of questions (at least 3) to compose a 300–350 word response. In lieu of a written response, you are welcomed to record a video/audio response and upload it to the forum. Please keep your recording to 2–3 minutes.

1. How are you experiencing this text? What are you feeling as you read? Why do you think you are experiencing it in that way?

2. What conclusions are you forming about the text based on your experience?

3. What is your perspective on language and do you see that perspective reflected in the text? In other words, do the author's perspectives on language go against your own views or do they align?

4. How have larger dominant structures (race, gender, class, ableism, etc.) informed your interaction with this text? Indicate which structure(s) and discuss how it shaped your reading of this text.

5. What personal and social habits helped you read and understand the text? What experiences or previous knowledge about language did you rely on to help you make sense of the text?

6. In high school, (how) were the histories of languages, literatures, perspectives and/or experiences of minoritized people presented? Explain.

7. In the texts you read in high school and/or in other college courses, whose voices and perspectives were highlighted? How were these voices and perspectives presented?

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8. Words we use can tell us a lot about who we are and where we come from. Explain your histories with certain words that emerged in the text. I am not looking for a dictionary definition of any word. Instead, identify what words you located in the text and or used in your own response that were memorable to you. Why did you select those words and would you rethink or rephrase any of them?

Instructions Part II

Throughout the week, visit the forum and read each of your group members' responses. Respond to no less than 2 of their posts. In your response, identify areas of similarities and/or differences with their reading habits. The goal of your response to their post is to keep the conversation going. This might take the form of offering your perspective, invoking examples, referencing an idea from the reading, especially if you selected a different text, building on another classmate's response, asking more questions, etc.

Note

1. This project received approval from Oakland University's IRB under protocol #RB-FY2021-267.

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Your Contract Grading Ain't It

Sherri Craig

In 2020, many writing programs had fallen for the trap of addressing anti-racist efforts by crafting quickly composed affirmations of #BlackLivesMatter and condemning the violent murders of Black citizens. In such statements, authors proclaimed a commitment to diversity and other such buzzwords like equity and inclusion. Some incorporated measurable actions, but most provided the same vague boilerplate language around fairness in their writing programs as their writing studies peers. Position statements in 2020 responded to calls for anti-racist action with contract grading trainings, assessments, and discussions. An unfortunate and inevitable conclusion. I want to be clear, I'm not arguing against contract grading. I believe that it is an acceptable method of assessment and that there are worthwhile reasons for using it in writing programs across the country and the world. Asao Inoue and others make strong arguments for why embracing the approach creates new opportunities for student success, but why does contract grading have to be labeled as anti-racist or pro-Black? Based on my experiences in the classroom, both as teacher and student, contract grading expresses anti-Black racism in unforeseen and deeply felt ways.

Such interests in contract grading ignore the anti-Black racism rampant in many English departments and IWPs. The interests also ignore the systemic racism present at universities and the utter lack of approaches to such "equitable" grading practices across the curriculum—an absence that leads to student confusion and a lack of preparation and transfer. I took these views to my department during a forum on building a more equitable writing program where the only solution presented was to encourage contract grading practices throughout the first-year writing curriculum based on the experiences of a few instructors. I became frustrated. Being in a conversation with a small group of well-meaning white people arguing for the removal of traditional assessment practices to express their equitable views towards their BIPOC students was surprising. Had my colleagues never considered the big picture? White savior complex concerns aside, for now, the prevailing idea seemed to be that it was possible to read a few articles, engage in a couple of conversations, and magically implement a collaboratively designed grading contract to a group of students who were not only new to the university, but who would be beginning their college careers in the middle of a global pandemic with the stress and anxiety of their targeted Black bodies. These same students who would be bringing 12 plus

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years of traditional writing assessment practices and would be held to similar standards throughout our university, were to suddenly embrace a new set of grading practices comfortably. These few BIPOC students were to trust their white teachers that completing an agreed upon number of tasks in their new journeys would satisfy evaluation in the course. How? I was frustrated. This was NOT the answer. Contract grading might make my colleagues feel good and ease the guilty burden of using practices with deep white supremacist origins in other areas of their courses, but it felt like a trap to me.

The department wanted me, a pre-tenure Black woman, to tell my students, most of whom were white, that grades were oppressive and inherently racist. That no matter what the common practice at the university was, in my classroom, my one locally controlled space with 25 students, they would be evaluated differently—in a way that valued their process and not the product and that desired to recognize their individuality, voice, and writing skills—with no attention to the expectations outside of our course. I am supposed to convince my students that their secondary school teachers had it wrong. The standardized testing system had it wrong. The direct placement test had it wrong. That every other writing evaluative space and opportunity and instructor had it wrong. That I, the young Black woman they had no knowledge of or trust for, was in fact correct and we would assess our writing the right way—the anti-racist way. Further, that by doing so, I could prove to them, and to the 1-2 Black students I might have that semester, that I was committed to equality in my classroom while existing in a program that still performed annual assessments, course and instructor evaluations, adjunct labor, and tenure and promotion protocols (all of which are arguably also rooted in white supremacy). So no. Contract grading ain't it. It ain't the answer to anti-racist practices in writing programs. It is low hanging fruit that does the most injustice to our Black students, to our Black faculty because it attempts to convince them that the university cares for their lives and their experiences. We might be able to control our courses or our collection of courses in a writing program, but we cannot correct the violence and the potential for violence in our universities, on the streets, in our own homes.

Sherri Craig is assistant professor of professional and technical writing at Virginia Tech University where she specializes in teaching diversity and inclusion through business and non-profit writing courses. Much of her research centers upon the experiences of Black women in their academic and industry careers and their professionalization and mentorship. Her work can be found in *WPA: Writing Program Administration* and at SparkActivism.com.

Narratives from a Writing Center: Actively Engaging in the Process of Anti-Racism

Sonya Barrera Eddy, Katherine Bridgman, J. Ione Matthews,
Randee M. Schmitt, and Autumn Brooke Crane

When our writing center moved online during the pandemic, we faced many new challenges. One challenge was creating a digital environment that supported Writing Center staff and administrators in our implementation of anti-racist practices. Our center's approach to developing this praxis has not been to prescribe specific actions for our administrators and tutors. Instead, we have worked with each other to examine our positions both collectively and individually in relation to systemic racism and develop processes of reflection, vulnerability, and care that engage each of us in anti-racist work both personally and professionally. Below, we discuss our processes of reflection, vulnerability, and care and provide an example of what this can look like in practice. We conclude this essay describing where these conversations have unfolded as we have moved online during the pandemic.

We find that more traditional Western Anglo methodologies and models of administrative hierarchies hinder our work in enacting anti-racist practices. Comadrismo[1] is a concept that Ana Milena Ribero and Sonia C. Arellano introduced as a means of mentoring Latinas in rhetoric and composition. It is also a way of disrupting institutional cultures that tend to exclude Women of Color. For the purposes of this article it provides us with an epistemological grounding that supports our personal and professional growth and enriches our process of developing and enacting anti-racist praxis (Tinoco, Eddy and Gage). As a concept, the word carries connotations unique to Latino culture, but the concept does not need to be limited or essentialized. For Latinas, the most common definition of the term comadre is women they know they can count on, lean on, and ask for advice or help when needed.

Even though comadrismo arises from a culturally specific methodology, it is one that our director and assistant director engage with/in and encourage in the center to facilitate? networks of support, kinship, and mentorship. Comadrismo honors the many forms our relationships with one another take. For example, as Sonya and Katherine built trust with each other as administrators, we became confidants in addition to coworkers, and we are able to enact our vulnerability with each other. This vulnerability also introduces elements of friendship to the relationships among administrators and staff such as Ione, Randee, and Autumn. Enacted

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alongside the reflection and vulnerability that thread through these relationships is our care for one another, a care that is rooted in our study of a feminist ethics of care and our emphasis on the reciprocity we build in caring relationships.

Prior to the pandemic, much of our work to enact anti-racist practices unfolded through informal discussions during our reading group meetings[2], between sessions, or in our breakroom over coffee. Through this face-to-face engagement, we modeled self-reflection, vulnerability, and care as a way to prepare ourselves for this messy work. Both administrators and tutors participated in this modeling. At the same time, we were building multifaceted relationships honored by comadrismo as we came to celebrate each other as whole people that occupied these spaces in unique ways. What emerged was a dynamic environment where we could confront and move through the very necessary moments in which we confront our own racisms. In these shared spaces, we emphasized our holistic growth as people and community members. We have grappled over the past year with how to continue this virtually, especially as we have hired new tutors while we are operating entirely online.

Rather than report out on what we do in our center, and risk ossifying this knowledge, we draw from comadrismo in the dialogue below to enact the process through which we develop anti-racist praxis. Comadrismo centers the experiences of those in dialogue and encourages the reader to examine their own positionality in relation to the dialogue. In disrupting the traditional Eurocentric epistemologies that root our knowledge about writing and writing centers, comadrismo provides us with a way of making knowledge that is dynamic, reflective, and collaborative. This aspect of comadrismo aligns with the challenging, messy, and ambiguous forms of labor involved in building a writing center that is committed to anti-racist and decolonial values and practices.

As you read the dialogue below, you will see hints of the nuanced relationships celebrated by comadrismo amongst the authors. These multifaceted relationships have been gradually built across a range of different positionalities through processes of self-reflection, vulnerability, and care. These processes help to hold us accountable to each other and to our anti-racist work. You see glimpses of this below as Katherine, our white director, opens the dialogue sharing her vulnerability not just to Sonya, our assistant director who identifies as Tejana, but to three tutors as well, and enacting a call for knowledge developed through their lived experience of working in the center during the pandemic that decenters her own knowledge. Our assistant director, Sonya then responds by modeling a care rooted in reciprocity as she affirms and then builds on Katherine's concerns. Additionally, the

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tutors in this dialogue demonstrate the anti-racist practice of self-reflection that is then used to build knowledge and lead to action. This highlights the collaborative nature of our work and underscores the importance of caring relationships that are formed through the sharing of stories. In the conversation, our administrators model self-reflection, vulnerability, and care as we talk through what anti-racism means to us in the center. Two of our more experienced tutors, Randee and Ione, also model this self-reflection, vulnerability, and care as they share their journey with one of our newest tutors, Autumn.

Katherine: I am nervous about our upcoming new tutor reading group. So much of the rapport we develop with our new tutors as we introduce anti-racist practices — and the unlearning this requires — relies on face-to-face relationship building. I'm not sure how we'll be able to replicate this through virtual meetings.

Sonya: I understand your feeling. Modeling how we talk and interact is important. We understand that neither Writing Centers nor tutors can be neutral and that anti-racism is action, but I am wondering how we are going to model this work as a set of choices. Anti-racist practice requires acknowledgement of the current systems rooted in white supremacy and their gatekeeping function. It is in acknowledging the basis of our discipline and the regulatory function of the center that we are better able to evaluate our own positionality, biases, and cultural understanding as we critically examine the choices we make in either resisting or upholding these values. I am nervous about these conversations and how they are going to play out virtually.

Katherine: Me, too. We don't need to look far to see evidence of our mantra that language is never neutral. At the same time we are situated within a Hispanic Serving Institution located in a historically segregated area on the South Side of San Antonio, we are also in a city with an active Black Lives Matter movement that has continued to actively protest throughout the summer. While the broader implications of these conversations and the choices we are asking tutors to make have become increasingly apparent this year, this also makes our discussions more painful as we all have so much at stake in them — whether that's through the complicity of someone like me or the precarity experienced by others. This context is a constant reminder to me as a cis-gendered white woman that I am "the one in the way of progress, no matter what [I] have said or what [my] agendas are, how hard [I] worked, or how sincere" I am (Inoue, 356).

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Sonya: Without our willingness to have these frank conversations, we would not be able to have them with the tutors. As a fifth generation Tejana whose family is from the land on which this university stands, working here with our student population means that I am home. Frank conversations can be difficult when they are personal. For me, this means the work we do in the center needs to value all of our students and affects me in a very personal way.

Ione: Dr. Bridgman, thank you for reminding me what Inoue says about our whiteness. Before working in the center, I equated white privilege with economic privilege. Since I grew up poor, I thought that I too had been marginalized. Working in the center has helped me realize that, even growing up poor, I have benefitted from being white. Now, I understand that as a tutor I should work to repair the damage of white privilege and systemic racism by becoming more aware of how I have been complicit with systemic racism and how to work against it. Part of this work is learning to recognize how my white privilege gives me an advantage and working to dismantle the systems of white supremacy I am complicit in. I am also learning to embrace discomfort and to decenter myself and whiteness in general in the hopes of clearing a path for all and not just white people.

Randee: I agree. It wasn't until I began working in the writing center that I was really introduced to this idea of being anti-racist. How we understand and address race in the writing center is vital to the success of the center, as well the success of the students who come and go. For example, white students have vastly more resources and opportunities available, placing them at an advantage before they even set foot on any college campus. It is important to create a space where differences are recognized, and even discussed. We as tutors must come to terms with our implicit biases, addressing not only where they may stem from but also how to push back against these ideas. As tutors, we recognize the institutions we are situated within have systems in place that are racist, classist, and favor white middle-class students.

Autumn: I started to see this in my own life after we started our new tutor reading group, and I asked my friend what he was doing to support the Black Lives Matter movement. He responded, "I do my part everyday by not being racist, I have black friends." In this moment, I realized the difference between being actively anti-racist and being not racist. After this experience, I began working in the writing center and learning ways in which I can be anti-racist. Upon reading Laura Greenfields' *Radical Writing Center Praxis* and discussing it with col-

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leagues, I learned that anti-racism in the writing center can look many different ways. It might look like reaching out to a student with radical kindness regarding derogatory remarks in their paper. It might look like consulting another tutor or director on the matter. It might look like speaking up on an issue even when you are uncomfortable. It might look like being aware of your own biases and being mindful not to engage these biases in the center.

Conclusion

As you read this brief snippet of dialogue, we want to draw your attention to the ways in which we are enacting self-reflection, vulnerability, and care with each other. In turning to discuss the writing center session, Autumn demonstrates the importance of engaging with the personal work that must be sustained as we engage with anti-racist praxis in the writing center. Our emphasis on processes of making knowledge about writing center tutoring over best practices for writing center sessions also allows us to resist privileging scholarship that remains rooted in and reiterative of the white supremacy of writing center studies and its adjacent fields. Sofia A. Villenas, Francisca E. Godinez, Dolores Delgado Bernal, and C. Alejandra Elenes write that "[o]ften when we think of educational scholarship, whether it concerns youth, adults, or girls and women, a middle class Euro-American norm comes to mind" (3). This applies to writing center scholarship as well and has resulted in tutoring "best practices" that all too frequently center this imagined white body in the role of both tutor and student. Given this, we emphasize processes of making knowledge over prescribed tutoring practice in our conversations about anti-racist work in the writing center and acknowledge the violence so much of our scholarship enacts on bodies that do not fit the "Euro-American norm" described by Villenas, Godinez, Bernal, and Elenes.

In our current online environment, our social committee has grown to become the main way we facilitate spaces where we reflect on our positions both collectively and individually in relation to systemic racism, enact our vulnerability with each other, and practice the care that engages each of us in anti-racist work both personally and professionally. Our social committee members have become the main organizers of our biweekly events where self reflection, vulnerability, and care are practiced. The social committee is currently comprised of veteran tutors and the assistant director, whose role is to schedule Zoom meetings and ensure necessary items are ordered and mailed to participants. The committee organizes two professional development events per month: one that does not require any preplanning, and

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one that requires preplanning and organization. Examples of events that do not require pre-planning are movie nights and book discussions. Examples of larger events are murder mystery dinner parties and ultimate vacation getaway presentations. Once a theme for the month is established, the veteran tutors take turns structuring discussion questions and planning for the ways in which our project intersects with our work as writing tutors and the anti-racist process. They devise discussion questions to help guide our conversations back towards anti-racist practice as well as our writing center work. For example we have discussed the ways in which we reveal our truths and perform ourselves as after we had a extremely fun night of playing characters as a murder mystery party.

These events continue to center the dialogues that unfolded so much more easily before the pandemic. They provide low stakes ways for us to reflect on the racist and colonial structures we work within, build trust through our vulnerability, and enact care for each other. Additionally, these events redefine professional development to include personal development as we learn that we must attend to the needs of every individual if we are to attend to the needs of the larger group and enact anti-racist processes in our center. Through such dialogues, we continue to grow together both personally and professionally as a community committed to anti-racist practices. This growth occurs through our self-reflection, vulnerability, and care, all processes that we talk about, study together, and enact differently through each of our unique positionalities in the center.

Notes

1. Despite MLA convention, the authors have made the deliberate choice not to italicize words in languages other than English in order not to create a demarcation between words that "belong" in the text and "exotic" or "foreign" words. By choosing not to italicize, we are asserting that these Spanish words belong in and have a place in this academic text. Also, In keeping with the multilingual tradition of rhetorician Gloria Anzaldúa, we do not provide English translations of Spanish words, but simply include them as part of the work.

2. Comadrismo is a concept Ana Milena Ribero and Sonia C. Arellano introduced as a tactic both for mentoring Latinas in rhetoric and composition and for disrupting institutional cultures that exclude Women of Color.

3. As our schedule allows, all of our writing center staff participate in reading groups through which we read and discuss a range of texts, including scholarship from a range of fields as well as other works of nonfiction such as biography and memoir.

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Sonya Barrera Eddy is a Tejana director of the Integrated Reading and Writing program at Texas A&M University- San Antonio. Dr. Eddy was previously the Assistant Director of the Writing Center. Her scholarship investigates the resistive rhetorical strategies Latinx communities in Texas enacted through literature, art, poetry, performance, and community education. Much of her current work centers around antiracist and decolonial practices, and her work has appeared in Composition Forum. She has been presented at conferences including the Cultural Rhetorics Biennial Conference and the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

Katherine Bridgman is an associate professor of English at Texas A&M University-San Antonio where she directs the Writing Center. Her research focuses on embodiment across digital interfaces. Her scholarship has appeared in venues including *Kairos*, *South Atlantic Review*, *College English, Computers and Composition*, and various edited collections.

J. Ione Matthews is a recent graduate from Texas A&M University-San Antonio, where she earned a bachelor's degree in history and a secondary teaching certification. As a student, Ione worked as a writing tutor at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Additionally, Ms. Matthews is a long-term substitute teacher for Northside Independent School District, where she teaches English Language Arts with seventh and eighth-grade students. She is looking forward to continuing working with learners of all ages through teaching and tutoring

Randee M. Schmitt is a native of San Antonio who began tutoring in the Writing Center while enrolled as an undergraduate student at Texas A&M University-

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San Antonio. After graduating with her Bachelor of Science in Psychology, she continued her work in the center, remaining involved in tutoring, workshops, and the social committee. She is currently preparing for graduate school, working as a research assistant on projects focused on moral injury and PTSD, with the goal of becoming a clinical psychologist. Randee loves meeting and working with students in the center and seeing their confidence grow after each session.

Autumn Brooke Crane holds a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology from Texas A&M University - San Antonio. Autumn is a writing tutor and Mindset Coach who helps women overcome fear and limiting beliefs, harness the power of their minds, and own their innate power to create a life they love. Autumn works with individuals who want to create a better life for themselves as well as the collective. She enjoys the impactful work she gets to do in her work as tutor and coach. Autumn also enjoys hiking, biking, reading, writing, creating, and making memories with loved ones.

Reimagining the Possibilities: A Narrative Account of a Journey Toward Anti-Racist Administration

Melvin Beavers

The summer of 2020 marked one of the most significant cultural changes in the way many Americans talk and think about race. With the death of George Floyd and others, Americans took to the streets to protest police brutality and use of excessive force on and against Black bodies. The politics of change often move slowly. Rhetoric does not always equate to change; however, this time something different occurred. It seemed as though this time, things were different.

As BLM (Black Lives Matter) movements mounted in city after city, I began to wonder what these calls for change would do and specifically, what, if anything, did this kairotic moment mean for higher education? A stream of institutions put forth statements in support of BLM and anti-racist action initiatives. One thing was clear to me, the tide was changing and perhaps the systemic racist policies that have prevailed in the walls of institutions of higher education for so long, might actually meet their reckoning.

As a Black writing program administrator, I knew I needed to do something. Many of the first generation college students that enter the first year writing program at my institution are Black and Brown students. Therefore, I felt a responsibility to reconsider the values of the program.

I knew the time was now. The then current political and cultural movements made the moment ripe with opportunities to support pedagogies that reflected tenets of anti-racism both in curriculum and the administration of the program. As a first step, I crafted a statement of BLM solidarity and sent it to my departmental faculty as well as my part-time faculty. I wanted my colleagues to know that as a program we stood in alliance with the movement. Additionally, I posted the statement on the first-year writing program's departmental website page. In it, I stated:

> The first-year writing Program in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing stands in solidarity with our Black American community, and any marginalized group, seeking social justice reform. As a program, we are dedicated to making sure our instructors and students have the resources they need for success within the classroom environment. Creating a more inclusive and equitable environment is one of our many goals. Likewise, inherent in our program's value system and the scholarship of our discipline is a deep passion to remove the

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tenacious grip of systemic, institutionalized racism that continues to ravage the lives of so many within our country. As a program, we know there is work to do, and we, as educators, have a significant role to play.

Although the statement acknowledged the need for making the program a more equitable environment for students, I was not convinced it went far enough, mainly I questioned whether or not it would inspire faculty to act or change their approach to teaching. I was well aware that a statement alone, while good, and certainly a step in the right direction, was not going to demonstrate the kind of actions needed.

Equally, I shared the same concern for another statement I had the opportunity to co-author. Like so many other institutions in the state, mine was no different in making pledges and commitments to becoming more inclusive environments. The dean of my college asked me and a faculty member in the Department of History to craft our college's anti-racist statement. We worked together and produced a document that unlike my solidarity statement for the first-year writing program, the college statement included several action items. Writing this statement with another colleague helped me think more mindfully about what the fruits of a statement should actually accomplish. Discussing and writing helped us to each engage more critically with the words "we support" or "we stand in solidarity" with BLM and to build on anti-racist pedagogy that would inform praxis in classrooms.

Still, even though I worked on these two documents, I was hesitant and unsure how to proceed beyond giving faculty members statements. To find out what others were doing to build a more anti-racist writing program, I decided to attend the 2020 CWPA summer workshops designed to help faculty think through ways of approaching anti-racist projects and initiatives in their programs. As a new writing program administrator, I was excited to have the chance to find out how others were planning to administer or spearhead anti-racist goals or outcomes within their programs.

Once the workshops ended, I sent the president of CWPA an email and thanked him for providing opportunities for folks to engage in discussions about anti-racist teaching and administration. He responded with an invitation to join a WPA Task Force. The charge was to revise the *WPA Outcomes Statement 3.0* to better reflect an anti-racist focus. I remember thinking and saying to him, "I have only been a WPA for a few months." He responded, reminding me that a novice voice might be something the task force needs.

Moreover, the opportunities I was able to secure over the summer helped give me perspective about developing a stronger and more robust

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Beavers / Reimagining the Possibilities

anti-racist first-year writing program. I was beginning to grow in my own understanding of what it means to be an anti-racist teacher; however, these experiences ultimately lead me to question, what does anti-racist administration look like?

To answer that question, I went back to my dissertation research. In it, I identified Administrative Rhetorical Mindfulness as the emergent theme from my qualitative study of the experiences of ten WPAs attempting to help prepare part-time faculty to teach writing online. One of the key phrases WPAs consistently articulated or used to describe their roles was the desire to "to do more." Like those WPAs in my research, the current moment requires us, those managing writing programs, to do more to ensure that our students learn to move beyond conventional notions about writing and language standards. Furthermore, perhaps one way to foster anti-racist administration is to cultivate an ethos around leadership that attempts to build community and harness a level of awareness or openness to the possibilities of change. We must give ourselves permission to push against the grain. Just as there is no single standard of English, there is no single or silver bullet for administering anti-racist administration; however, through intentional teaching praxis and becoming more mindful administrators, we can help to dismantle some of the curricular and policy barriers that have done harm to our students and faculty.

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Interventions Foregrounding and Honoring Black Language in FYC from a HBCU/PBI Perspective

Kathleen Turner Ledgerwood

Teaching at a small HBCU in the Midwest, students in our first-year composition classes are predominately black and the majority of our students come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. What struck me early on in my role as a writing program administrator and a classroom instructor is how many of my students came into the writing classroom with a fear of failure and a belief that they cannot language or use English well. In early introductory writing, over 70% of our first-year students report a fear of failure and/or a belief that they cannot write well. As I've discussed and listened to first-year students, it is clear that they have this belief in part because of what they have been taught in educational settings. Instructors must problematize and question our own standpoints. Coming from the standpoint of a woman in a white body teaching my students about language and writing, I know that I stand in front of my students from a place of privilege and that it is therefore imperative to foreground their experiences and thoughts, rather than my own. Using Jacqueline Jones Royster's ideas about listening, Krista Ratcliffe's ideas of "rhetorical listening," and Asao B. Inoue's ideas about "deep listening," can help us begin to problematize our classes. While our writing program is working toward implementing changes to create a more equitable and just program, and hopefully by extension society, we know that we still have a lot to learn and do. So this essay will share some of the changes we are making to our program to foreground and honor Black Language in the first-year writing classroom.

When students come into our first-year writing classes, they mention how they can't use "proper," "professional," "correct," or "standard" English. In these early writings students contrast these positive adjectives for White Mainstream English (WME) with negative adjectives for Black Language (BL), calling it "ghetto," "uneducated," "unprofessional," etc. To be clear, for the majority of these students, BL is what they speak at home, with their friends and family, so in essence they are naming their own language with these negative adjectives. It is impossible to reconcile these pejorative terms with the professional resolutions and position statements, such as "Students Right to Their Own Language" (1974). Obviously just educational and professional organizations saying that we need to change is not enough. If we want to dismantle racism, we must dismantle linguistic racism systemically. CCCCs/NCTEs focused statement on Black Language

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"This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!" offers some steps to move toward linguistic justice.

Therefore, in our classes, we begin by questioning and critiquing "standard English" through teaching students about the connections between language and power. How do we help students recognize the power structures and how they are present in language? How do we help students move from a lived reality and understanding of linguistic power structures and their relationship to racial power structures to being able to critique and challenge racist systems of power? We begin by lecturing to students about the history of BL, which was born in the disparity of power given to slaves who were linguistically separated in order to diminish power and control people. Giving students an understanding of the socio-historical systems in which language and linguistic racism began helps students understand that humans made decisions about language to maintain power and control, and it helps students understand where and how linguistic differences were created. Most of the students in our first-year writing classes report that they have never learned about language in these terms. Building a shared language where we can discuss code switching, code meshing, and linguistic and rhetorical choices is of paramount importance in the writing classroom. And giving students the right to decide how they write and the opportunity to critically think about how their writing has been judged in the past is of utmost importance to making changes in the racist systems. Essential to this discussion is a critique of the moralising language used for WME and BL. To call WME "proper," "correct," or "respectful" is to place a morality around different language varieties that we should help students reconsider. As we discuss the role of language in classrooms, educational systems, and in the broader society, we have students reflect on their language choices and the racist systems they encounter when they code switch or code mesh. Students report an appreciation for learning about language and privilege, and this helps them develop their own critical awareness of the racist systems in which we live.

Because students have been taught to think of their own language in negative ways, it is important to bring in articles, literature, and books that use BL. Students in our writing classes read portions of April Baker-Bell's book *Linguistic Justice*, Vershawn Ashanti Young's chapter "Should Writers Use They Own English," Victor Villanueva, and literature that is written in BL. We must reinforce that it is truly not a mark of inferiority to use BL, but rather a powerful choice. We need to build pride and help students believe they truly have a right to their own language. With an understanding of the socio-historical underpinnings of BL and an appreciation for how it developed, several students choose to change how they talk about their

own use of BL. As we show, model, and build curiosity for other people's languages and usage—in reading and in speaking—making rhetorical and linguistic choices without shaming and disadvantaging any one group of people, especially in school, students begin to form their own critical language awareness.

Students discuss and analyze what several scholars have said about how our culture perpetuates White language supremacy. One such quotation that we use comes from Baker-Bell, who writes, "If we honestly believe that code-switching will save Black people's lives, then we really ain't paying attention to what's happening in the world. Eric Garner was choked to death by a police officer while saying "I cannot breathe." Wouldn't you consider "I cannot breathe" "standard English" syntax?" (5).

We know that it is vitally important that we make systemic changes. We must make room in grading/judging of student writing to give students the right to their own language and to help them develop and use their voice in writing in the ways they want. As Asao B. Inoue said, "If you use a single standard to grade your students' languaging, you engage in racism. You actively promote White language supremacy, which is the handmaiden to White bias in the world, the kind that kills Black men on the streets by the hands of the police through profiling and good ol' fashion prejudice" (359).

While many students welcome the ability to use their own language, several students are resistant to opening up their writing to a variety of language choices because they believe that our linguistic systems or prejudice and privilege are unjust, but that they still must learn to operate within an unjust and racist system. We cannot ignore voices of descent against this opening of curriculum and learning, but nor can we continue to raise the mantle of white language supremacy in our classes and writing programs lest we are complicit in violence against black bodies and language, so bringing students into our discussion helps us privilege and listen to their voices.

Throughout the classes, students question if there is a loss of culture and loss of self for themselves or others as they conform to fit into racist linguistic systems. Most students say something along the lines of "That's just how society is," but they also voice their frustrations, calling it "not fair" because the burden is placed only on certain individuals. Our students often report that they feel more comfortable in a PBI because they get to use their own language more freely. But students also move this into a discussion of the outcomes of linguistic prejudice. Students begin to question how and under what conditions corporations strive for diversity and point out that this often does not include linguistic diversity.

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Through constantly engaging in a discussion of critical language awareness and problematizing society with our students, it is one way we can begin to change power structures, and we can hope some of it will emanate from our classroom communities. Asking students to think with us about how we dismantle racist systems and power structures that privilege race and class and unfairly disadvantage groups of people allows us to engage in listening and work forward together as a classroom community. From there we just need to continue to move toward an equitable future together as a society.

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Anti-Racist Collaborations, Resources, and Support

Aligning Practice with Belief: Bringing Anti-Racist Information Literacy and Writing Instruction to an HSI Lutheran University

Meghan Kwast, Jolivette Mecenas, and Yvonne Wilber

This first-year writing (FYW) program is situated in the English department of a small faith-based private liberal arts university located in the largely homogeneous, politically conservative community of Thousand Oaks, California. The college that became California Lutheran University was founded in 1959 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, one of three Lutheran bodies that merged in 1988 to create the socially progressive Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). Reflective of the Christian values of the ELCA, the University's stated core values include a commitment to embrace people of all faiths, as well as "value diversity and inclusiveness, practice tolerance and acceptance, and treat one another with respect, civility, and compassion" ("Identity"). Its affiliation with a justice-minded denomination provides unique opportunities for advancing anti-racist ideals. Yet Cal Lutheran has discovered that the road to diversity, equity, and inclusion is "neither smooth nor straight" (Biasotti). At the curricular level, issues of race and racism have not been adequately addressed across the university's programs, missing opportunities for anti-racist education. It is within this movement toward incorporating anti-racism into the curriculum that the authors have collaborated to integrate critical information literacy (IL) in the first-year writing courses.

Cal Lutheran was designated a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) in 2016, with growing numbers of BIPOC students wanting to see themselves reflected in their teachers and in the curriculum. In response to an accreditation recommendation in 2015, Cal Lutheran has sought to diversify its faculty. As of August, 2020, the faculty is 29% nonwhite, a 12% increase from 2015 (Biasotti). This change, as helpful as it may be, has not adequately addressed issues of race and racism on campus, especially from the BIPOC students' point of view. Cal Lutheran does not yet offer a culture where most students feel comfortable discussing race, especially with students outside their own racial affiliations. Alarmingly, nearly half of all BIPOC students responded in a survey that they have experienced feeling lonely, isolated, and excluded as a result of the campus racial climate

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(National). Admittedly, students have lacked opportunities for honest conversations about race and racism in the classroom, and students of color have often found themselves subject to microaggressions and discrimination (Salguero). These tensions came to a breaking point in the Spring of 2020, with members of the Black Student Union, Sisters' Circle (a student affinity group for Black women), Latin American Student Organization, and other student groups organizing a school-wide walkout to protest the handling of two racially-charged incidents on campus (Breda).

Concurrent with this time of campus unrest, an external report recommended that Cal Lutheran faculty create more opportunities for cross-racial engagement in courses, so that students could develop the language and critical thinking skills necessary to engage in meaningful dialogue on race and racism (National). In order to address the gap between institutional and curricular goals for racial equity and inclusion, the authors revised the library's information literacy instruction and first-year writing instruction to incorporate anti-racist goals. These curricular revisions are driven by equity-minded and anti-racist goals to address institutionalized racism at the structural, not individual, level. We seek this change through culturally relevant and equity-driven instruction informed by critical pedagogy.

Centering Black Lives in the First-Year Writing Curriculum

The WPA co-author of this essay, Jolivette, joined Cal Lutheran as a full-time faculty member in English in Fall 2019. In order to address institutionalized racism at the curricular level, the WPA sought to revise FYW instruction using an instructional framework that is more consistently and intentionally inclusive of first-generation college students, and particularly of Black and Latinx students. Immediately after George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police officers, the WPA sought curricular revision guidance from the 2019 collection *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration*. She began to consider how she might take up Perryman-Clark and Craig's invitation to center Black lives, experiences, and voices in the curriculum in "the fight against oppressive and racist institutional practices" (24). This move would follow a culturally relevant instructional approach, which recognizes the intertwined components of setting high expectations for academic achievement, developing cultural competence, and cultivating socio-political consciousness for all students (Ladson-Billings 75). Applied to writing instruction, culturally relevant teaching invites students to "take on issues that reflect their cultural, social, and personal experiences" as legitimate content for academic writing (Winn and Johnson 22). The goal

was to center Black lives in the curriculum so that first-year writing courses would be a space for all students to investigate systemic racism.

The first curricular revision created consistent and assets-based learning outcomes for FYW. Previously, sections shared little in common except for a focus on error identification and grammar instruction in Standardized Edited American English (SEAE). Faculty needed guidance to recognize how the corrective emphasis on SEAE and the lack of transparent learning outcomes across sections failed to support all students equitably, and marginalized students from linguistically-diverse backgrounds. The WPA met with part-time and tenure-line faculty to draft learning outcomes, using more inclusive language. One new learning outcome emphasizes critical reading, stating that students will evaluate popular and scholarly source material for authority and relevance to their inquiry. This learning outcome calls for more coordinated, programmatic collaboration with campus librarians Yvonne and Meghan, also the co-authors of this essay, than had previously existed. Critical pedagogy-driven IL instruction and culturally relevant writing instruction provide students with the analytical tools to evaluate the authoritative power of sources. These teaching practices guided the authors' planning of IL-integrated FYW instruction for fall semester 2020.

The revised critical reading learning outcome aligned with another key curricular revision that semester: the shift to academic writing as rhetorical communication between specific publics and audiences, and within contextual situations and exigencies. This approach necessitates the wider recognition of journalists, artists, filmmakers, oral history interviewees, and other communicators outside of peer-reviewed scholarship as potential authoritative voices that FYW students may evaluate and reference in their writing, in support of their own inquiry. The framework for Black student success proposed by Perryman-Clark and Craig centers Black voices and experiences in the FYW curriculum, focusing on the perspectives of Black diasporic peoples as intellectual knowledge (107). Enacting this framework, the WPA selected Ta-Nehisi Coates' 2014 essay "The Case for Reparations" as the common text for all sections of the first semester FYW course. Originally published in *The Atlantic*, the essay is a popular source that can be considered a mentor text for teaching argumentative writing to a general audience: Coates builds his argument for reparations to descendants of U.S. slavery by providing multiple narratives of Black experience through historical research, interviews, and data. The multimedia, open-access online version provides an even deeper dive into systemic racism from multiple perspectives of community activists interviewed by Coates for the essay.

A Black author was selected in response to prevailing anti-Black violence that pinnacled in Floyd's murder. In the aftermath of global protests, during the national public health crisis of COVID-19 that disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities, and during the divisive US. presidential election, discussions of systemic racism saturated public discourse. Coates' essay and the sources that Meghan curated in the related library reading guide invite FYW students to read Black experiences and voices, to investigate systemic racism in their own lives and communities, and to write about how these ideas are meaningful to them.

Shift to Critical Pedagogy in Library Instruction

Information Literacy at Cal Lutheran is a required student outcome for traditional undergraduate (TUG) courses, though there has never been a systematic program to ensure that library instruction is equitably distributed. To ensure equitable IL instruction across the TUG curriculum, Yvonne and Meghan sought to collaborate with the English Department to embed critical IL in all first-year writing courses. This would require a transformation not only of what IL looked like for writing faculty, but also of the role of librarians working with the English Department.

Critical pedagogy is well-established in IL instruction, representing "a natural growth in understanding literacy as a contested social construction, rather than as a naturally occurring phenomenon" (Elmborg ix). Critical IL allows learners to identify power structures and privilege within the sources they consult. Librarians at Cal Lutheran have traditionally been called into classes in an ad-hoc manner, most often to teach students the mechanics of identifying an information need, finding information, and avoiding plagiarism. Meghan and Yvonne's first priority, then, was to counter this dated narrative. Rather than delineating the content of an instruction session according to outmoded standards, faculty were asked to collaborate with the librarian, reviewing the class syllabus and assignment rubric together to determine the appropriate timing and content for the IL session. This collaboration with individual faculty allowed librarians to create learning outcomes, and scaffold instruction for IL sessions in the FYW courses.

This preliminary work toward developing IL equity provided insight into how some faculty understood authority. As is common in literary studies, faculty often esteem peer-review as the only legitimate source of authority. Consequently, they generally expected librarians to refer students to published scholars alone, framing all other sources as being less valuable. This approach is absent a critical evaluation of the peer-review process and the voices it historically excludes. Excluding these other sources dis-

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counts the authority that stems from marginalized communities, and ultimately limits students' ability to see themselves as having authority (Beilin). Despite this challenge, the librarians remained on course to incorporate critical IL by providing students with sample topics, search strategies, and activities that required them to engage and evaluate a diversity of authorial voices. This critical IL tack provoked not only the students, but the faculty into a transformative dialogue with information sources.

In the summer of 2020, Yvonne and Meghan worked with the WPA to embed critical IL within the learning management system of all FYW courses. This approach was intentionally chosen to provide equitable coverage of critical IL concepts across all FYW sections. Embedding critical IL modules would allow for multiple points of access for students and ensure the content could be revisited later in the semester. It also ensured that the same content would be covered across all sections in the same manner. The modules were created using a combination of locally-created content (such as videos and quizzes) and content sourced from Credo Learning Tools. First semester FYW students would encounter how authority can be evaluated across a variety of sources and formats. Second semester students would build on those concepts as they learned about research being a project of inquiry, and searching a process of strategic exploration. Pre-tests and post-tests would be used to assess student learning. In addition to the embedded modules, Meghan developed a reading list to complement the common reading. Demonstrating that peer-reviewed sources are not the only authoritative sources of information, Meghan chose a collection of primary, popular, news, and scholarly sources that expanded the themes of redlining and the Great Migration discussed within Coates' essay. The list represented a shift toward incorporating diverse voices, and centering the Black experience as a legitimate source of knowledge.

Committing to Anti-Racist Teaching and Cultural Change

Anti-racist work is ongoing; changing deeply-embedded structures of institutionalized racism takes time and commitment. This is true when revising the more tacit vestiges of White supremacy in higher education that privilege Eurocentric authors and knowledge. Critical pedagogy approaches to information literacy and writing instruction provide faculty and students with the tools to decenter Whiteness in the curriculum, toward more ethical and compassionate cross-racial dialogue in academic and public discourse. During these initial steps, we learned that institutional change is more likely to happen when there is a programmatic approach between campus units, such as between the library and the English department. To recog-

nize this collaboration and the efforts of our students, faculty, and librarians, a spring celebration of first-year writing and research was planned, during which student authors of exemplary essays on Coates' "The Case for Reparations" and related library guide sources were honored. The authors hope that the annual celebration will provide another space for the campus community to engage in cross-racial dialogue about writing and research.

The benefit of being a Lutheran university includes access to those social justice values of the ELCA that provide direction for anti-racist work. While reflective of the Lutheran faith, these values are also supportive of a diversified, secularized student population, faculty, and staff that are not predominantly Lutheran. As an HSI, the university seeks to support Latinx students and all students as a campus "where all individuals feel valued and empowered to live their purpose, where we can exercise enhanced cultural dexterity and a commitment to social justice, equity and inclusion" ("Hispanic-Serving Initiatives"). The collaborative efforts of the authors to implement anti-racist education into the first-year writing program is supportive of the university's goal to truly serve—and not just enroll—students of color.

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Collaboration at the Center: Anti-Racist Writing Program Architecture at California State University Dominguez Hills

Mara Lee Grayson and Siskanna Naynaha

In 2015, California State University Dominguez Hills—the most racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse of the CSU's sprawling 23 campuses—hired a writing across the curriculum coordinator, a position that had never before existed. The hire was part of an initiative funded by the Office of the Provost in an effort to improve writing instruction and build a true culture of writing at CSUDH, where longstanding narratives typically constructed our predominantly local, Los Angeles students as academically "deficient" and even incapable of "writing a proper sentence." Those narratives came as no surprise, but for the new WAC coordinator (Siskanna Naynaha), the fact that the university would hire a dedicated, 12-month position to disrupt that narrative and transform writing instruction and student writing success was thrilling, inspiring, and, yes, also terrifying in its scope. In 2018, the English department hired a new faculty member with a specialization in composition and rhetoric (Mara Lee Grayson), signaling the institution's ongoing commitment to building that culture of writing and improving writing outcomes for our students. Here, the co-authors discuss how the halting development of the WAC program—grounded in principles and practices of social justice— led to the creation of CSUDH's first dedicated writing center (WC) and describe how the WC and WAC program have collaborated to develop an explicitly anti-racist writing program architecture on our campus.

In her first moves as WAC coordinator, Siskanna took the helm of the University Writing Committee (formerly the Writing Competency Committee) and developed the WAC program's *Statement of Mission, Vision, and Values*:

> **Mission**: The mission of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Program is to draw upon our students' greatest strengths—their diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds—to cultivate a robust culture of writing at CSUDH, and so to facilitate the creation, integration, and synthesis of critical writing experiences both across the curriculum and throughout students' time at CSUDH.

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Vision: The vision of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Program is that CSUDH students will use rhetorically forceful and effective writing to transform their own lives, their communities, and their world to help create a more socially just and sustainable future for all.

Core Values: The WAC Program will work daily to help build, deepen, and sustain a culture of writing at CSUDH that is:

- **Socially just**
- **Accessible** to all
- **Collaborative** in methods and approach
- Academically **rigorous**
- Educationally and personally **transformative**
- **Accountable** to all stakeholders

When the statement was ratified by the University Writing Committee (UWC), it seemed that things were off to an auspicious start. However, the newness of the WAC program and the WAC coordinator position created complications. While Siskanna labored to design and implement WAC programming, pressing exigencies continually cropped up: the desire to institute a free-standing writing center separate from the learning and testing center, which offered writing tutoring but did not incorporate disciplinary approaches to writing pedagogy; the need to update the Early Start English (ESE)/Summer Bridge curriculum; and, following statewide mandates that eliminated outdated, inequitable placement exams and remediation requirements, the necessity to revise the first-year composition (FYC) curriculum to align with the revised ESE curriculum. Without a firmly established WAC Program, Siskanna was tapped for leadership roles in these efforts, turning the program's development into a rash of fits and starts.

With Mara Lee's hire, that burden began to ease. She came in just as the newly-revised FYC curriculum rolled out, and Siskanna was freer to refocus on WAC priorities. Then, in spring 2019, Siskanna was given 48 hours to draft a proposal for a free-standing writing center, to be run by disciplinary faculty, as part of the university's annual budget prioritizing process. Though the timeline was daunting and WAC priorities once again temporarily sidelined, a golden opportunity was presented: If the university would fund a writing center, then the mission, vision, and values of the of the WAC program—including firmly anchoring the development of the new writing center in a social justice framework—could become a collaborative effort that engaged faculty members, programs, and units across campus, including the UWC, the WAC program, the new writing center, the revised

FYC and ESE programs, and the English graduate program, which was slated to begin curricular revision the following year.

The proposal was funded and Siskanna took on the role of interim writing center director. The first two semesters included successes and challenges, but things essentially unfolded as planned. However, when Siskanna was forced to take family medical leave, Mara Lee stepped into the role of interim director. It was a rapid and unexpected shift, but Mara Lee had been part of the WC from its inception, and her work examining rhetorics of race, racism, and white supremacy in writing studies and education ensured the seamless continuation and deepening of our shared vision for the WC. In the following semesters, we saw additional changes to writing instruction campus-wide, not to mention a global pandemic, remote instruction, and nationwide anti-racist uprisings. Below, we discuss how we leveraged our collaboration in this kairotic moment to draw attention to anti-racist writing pedagogy and make additional shifts in writing program architecture across campus. We tell the rest of this story not from an imagined ending but from somewhere in the middle, closer, we hope, to its beginning than its conclusion, with recognition that our work remains in flux and dependent upon our ongoing collaboration as well as institutional support.

Building an Anti-Racist Writing Center

The metaphor of architecture reminds us that "material, logistical, and rhetorical elements of a writing program" help "anchor a program to the ground and keep it standing (White-Farham and Finer 4). When we launched the WC in summer of 2019,we occupied a borrowed space in the library with no technological infrastructure and had no stable funding beyond the first year. If writing centers are "liminal spaces" as so many have marked before—noting our institutional positions as simultaneously "privileged and illegitimate" (Denny 41)—our writing center sprouted in a space that was liminal par excellence.

Financial struggles abound. Due to increasing enrollment, the supplemental instruction program was no longer able to staff supported sections of FYC, and grant funding for the graduate student support center expired. The demise of these programs coincided with the WC's creation, leading to both resistance to the WC and additional pressure to succeed. Fortunately, as the university's gaze turned toward the WC, so did resources. Over the next year, we were given a new space and we received approval to conduct a search for a director. We hired student and faculty tutors, purchased specialized software, and launched a website.

Writing programs are "ideological entities" (Gunner 7), and, often, the ideologies that undergird writing centers reflect the white cultural and linguistic supremacy of academe (Greenfield and Rowan; Lockett). Knowing that anti-racist work is active and foundational, not additive, we were clear about the theories and pedagogies that would define our praxis. We invited faculty writing professionals to identify areas where they would contribute and engaged graduate and undergraduate writing associates in readings of composition and writing center scholarship to understand our approach to tutoring.

For both the WAC Program and the WC, our anti-racist mission was "built from a critical framework that acknowledges and examines the ways in which language and text represent, reinforce, or resist ideology." In tutor preparation, we emphasized self-efficacy, awareness of multiple literacies and academic discourses (Horner), and the critical understanding of multiple Englishes (Canagarajah). We deemphasized "grammar" and notions of "correctness" and "error," focusing instead on rhetorical effectiveness, rhetorical flexibility, and writerly choice. We encouraged staff members to explore how their positionalities impacted their perspectives on language, composition, education, and tutor-student interaction. Knowing that professional development workshops "need to model the very practices they promote" (Artze-Vega et al. 168), we made sure to model this in our interactions with tutors and other stakeholders.

To combat the deficit-model frameworks that often undergird how faculty (and, by extension, students and tutors) talk about student writers, particularly writers of marginalized racial formations, we knew we needed to do some of the "reframing" work Mya Poe describes: By avoiding "an achievement gap frame" and focusing on the varied "expectations teachers and students bring to rhetorical situations across the curriculum" (95), we helped tutors develop an assets-based approach to working with students across disciplines. Because we encouraged self-efficacy, we discouraged instructors from mandating tutoring and offered in-class information sessions to highlight the benefits of writing tutoring. These sessions also showed students how to access the WC, a practical yet important function on our commuter campus. To accommodate students' varied schedules, we offered Saturday sessions and piloted online tutoring, which expanded rapidly when campus closed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not to say that everything went smoothly or even that everyone in the WC was on board. Many faculty (and, thereby, students), preoccupied by whitely concerns about grammar and mechanics, saw the WC as a "fix-it [shop]" designed "to acculturate marginalized students" (Alvarez 87), and the ghosts of the defunct supplemental instruction and graduate academic

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support programs haunted the WC. Students requested appointments for someone to "fix" their grammar. Others brought in papers cluttered with red ink, explaining that their professor had mandated the visit because, as the lament often went: "My writing isn't good." Similar requests came from instructors, and, when we tried to negotiate a student-centered and anti-racist approach, we were often reminded that the "other tutoring center" used to do it. These obstacles required that we actively and persistently challenge the deficit model undergirding so much writing instruction on campus.

SPREADING THE WORD

Alexandria Lockett likens writing centers to "academic ghettos" for those "whose performance of academic discourse has been evaluated by authorities as an obstacle to their self-sufficiency and social mobility" (2). As interim WC director, Mara Lee worked to challenge that ghettoized perception through meetings with faculty, visits to Academic Senate, and town halls. Conversations that arose following the killing of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests in summer 2020 presented the opportunity to be more explicit about our anti-racist approach in the WC, ESE, FYC, and the WAC Program.

In collaboration with WC staff and with input from Siskanna, Mara Lee formalized our *Statement of Philosophy and Commitment to Antiracism*, detailing how each of the center's guiding principles was reflected in practice. Summer professional development for tutors began with discussion of this document, but we wanted to ensure that this work would not be happening *only* in the WC. One unintended consequence of writing centers that employ "diverse methods of transforming students' engagement with writing and communication" is that "students may not want to 'leave the hood,' regardless of how others stigmatize this learning place" (Lockett 2). If this was one of those "points of leverage where even small changes will affect the entire system" (Melzer 76), our collaboration in this time and place could shift perspectives on writing across the university.

We circulated the statement, and, gradually, more people understood that our approach was intentional, grounded in our discipline, and tied to the university's commitment to educational equity. We then turned back to the composition committee, on which we both serve, which oversees the English department's FYC program. We suggested the removal of an outdated, racist reference to "Standard Academic English" from the sample syllabus provided to instructors, pointing to the WC's statement of anti-racism as precedent. Committee members agreed and, when fall semester began, an updated syllabus was distributed. Two years earlier, we'd had neither momentum nor consensus to make this change.

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Thinking Ahead

Our work continues: In fall 2020, Mara Lee led workshops for instructors on assignment design, genre, and commenting on writing, all of which emphasized anti-racist approaches to instruction and assessment. In spring, Siskanna led a faculty learning community aimed at actualizing departments' statements of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-racist writing pedagogy.

This exemplifies our approach to collaboration: We are clear about our ideas, we build upon what we've already accomplished, and we communicate a shared vision across campus. Importantly, collaboration distributes work across budgets. The challenges we've faced reflect long-standing dynamics within the supersystem of the California State University, which is often at the forefront of writing initiatives (Bazerman; White) while we find ourselves constrained by limited resources. We imagine this dynamic is familiar to WPAs in general.

There is too much work to tackle on our own. The systemic and ideological changes anti-racism requires collaboration and coalition. Though the writing center's anti-racist approach has gotten some attention recently, it wouldn't exist if the foundation for this work hadn't been laid by the WAC program, persistent efforts by the University Writing Committee and the FYC program, and deepening structural and budgetary commitments from Academic Affairs. Ongoing collaboration—and a shared anti-racist vision and purpose—*is* the center, and without it, the Center would not hold.

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for our professional practices. Our disciplinary metaphors, including the metaphor of foundations and the spatial metaphor embedded in the concept of a field, are deeply implicated in the ways we understand our work and its history.

The sharing of information and resources is a potentially powerful place to begin, but we must be careful to acknowledge the labor that undergirds such resources and the scholars whose work makes such sharing possible. As Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyaq and Breeanne Matheson (2021) remind us, there are real "dangers related to the use of decontextualized and appropriated cultural materials/knowledges by those wishing to use these materials in their own work in order to fill a need—a lack—that they've identified in their own cultural context" (p. 21). To mitigate these dangers, I have sought to foreground the voices and the work of the Black scholars and other scholars of color whose labor has made this work possible.

The remainder of this article describes the resources I curated and some suggestions for how WPAs might make use of such resources.

Curating and Contextualizing Resources

In the days and weeks following George Floyd's murder, I began to collect and share resources relevant to the work of building and sustaining anti-racist writing programs. My initial efforts were focused on collecting and sharing the work of Black scholars and other scholars of color whose research has too often been marginalized within the discipline. As I curated these resources, I was guided by the following questions:

- Whose work is being centered here?
- Whose labor is being acknowledged (and compensated)?
- What starting points are being offered to those new to this work?

These questions helped me to think carefully about the resources I was collecting and sharing, and they also helped me to consider the ways in which my own positionality shaped the choices I was making.

The resources I curated are organized into several categories, including resources for teaching, resources for administration, and resources for building knowledge. Within each category, I sought to center the work of Black scholars and other scholars of color.

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for our writing programs. We have a responsibility to create spaces where Black, Latinx, and Indigenous teachers, researchers, and students see their experiences not as peripheral to our work but as central to it.

Disciplinary histories (Ruiz, 2016), curated exhibits (Gonzales, 2019), and works cited pages (Bailey & Trudy, 2018) are all places for critical, anti-racist praxis. These are vital spaces for anti-racist work because they are places to begin: they offer the framing for a set of questions or an entire discipline, and when these introductory spaces exclude Black scholars, Latinx scholars, Indigenous scholars, Asian/Asian Pacific Islander scholars, and other scholars of color, they reinforce the racist framings and foundations that characterize too much of the work of the academy. For writing program administrators in particular, creating introductory spaces (reading lists, professional development workshops, and teaching practica for graduate students) that center the work of Black scholars and other scholars of color is a important step toward creating anti-racist writing programs, which I have argued elsewhere are characterized by "particular concrete classroom, program, and labor practices . . . classroom community standards that foreground equity . . . [and] outcomes and statements of programmatic identity that emphasize culturally sustaining practices [with] keen attention to equity gaps" (McIntyre, 2019, p. 4). To realize this goal of anti-racist writing programs, though, we need an alternative foundation that looks much different than the so-called "Harvard history" Ruiz (2016) describes. We cannot build anti-racist writing programs from our current Harvard-centric history nor can we continue training graduate teaching associates with texts that too often exclude the lives and literacy practices of students of color. Ruiz's historiographic work is central to such a shift, but we also need new resources (reading lists, teaching how-tos, and sample syllabi) that show us anti-racism in practice.

This is why I've spent time over the last year or so creating and sharing resources that center the work of Black and Latinx composition scholars: I've shared resources specifically aimed at helping faculty new to anti-racist work make such a transition (see my "7 Steps Toward Antiracist Teaching" and "Antiracist Teaching Resources/Readings"). But I've also created resources for teaching online, teaching first-year writing without a textbook, using reading circles, and using backwards design to plan a writing course. All of these resources center the work of scholars of color and/or position equity as central to our work as writing teachers.

It's not enough, though, to curate reading lists that focus on Black, Latinx, and Indigenous literacy practices. We must also incorporate the work of scholars of color across the topics we cover: for example, it's not enough to include the work of James Baldwin during the week a class

discusses Black English; instead, we must include work on Black English from the very beginning. Baldwin's work (plus work from scholars like Geneva Smitherman, Vershawn Ashanti Young and April Baker-Bell) should be part of the conversation in which we define literacy in general. Siloing scholars of color only in parts of a reading list or syllabus focused on "diversity" or "inclusion" is tokenization. The work of such scholars is not an afterthought; it is integral to adequately defining our discipline and preparing future writing teachers. (We might think, here, of moving from a metaphor of curation to one of construction: this work is about building and rebuilding writing courses and programs that center the experiences of teachers, scholars, and students of color and with the work of scholars of color as both a foundation and a central feature.)

This necessity extends beyond reading lists into other kinds of resources, too. My "Backwards Design & Planning a Writing Class" resource is perhaps a good example here. Ostensibly, this resource (which doesn't include links to readings or other work) is a "neutral" space, a how-to guide for folks new to planning a college composition course, but in each section of the document, I ask questions that remind teachers that our students come from diverse communities and have varied experiences with reading and writing. For example, in the first section of the document, "Before Creating a Syllabus and Writing Assignments/Prompts," as part of the very first question in the section, I ask instructors, "How will you support students and their communities via the work of your class?" This question reinforces culturally sustaining pedagogical practices that affirm the value and importance of community literacy practices. Similarly, in the following section, "As You Create Writing Assignments/Prompts," I ask instructors to think about how the "assignment make[s] room for diverse language users." My goal in each section is to ask instructors to think about language diversity as an asset to include in their course planning and to begin with equity and justice as central goals of their courses.

In part, creating these resources was a part of my commitment to realizing an anti-racist writing program at my own institution. Each of the documents I've shared began, at least in part, as a way of solving a problem or addressing a concern within my own program. But this work was also about recognizing and countering the uncompensated labor that Black, Latinx, and Indigenous scholars are too often asked to do. Often couched as service, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives on many campuses are too often foisted onto faculty of color. Likewise, when a university looks to create a new program or workshop about diversity or equity, faculty of color are too often the ones tasked with making it so. It should not be this way. White faculty like myself, who are committed to anti-racist work, have

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a responsibility to do this work (while centering and celebrating the existing resources and scholarship Black, Latinx, and Indigenous scholars have been creating for decades) rather than asking for more labor from these same colleagues.

Creating resources, conducting professional development, and teaching graduate teaching associates are all fairly standard parts of the work of a WPA. But it is in these basic tasks that we can have the most impact: changing our campus cultures is necessary and vital work, but it takes time and coalitions. Changing the ways that we conduct professional development workshops and train graduate teaching associates allows us to make immediate, concrete changes and allows us to build the capacity for larger structural changes within our writing programs and beyond. These changes might take the form of structural changes to grading and assessment practices in writing classes and across campus, changes to the way that writing and communication are discussed and integrated in courses (particularly general education courses) outside the writing program, and broader, university-wide discussions about the kinds of linguistic prejudice that do real and ongoing harm to students of color, particularly our Black students. And when we share the resources we create, those good changes spread, hopefully creating the momentum we need to see the broader changes necessary for equity and justice.

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How to Respond When You're BIPOC and Your Organization Is Called Out for Racism[1]

Patti Poblete

In the original version of my blog post, I included an illustration: a web comic by James Stewart of @dinosandcomics. It's a simple, four-square strip featuring two cartoonish dinosaurs, one blue and one orange. In the first panel, Blue tells its companion, "You've got to be in it to win it." Orange replies, "I've no interest in winning it." For a space, they simply stare at each other. Then Blue breaks the news to its friend: "You've got to be in it anyway." Whether I want to or not, I've got to be in this anyway.

I asked a colleague whether I could make this statement in all memes. Can I get away with making pointed jokes? That would actually be well within my wheelhouse.

But I guess not, so here we go. Please note: I am not speaking on behalf of the CWPA, the Executive Board, or on behalf of my colleagues. This is just me, having feelings.

For the record, I am Filipina and cis-female, and I can only speak from my own standpoint and experiences. I have been a member of the CWPA for almost a decade now (except for that one time I forgot to renew my membership for a couple of years; that was pretty awkward). I was a member of WPA-GO, the graduate student branch of the CWPA, for four years. I have been on the Executive Board of CWPA for the past two years. I have been part of a task force to consider anti-racist initiatives the organization could develop. (This is separate from the task force that was working to revise the Outcomes statement; we've got a lot of tasks, guys.) So, again, while I am not speaking for the organization, I do want to establish that, like, I know of what I speak.

A while back, the Outcomes task force did share a draft of what they were working on. We discussed it during an Executive Board meeting. I was one of the people who expressed reservations about it—not so much about the work itself, but rather that I wasn't sure what the document was supposed to *do*. (I'd been smack-dab in the middle of teaching proposals in all my classes; I could recite genre conventions in my sleep.) I'm still not sure what it's supposed to do, except that I'm also now realizing I don't know what *any* statement is supposed to do.

Who are we talking to?

I was also in the most recent meeting with the Outcomes task force. And I want to be absolutely, 100% clear on this: Asao's recounting of the

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events of the meeting is accurate ("Why I Left"), based on my memories of the discussion. That is what I saw happen, though of course my experience of the meeting was quite different from his. I'm also certain my experience of the meeting was vastly different from what some of my colleagues on the board experienced. I choose to believe everybody was acting in good faith, but also not accounting for the centuries of context that come with discussions about anti-racist work.

He's right about the horrific silence as well: I was responding to folks in the chat box, certainly, but I could have said something so that everybody heard it. I should have. Honestly, I couldn't sleep that night because I kept thinking over what I could have said. (My hindsight self is so eloquent.) My best (and very weak) defense is that I still feel very much like a junior scholar and I usually hesitate to wade in when folks who have, like, twenty years of publication on me are having it out.

And, well. Let me quote, of all folks, Lemony Snicket:

> When somebody is a little bit wrong—say, when a waiter puts nonfat milk in your espresso macchiato, instead of lowfat milk—it is often quite easy to explain to them how and why they are wrong. But if somebody is surprisingly wrong—say, when a waiter bites your nose instead of taking your order—you can often be so surprised that you are unable to say anything at all. Paralyzed by how wrong the waiter is, your mouth would hang slightly open and your eyes would blink over and over, but you would be unable to say a word.

I didn't say anything at the time and that's a failure on my part. Not because I am BIPOC—we should not have to always do the heavy lifting in anti-racist work—but because I was elected to the Executive Board. I failed in my *role*, not my identity.

Speaking from that intersection of viewpoints, though, I *personally* find this ongoing situation to be frustrating. In 2016, Asao's plenary address to the CWPA conference, "Racism in Writing Programs and the CWPA," had many of the same points and received the same response. In 2019, Asao's talk at the opening session of CCCC, "How Do We Language So People Stop Killing Each Other, Or What Do We Do About White Language Supremacy," had many of the same points and received the same response. A couple of days before he made his announcement, I mentioned this to a friend and said—literally, for real—"If I were him, I'd have stopped trying by now."

If we acknowledge that the American educational system is built on white supremacy—and it is—and that writing programs, in particular, reinforce white supremacy—and they do—then it shouldn't be a surprise

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if we get called out for saying things that reflect white supremacy. **Because we do**. It's what we're trained to do. It's what we've been doing. It's the air we breathe and the water we wade through.

That doesn't make it right, obvs. It's frustrating as hell. But if someone says you've said something racist, the response of someone who claims to be an ally should *not* be an explanation of why it isn't. If someone says you've said something racist (or sexist or ableist or classist), they're probably right. They're the ones getting stepped on, not you. Take the hit and *do the work* to figure out how to avoid doing it again.

(So what can we do, if the very foundation of what we do, what we believe, what we profess is inextricable from white supremacy? Burn it all down? I agree with folks that change will happen incrementally, largely because we lack the power to do anything in big, broad sweeps. But can't we commit to the promise of rebuilding it all, even if it seems impossible? How many of y'all stanned for Bernie Sanders?)

The Council of Writing Program Administrators is a racist organization in the baseline definition of the word: Systemic or institutionalized racism "refers to how ideas of white superiority are captured in everyday thinking at a systems level: taking in the big picture of how society operates, rather than looking at one-on-one interactions" (O'Dowd). Sometimes it manifests on a personal level, but racism is actually a big picture problem. And hey, we're *the Council of Writing Program Administrators*. Except for "the" and "of," every word in that title is inherently exclusionary. (Wait, "the" is a definite article. Only "of" got out of this unblemished, I guess.)

I'm not quitting, though. I get the call to boycott, I really do. And if you feel that's the best course for you, well, rock on. I support you. I also believe that *I, personally* am in a position to maybe get something done. I'm on the Executive Board. I'm going to be an editor of *WPA: Writing Program Administrators*. I'm good at social media, I'm good at conversation, I'm good at what I do. I am good at making noise.

It's my responsibility to make noise.

Also, don't take my word for it—what do I know, other than myself? These might be helpful, if you're interested:

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All right. Time to hit "publish."

Note

1. A version of this essay was originally published in Patti Poblete's blog on April 21, 2021.

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"Troubling the Boundaries" of Anti-Racism: The Clarity of Black Radical Visions amid Racial Erasure

Carmen Kynard

The first time that I ever related to an essay about writing program administration (WPA) was an epic moment. It was Collin Craig and Staci Perryman-Clark's 2011 call for a racialized/gendered understanding of WPA work in "Troubling the Boundaries: (De)Constructing WPA Identities at the Intersections of Race and Gender," now in its tenth-year anniversary.

At the time, I was three years into a WPA position. While I had certainly valued the work that I had read on "best practices" and labor polemics in WPA, none of that represented my life or the raced life of the university in which we all work. In contrast, Craig and Perryman-Clark connected the ways that racial embodiment in their graduate programs, in their universities, and at the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) structured a cohesive whole in the workings of institutional racism. They told us ten years ago, when they were graduate students in fact, that Black WPA Lives Matter. Up until that point, I had never seen WPA publicly called out this way in the research and I see very little today that recognizes this fact.

Perryman-Clark drew from bell hooks's "Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace" to examine the ways that one particular white man at her graduate university hypersexualized her leadership position in his request that she deal with a Black graduate student he saw as a problem. In detailing this experience, Perryman-Clark connected the hypersexualized, white violent contexts that have been mapped onto Black women's histories and bodies to the everyday exchanges and encounters in her administrative work.

Craig took us further into the racial abyss that is composition-rhetoric graduate study and the CWPA. He described white men graduate students who questioned his qualifications for a graduate research assistantship but not their own. Meanwhile, white faculty and administrators expected him to move heavy furniture all while he was under their hyper-surveillance. And of course, the same white men graduate students had no grumblings in such instances of racial profiling against a Black man in their program; his alienation had not been a problem for them, only his reward.

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Craig and Perryman-Clark assumed that the national conference of the CWPA might be a space where they could find a kinship network with whom they might reimagine theory and praxis at the intersection of their lived realities. They are certainly much more eloquent and generous than me, because I can never un-see their first-time attendance at CWPA as anything other than a racist mess. One conference attendee told them that they should do well on the market as minorities because even her college could use a couple more African Americans around the place. At one of the conference's dinners held at a park where a basketball tournament featured young Black men athletes, Craig was denied entry into the locked pavilion doors. For those of us who remember this moment and/or can just guess what went down: yes, the proverbial "Karen" at the door told Craig "you're not allowed in here." From my perspective, no real reconciliation or reckoning at the programmatic and systemic levels ever materialized for Craig.

And here is yet again another moment when many fail in a fundamental understanding of whiteness when we suggest that spaces like CWPA have been merely "unwelcoming" or non-inclusive. White space is never just an unfortunate accident and, instead, is always the product of Jim Crow segregations at the levels of policy, process, and affect. Black people were not merely "unwelcomed" at the whites-only drinking fountain and they have not merely been "un-included" in the discipline either. Jim Crow is not about the denial of niceness or inclusion; it is the heart of racism as Ruth Wilson Gilmore defines it: *group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.*

Graduate students connected to CWPA created an online forum through the organization's digital platform to discuss Craig and Perryman-Clark's work which they saw as more than just an article, a text that, based on my own undercover work, wasn't reviewed predominantly by Black or BIPOC scholars who focus on institutional racism. With a whole article about Black folk being violated and locked out, the journal set up yet another white gatekeeping function in its review process on the way towards publication. Graduate students were the ones who paved the way for a more "endarkened" conversation via a set of blogposts that would center the essay more deeply (Dillard). I was one of the blog writers and no discussions came my way based on my posting. Today you wouldn't be able to even find those posts, because, ironically but not surprisingly, those blog posts were taken down just as fast as they went up.

I begin with Craig and Perryman-Clark's essay for many reasons here. It should be obvious that their text is an intellectual and political foundation for this incredible collection of essays curated by women of color, Sheila Carter-Tod and Jennifer Sano-Franchini. Carter-Tod and Sano-Franchini

are bringing me full circle here in this ten-year anniversary of my own Black Mattering in WPA. Their vision and role are especially important right now in getting us past the field's tendency to ignore, appropriate, and/ or plagiarize (yes, sometimes these things can happen all at the same time) the unique praxis towards racial analysis and critique by feminists of color.

This ten-year anniversary of my own Black Mattering in WPA and this collection represent a critical moment to also call out white racial erasure (and I will stress here that faculty of color can succumb to this as much as white faculty). Some days it is as if Perryman-Clark and Craig had not called out foolishness way back when, as graduate students no less; and some days it is as if the folk who are suddenly newly radicalized ever showed up back then in solidarity in any real or critical way. The so-called new social-justice-turn or new racial consciousness in the field not only erases a Black radical past, it also does the continued work of white settler logic in suggesting new arrival, new beginnings, and/or new possibilities on already hallowed grounds. This is whiteness at its extreme: the ability to declare a space as new and in your own image simply because you have arrived without needing to add, do, or recognize anything or anyone around you. Such practice also denies the possibilities for restorative justice because it allows white power to erase its historical trajectories and foundations.

In calling up white racial erasure, I am referencing the 1990s scholarship of Stuart Hall and Charles Mills who critiqued British and North American racial memory when it comes to the history of race and empire, what they saw as a willful mental repression that sustains contemporary, home-grown varieties of racism. They posited what they called "white racial amnesia" as a de facto ability to righteously move forward and in so doing erase the histories of racism and white supremacy and thereby sediment its endurance more than its rupture. Given the constant tendency to ignore their distinct presence and contribution, Black feminisms have continually positioned racial counter-histories in an intentional strike against racial/misogynoirist (Bailey and Trudy) erasure and its inability to evaluate the present with critical insight (Crenshaw, Alexander-Floyd, Boyce-Davies). Racial erasure thus maintains white supremacy because it allows us to dilute and/or only vaguely name the specific histories of anti-black racism which have crystallized racist practices in our ways of talking and doing.

I have never worked in a writing program where whiteness was not the fait accompli of its structure and yet, in every such program, the folk at the helm would tell you that they are striving towards and have achieved justice around racial equity, access, and diversity. After reading seemingly countless applications for the writing program at my current institution, I am stunned by the performativity of white folk espousing anti-racism.

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White candidates do not interrogate their damn-near-all-white graduate programs or their damn-near-all-white institutions and yet we are supposed to believe that they have achieved an anti-racist ethos in their classrooms and research in relation to BIPOC. There is no evidence of a proximity to BIPOC scholars, anti-racist activism, or sustained study of BIPOC and race and yet they are race experts now. I have never before witnessed so many scholars maintain the field's whiteness and racism with the uncanny ability to call it *anti-racism.*

With this collection in hand, and ten years after the publication of "Troubling the Boundaries: (De)Constructing WPA Identities as the Intersections of Race and Gender," I question the newfound social-justice-turn everyone thinks they have made in a context where Craig and Perryman-Clark's experiences are routine encounters on campus and off. This collection asks us to reckon with our racist histories and current realities so I sit in this moment with many questions. Where, for instance, were wide outrage and national boycotting when our own national conference, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), decided it would retain its 2018 hosting location in Missouri? How do we account for people who, quite literally, would not honor a social action by an entity like the NAACP, but will hop on board when the call doesn't come from Black folk and Black organizing? As a reference point, the NAACP issued a travel advisory on June 7, 2017 after the passage of what they called the Jim Crow Bill, SB 43, a Missouri law that rescinded legal protections against racial discrimination sponsored by a white lawmaker whose business was being sued for race discrimination (Ortiz). In the advisory, the Missouri NAACP explicitly described the state's contemporary circumstances: the death of Tory Sanford, ongoing racist attacks against Black students at the University of Missouri who made headlines in their solidarity with Mike Brown and Black Lives Matter, public homophobic rants by white legislators, attacks on Black high school students, escalating anti-Muslim violence, excessive traffic stops and searches against Black motorists. They named the roots of current events in the historical violence faced by Black people like Lloyd Gaines and Dredd Scott and the formerly enslaved via the Missouri Compromise. Meanwhile, back at the farm, CCCC told us that its executive committee would think deeply about holding its conference amidst this NAACP call-out of anti-Blackness but hosted its own violence via the NDA/gag order that the executive committee had to sign. In the end, it made it seem as if the minoritized group of BIPOC scholars on the committee agreed with an almost-majority-white vote to hold the conference in Missouri. Basic common sense should tell us otherwise. In fact, if we ever even bothered to notice, we would see that one of the then com-

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mittee members, Eric Darnell Pritchard, has never returned to CCCC since that moment, not even to collect their multiple awards for their critically acclaimed book, *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy*. We have to thus ask ourselves why we have allowed folk to build their current anti-racist platforms on top of such levels of unseeing and uncaring (the very argument Pritchard is making in their book) and therefore on top of the literal inability to notice the loss of Black lives.

And you don't need to look very far to find social media posts from folk who called a 2018 CCCC boycott a simplistic and/or problematic response. What is the difference between now and then? Is it the white approval and white attention that came in 2020 that makes it so sexy now to center/exploit Black protest? I was floored by the general anti-Blackness circulating with the anti-boycott sentiments of CCCC given the historical roots of a Black and Brown boycotting ethos inherent in activist work going back to the NAACP's boycott of the *Birth of a Nation* film and up into the infamous struggles of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Chicago Open Housing Movement, and the Delano Grape Strike. Today's newly-radically-anointed even trotted out the routine Walmart argument to justify their embrace of CCCC in Missouri: the one where you recognize, yes, Walmart, does some bad things, but you embrace racial capitalism anyway because Walmart offers Black folk new menial, exploitative labor. And what about all those people who said they couldn't jeopardize their careers by not attending CCCC? Does their anti-racist "area of expertise" today not involve risk? Are we anti-racist only when it is safe (i.e., sanctioned by white organizations)? Who then is their anti-racism for? Others from the newly-radically-anointed said boycotting wasn't their choice of intervention because they had greater plans (which often seemed to revolve around their own clout and visibility). How has the interruption of deep-rooted political frameworks of a white supremacist organization become so synonymous with pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities within it? When do Black Lives Matter more than white economics in our organizations? My questions don't stop here though.

I also have questions about white and white-passing scholars who have turned the other cheek *repeatedly* when Black and Brown feminist graduate students and early career faculty were facing violence in composition-rhetoric programs with the justification that the perpetrators are/were supportive of you. That's not even a basic, ground-level level anti-racist ethos: if you are white-passing and you are treated well and ignore the Brown and Black folk who are not, then you are actively maintaining racism. This ain't hard. And truth be told, this describes a significant number of folk in the field and even some folk with the nerve to try and show up in this collec-

tion. I have questions too about all of the Black Lives Matter statements produced in this field in the summer of 2020 without nary a Black scholar mentioned and/or with the assumption that we are all the same and espousing the same politic.

In this moment, we must never forget that our "new" political affordances in academia in relation to Black Freedom were made possible by radical Black queer feminist activism outside of the academy, not within it (Cohen). As Saidiya Hartman warns us, there's a wide disparity "between what's being articulated by this radical feminist queer trans Black movement" and the language and practices of institutions and corporations. In her now infamous words, particularly noted by activists everywhere challenging the academy:

> The possessive investment in whiteness can't be rectified by learning 'how to be more antiracist.' It requires a radical divestment in the project of whiteness and a redistribution of wealth and resources. It requires abolition, the abolition of the carceral world, the abolition of capitalism. What is required is a remaking of the social order, and nothing short of that is going to make a difference.

Hartman reminds us that rhetorics of abolition, defunding, and non-reformist reform are decades-long movements by Black/Feminist/Queer/Trans folk who have inspired the most powerful "clarity of vision" of our moment. This collection stands in homage to that clarity, but it remains to be seen if this field can match such a vision or merely appropriate its energy towards the continual "possessive investment in whiteness" that it has always upheld.

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