

DIRECTIVE/FACILITATIVE COMMENTING IN THE DISCIPLINES AND ITS EFFECTS
ON STUDENT REVISION PRACTICES

by

CHRISTINA MONTGOMERY

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Supervising Committee:

Estee Beck, Supervising Professor
Tim Richardson
Jim Warren

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DEDICATION

For:

George

Ashley and Kyle

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, George Montgomery. From the day I stood on the steps of Dallas Hall at Southern Methodist University as an undergraduate, he has been my biggest supporter. He has given his life to his family and to me. I am profoundly grateful and thankful to have such a kind, generous, and compassionate partner who has always wanted my happiness and success more than his own.

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ABSTRACT

DIRECTIVE/FACILITATIVE COMMENTING IN THE DISCIPLINES AND ITS EFFECTS ON STUDENT REVISION PRACTICES

Christina Montgomery

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2019

Supervising Professor: Estee Beck

The purpose of this study was to build on findings by Patton and Taylor (2013) in faculty commenting so that administrators, researchers, and faculty can address how to improve writing pedagogy for helping students in their disciplinary courses, majors, and professional lives. The researcher interviewed six students enrolled in a graduate-level writing course at a large public university about their experiences with writing and revision decisions based on their response to directive/facilitative comments. Using grounded theory, the researcher found that directive/facilitative comments influenced students' revision practices, which resulted in improved writing in their final drafts and confidence in themselves as writers.

CHAPTER 1

There has been considerable debate in the last ten years over how to integrate writing in the disciplines, how students are responding to writing, and how to help faculty teach and give feedback on writing. Many universities have Writing Across the Curriculum and/or Writing In the Disciplines (WAC/WID) programs where faculty are required to include writing in their courses. This can range from a set percentage of required writing to requisite expectations of types of writing that must be included in curricular outcomes and goals (Beason, 1993; Jeffrey & Selting, 1999). Most scholars, faculty, and compositionists agree that students need to be writing in their fields and that disciplinary faculty, faculty who teach writing in courses outside of composition, are not adequately prepared to teach writing and that students are not meeting writing expectations (Emerson, 2017; Neely, 2017; Patton & Taylor, 2013; Szymanski, 2014; Taylor, 2011). Though there are many pedagogical practices that faculty currently use to support students in writing, including peer review, instructor/student meetings, and class discussion, instructor comments continue to be the most effective practice when working with students on revision (Anson, 2000; Sommers, 1982, 2006; Straub, 1996, 1997, 2000). However, interpreting and applying feedback is problematic for students writing in the disciplines. In Summer Taylor's (2011) study of how students understood comments in writing, students reported that based on the comments they received that they often did not know how to revise. Taylor contended that commenting practices of engineering instructors "fall short" and suggested that this is indicative of commenting practices of disciplinary instructors (Szymanski, 2014; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). In a follow-up assessment of commenting practices, Martha Patton and Summer Taylor (2013) identified directive/facilitative feedback, comments that give students specific directions and ask guided questions, as potentially significant in student revision. Though there are other

commenting schemes, Patton and Taylor used Richard Straub and Ronald Lunsford's (1995) feedback framework to code comments in their study. Patton and Taylor's analysis of instructor comments illustrated that writing studies researchers may have misinterpreted how students are using feedback and need to further investigate the ways that disciplinary students are using feedback in revision. Building on the recent findings by Patton and Taylor in faculty commenting, I investigated, in this dissertation, whether directive/facilitative comments, comments that both direct and guide, prompted revision for students in the disciplines. The data validated that directive/facilitative comments were influential in revision and more significantly that students made changes to their writing throughout their papers and reconsidered their overall writing practices. These findings suggest that stakeholders including institutions, writing program administrators, disciplinary faculty, composition faculty, and researchers need to address ways to improve writing pedagogy to promote revision for helping students not only in their disciplinary courses but in their majors and professional lives.

Researcher Background and Experience

I situate my work against the backdrop of a fifteen-year career in composition, writing program administration, and writing center work. The combination of these roles put me in a unique position to work with students in both composition and WAC/WID courses. As a writing center tutor, I worked one-on-one with students from across the disciplines and with students in composition courses. The center's goal was to help students become better writers, and the feedback from instructors helped me to do that. Increasingly though, I began to recognize that in the papers that were discipline specific, students were overwhelmed. Either they did not know how to interpret feedback or did not know how to improve their writing. As a composition instructor, I have thought a great deal about working with students and how I can help students to

be not just critical writers and thinkers but how they can use what they are learning not only in the first-year writing classroom but in their majors. Additionally, my experience coordinating a developmental writing program, working as an administrator in a writing center, and facilitating faculty development workshops, has given me valuable insight into faculty training and collaborating with stakeholders. My experiences in these roles allow me to bring multiple perspectives to this dissertation and offer expertise to how faculty, administrators, and institutions consider feedback practices in the disciplines and its importance for student success as writers in their classes and in their professions.

Recent Outcomes in Disciplinary Writing Pedagogy

The recent scholarship and conversations about writing, faculty development, and student performance in the disciplines has led to an increased focus on how and why students revise, which has brought more attention to the feedback students are receiving from faculty. To address the role of commenting and its importance for faculty and students, it is necessary to examine where writing studies research is today in disciplinary commenting, how students and faculty consider revision, and the role of the faculty member in revision. In “Where Did Composition Studies Come From?” Martin Nystrand, Stuart Greene, and Jefferey Wiemelt (1993) traced the history of composition and its development as a field. Nystrand et al. contended that one of the reasons for composition’s development was that teachers in the 1960’s, with the advent of open admissions and land grant institutions, recognized the need for writing instruction and the lack of training and support for doing so effectively. WAC/WID programs are facing an almost identical crossroads—Research driving recent studies in WAC/WID administrators believe that students are not writing effectively in their majors, and instructors are struggling with how to meet student needs in writing instruction (Emerson, 2017; Neely, 2017; Patton & Taylor, 2013;

Szymanski, 2014; Taylor, 2011). There were two key outcomes in the research over the last ten years in disciplinary commenting, which informed the research questions for this dissertation, that suggested researchers, scholars, and administrators need to reconsider the ways faculty use commenting to promote student revision. The first outcome in the research on commenting is student “preference” and why an awareness of student development theory is necessary for faculty to influence student revision. The second outcome is the type of comment and its influence on how and why students revise their writing. The two outcomes are related in a way research has not connected, but it is important to understand the relationship between theory and practice to make claims about how faculty can improve their writing pedagogy.

First Key Outcome: Student Feedback Practices

One key outcome that is important for stakeholders in the research on faculty commenting practices is on student feedback “preferences” and a connection to student development theory. In past commenting research, scholars have looked at types of comment and the ways students revised. Taylor (2011) also analyzed types of comments in her research but looked at why students were revising their writing; Taylor wanted to better understand the influence teacher comments were having on student revision. She interviewed engineering students on the comments in the margins of their papers and found that overwhelmingly students desired directive comments, which were comments related to either surface level issues such as editing, commands, and/or directive advice on how to change their writing. Students in Taylor’s study struggled to understand more global type comments, larger questions that asked them to consider their ideas and develop and connect ideas throughout an essay, because Taylor posited that students were not in a developmental place in their learning to be able to respond and revise to this type of comment. Taylor’s tie between students’ preference and students’ understanding

of what they found doable can be tied to student development theorists such as William Perry. Perry suggested that students were ready to understand and accept different types of advice based on where they were in their maturity. Perry broke up development into stages and then constructed a theoretical scheme, where each stage was related to cognitive growth. By connecting marginal feedback to student development theory, Taylor speculated that first and second-year undergraduate students may not be prepared to understand comments beyond the directive stage. Taylor's connection to student development theory may hold true for first-year graduate students as well.

Taylor's tie between student learning and feedback may help disciplinary faculty and compositions consider commenting differently, especially with consideration of specialized knowledge. In her study of four-hundred undergraduate students at Harvard, Sommers (2006) determined that though students found feedback important, they needed to be taught how to apply feedback and be prepared to receive advice in a way that they could understand how to revise their writing. These results lead me to conclude that in composition studies and in the disciplines, teaching students the meta-language of marginal commenting should be a practice that teachers consider using to help students become more effective in revision based on their developmental stage in learning. Like Sommer's research, Taylor's study concerning student development is significant because considerable scholarship in composition on commenting (Anson, 2000; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982, 2006; Straub 1996), which has heavily influenced commenting in the disciplines, asserted that global comments, comments that focused on broader questions concerning development and ideas, were more effective than surface comments, which were focused on editing.

Second Key Outcome: Type of Feedback

Reconsidering the directive comment influenced a second key outcome in commenting research in the disciplines that is important for stakeholders to consider, type of comment. Patton and Taylor (2013) examined thirty student papers from engineering departments at two different universities to analyze types of comments, how those comments promoted revision, and found that there were many more directive comments. However, more significantly, they found that directive commenting in the disciplines was functioning differently than directive commenting in composition based on their analysis of comments through the framework of Straub and Lunsford (1995).

Using Straub and Lunsford, Patton and Taylor (2013) defined “directive-leaning” comments as those that “correct, critique, or direct” and facilitative comments as those that “guide, prompt, question, or reflect” (p. 4). The authors collected rough drafts and final drafts from students, coded their comments, and then interviewed both faculty and students to review the comments. To analyze the comments, the authors coded the comments by number of comments, type (directive or facilitative) using the framework of Straub and Lunsford, and whether they “constrained or facilitated” choice. Patton and Taylor found that 80% of the comments were directive. For example, the authors said comments like “add your results” or “check decimal” would fall under this category (Patton & Taylor, 2013, p. 4). The authors pointed out that these directive comments might be related to the “constrained genre system” of engineering and that perhaps facilitative comments may not have helped students in revision. The authors categorized comments under facilitative if the comments were like, “explain, perhaps an example” or “explain to the reader how these are connected” (Patton & Taylor, 2013, p.4). The authors discovered that many of the faculty made directive comments that gave choice

and that the limited facilitative comments that were given may apply throughout the paper. This led the authors to consider whether counting the number of either type of comment was necessarily helpful. In addition, they found that some directive comments were combined with “facilitative thinking” and other facilitative comments could be interpreted as directive. A significant finding in the analysis of the number of comments was that all the changes made in revision could be linked to a faculty comment. Concerning revision, faculty reported that only “25 percent” of papers had “significant revision,” but student interviews suggested that students “described thinking and learning” in revising when considering faculty comments (Patton & Taylor, 2013, p. 6). Patton and Taylor opened the door to thinking about commenting practices differently, which directly affects the research for this dissertation and the recommended changes and development for faculty teaching in the disciplines based upon my findings.

These two studies suggest that commenting is functioning differently in the disciplines, especially concerning developmental appropriateness of comments and types of comments that will be effective in disciplinary courses. This research establishes that disciplinary commenting is distinct and that assumptions about types of comments and best practice in composition research may not hold true for feedback in the disciplines. As a composition scholar, these two studies were instrumental to the direction of my research and provided me with a path to better address the role of feedback in the disciplines and why students were struggling to revise their work. Considering developmental readiness and type of comment prompted me to think about how directive comments that were also facilitative based on the same scheme used by Patton and Taylor (2013) from Straub and Lunsford (1995) would function for students and how these types of comments would influence revision. Using Taylor (2011) and Patton and Taylor as a starting

point allowed me to focus on the efficacy of directive/facilitative commenting for students entering into new disciplinary communities.

Reconsidering Commenting

Given the recent research on commenting concerning faculty commenting practices and how that commenting might be reconsidered in the disciplines concerning student development theory and types of comments, this is an exciting time for disciplinary writing faculty. Lisa Emerson (2017) argued that writing in one's discipline is crucial for success in writing in graduate school and in one's professional life. This directly supported Nancy Sommers' (1980, 1982, 2006) work that concluded that students needed to be writing throughout their careers to be successful writers. Michelle Neely (2017) found in interviews of disciplinary faculty that they believed they did not have the background for teaching writing but wanted to help students improve as writers. Patton and Taylor (2013), along with Neely, demonstrated that if disciplinary faculty are open to helping students have success in writing, there are opportunities for faculty to help students find success by considering where students are in their learning development and crafting feedback that will help students revise and develop their work.

The recent outcomes on student feedback practices, type of feedback, and faculty development show that there is a need for research that connects type of comment in disciplinary writing to student revision. Further, there is a lack of research that provides direction and support for best practices in writing pedagogy for disciplinary faculty to employ when working with students on writing, specifically feedback. As a result of this gap, I conducted a qualitative study where I analyzed use of directive/facilitative comments in a disciplinary writing course, students' response to the comments, and their revision choices based on individual comments in the assignment. The findings of the study, which I discuss in Chapter 4, produced four key themes

that emerged in the research: background of the writer, institutional support, commenting for revision, and purpose for writing. The results, as discussed in chapter 5, of this dissertation show that directive/facilitative commenting is effective for promoting student revision, advances the conversation concerning effective feedback processes for students writing in the disciplines, and provides implications for faculty, writing program administrators, and institutions.

Research Questions

To examine the connections between student revision and commenting practices with the two key outcomes, I considered the following research questions:

- (1) Do past experiences with writing affect students' understanding of comments?
- (2) Do directive/facilitative comments prompt revision?
- (3) What motivates students to make revision changes in their writing?

While Patton and Taylor (2013) connected feedback with student learning development, I suspected an underexamined area of research—student background and previous experiences with writing. Based upon my 15-year career in composition, I knew students needed a formal background in writing, including a working knowledge of meta-language in writing, e.g., claim, organization, development. Absence of this type of background would be disadvantageous to students' success as writers if it did not match faculty expectations. Because this education is essential for writers to have success in revision, I wanted to find out more about students' backgrounds in writing through my first research question. The results of Patton and Taylor's study with students in the disciplines revising their writing using directive commenting led me to consider, with the second and third research questions, if some directive comments were functioning differently than others. Research on faculty commenting in the disciplines showed that faculty prefer surface-level commenting, but students were not revising in meaningful ways

(Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). Some studies suggested there may be a distinction in global commenting (Stern & Solomon, 2006; Wingard & Geosits, 2014) when connecting to content-specific language, but Patton and Taylor noticed revision patterns with directive comments that might be indicative of something more significant than researchers had first considered. For this dissertation study, I wanted to uncover if directive/facilitative comments would have a positive effect on revision. Finally, due to Sommer's (1980, 1982, 2006) work with student writing and commenting paired with Patton and Taylor, I speculated that students may be motivated to revise their work based on how they understand revision and how they prioritize revision choices. Because there has been an emphasis on surface-level commenting in the disciplines (Stern & Solomon, 2006; Wingard and Geosits, 2014), it was important for me to discover if students would be motivated to revise their work in response to directive/facilitative commenting.

Methods and Methodology

To address the relationships between commenting practices and student revision in the disciplines, I conducted a qualitative study where I interviewed six graduate students enrolled in an entry-level graduate writing course about their past experiences with writing and specific revision decisions on their drafts based on their response to directive/facilitative comments. I received IRB approval for this study, protocol number 2018-0196, on January 24, 2018 (Appendix 3). The qualitative study consisted of three phases and used a mixed methods approach, which included artifact analysis, face-to-face interviews, and data analysis. Before the first phase of the project, I consulted with the faculty member instructing the course and designed directive/facilitative (Straub & Lunsford, 1995; Taylor & Patton, 2013) comments that were specific to a summary assignment (Appendix 1). After students consented to the project, I

collected students' rough and final drafts of the assignment, which I stored in a password-protected Dropbox account (Appendix 3).

In the first phase of the study, I analyzed the students' drafts and looked at changes that students made for each directive/facilitative comment and then traced those changes through the final draft. For the second phase, I conducted face-to-face interviews where students were asked questions about their revision choices, writing background, and advice for faculty concerning effective writing pedagogy (Appendix 2). The combination of analyzing paper drafts and interviewing students about their revision choices were effective methods because it allowed students to show not only where they revised their writing but also what motivated their decisions. In the final phase of the project, I analyzed transcripts of the interviews. For the analysis, I used grounded theory based on Kathy Charmaz's (2014) work in *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Grounded theory analysis allows researchers to examine data to look for emergent themes and patterns that otherwise may not be discovered. For the analysis, I labeled sections of the transcripts and then coded the transcripts for categories line-by-line. Evaluating the transcripts in this way produced emergent categories that helped me to uncover themes based on student interpretation of their experiences (Appendix 5). The design of the study and the methodology and methods I used enabled me to capture student experience in an authentic writing situation. The data analysis produced results that answered my research questions and substantiated my conclusion that faculty should be giving students feedback in the disciplines using directive/facilitative feedback and that this type of feedback promotes revision in disciplinary writing.

Study Results

The findings from the analysis, as discussed fully in Chapter 4, addressed the research questions and demonstrated that student revision is directly connected to feedback, suggesting implications for faculty, writing program administrators, and institutions. When Patton and Taylor (2013) found that students seemed to be making revision changes based on directive comments where the comment occurred and then later in their drafts, the authors were not sure why this was occurring but felt that it might be significant. In my study, the analysis of the transcripts produced four emergent themes: background of the writer; institutional support; commenting for revision; and purpose for writing that addressed how the directive/facilitative comments that Patton and Taylor identified were working from the students' perspective. Each of the themes provides evidence that faculty should consider student background in teaching writing and consider feedback that is both directive and facilitative. The findings from the study suggest that using this type of commenting will result in improved writing and will positively affect students' perception of themselves as writers.

One outcome that emerged through examining student background and history of writing showed that students are in a developmental place similar to first-year undergraduate students when they are learning a new disciplinary language and gaining expertise in specialty subject areas. Taylor's (2011) findings connected feedback to student development theory, e.g. Perry, who explored the psychological development patterns of undergraduate students, and suggested students prefer more directive feedback. These results are similar to the findings in this study, which suggest that like the first-year undergraduate students, the students in the study are not able to meet the level of writing expected of them as graduate students. Therefore, Taylor's

conclusions, that faculty should think about feedback differently for the disciplines, could prove to be true for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Another outcome from the research, institutional support, showed that faculty support is tied to student success and demonstrates the need for faculty development. This validates Neely (2017), in her study on faculty development and faculty perceptions of their own pedagogy, who uncovered that disciplinary faculty believed they did not have the background for teaching writing. She asserted that it is difficult if not impossible to “move the needle” of a belief system. The findings from this study should shift perceptions of faculty development in writing pedagogy and help faculty understand the ways their development is related to student support.

The analysis also found that directive/facilitative comments influenced students’ revision practices and resulted in improved writing in their final drafts. The results from the study confirmed Patton and Taylor’s (2013) initial findings on disciplinary commenting and showed that directive/facilitative commenting can be tied to more effective types of feedback practices. The types of comments that were created for the study prompted revision by the students at both sentence and idea level and motivated students to make changes to their drafts. In addition, the comments gave students confidence as writers, making revisions feel doable and resulted in students considering how the comments might shape later parts of their draft. This outcome is important as it demonstrates that the preference for the global comment in composition, adapted by disciplinary faculty when giving feedback on writing, may not be best practice and that feedback in these types of courses needs to be assessed.

The fourth emergent theme in the study was purpose for writing. Students believed that having success as academic writers is important for their success in the classroom, in their majors, and for their future professional lives. This result supported the research in writing

pedagogy in the disciplines (Schreibersdorf, 2014; Wingard & Geosits, 2014) that students will revise their writing when provided with the appropriate feedback because they are invested in improving as writers so that they can be effective contributors and scholars in their fields. This theme is important as it aligns with the research on faculty values (e.g., teaching philosophy, classroom practice, teaching preference), which suggested that faculty have a high regard for student learning (Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006). The outcome that learning and effective academic discourse in the disciplines is valued by faculty and students indicates that institutions, writing program administrators, and faculty will have success with integrating directive/facilitative practices for students writing in the disciplines.

The outcomes from the study highlight the need for stakeholders to consider directive/facilitative commenting as a practice for writing in the disciplines. The four emergent themes illustrate the importance of designing curriculum for graduate students; managing writing expectations of incoming graduate students; and creating faculty development for composition and disciplinary faculty. Stakeholders should carefully consider each of these outcomes and their role in supporting change in teaching practices so that institutions can better serve students and prepare them for writing in their professional lives.

Organization of Chapters

Given the recent outcomes in disciplinary commenting research, this dissertation is organized to give stakeholders a background in the literature on disciplinary commenting and inform readers about the study's methods/methodology, results, and implications. Each chapter is structured to establish a foundation of shared knowledge concerning past research and this study's findings. The scaffolding of the chapters ensures that stakeholders will be knowledgeable about directive/facilitative commenting and its influence on student success so that they can fully

comprehend the implications for institutions, writing programs administrators, and faculty. Consequently, stakeholders can consider using the findings from this dissertation to have conversations at their institutions about the importance of directive/facilitative commenting and supporting faculty in working with students and writing in the disciplines.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters with this chapter serving as the introduction to the project. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature on commenting in the disciplines. The scholarship is organized around three predominant themes found in disciplinary commenting research: types of comments, faculty role, and values of faculty and students. In types of comments, I analyze higher-order, higher-order content-specific, and lower-order concerns and their use as a feedback practice and consider the ways students are revising based on the feedback they receive. Concerning faculty role, I investigate disciplinary faculty's perception of their role as teachers and how their role is influenced by institutions and commonly held beliefs about transfer of knowledge from one situation to another. Values of faculty and students is the final theme addressed, and I look closely at how beliefs concerning teaching philosophy, pedagogy, and practices shape comments and the faculty role. I also address how student values concerning pedagogy and practice affect their learning and how they respond to feedback. Based on the analysis of the research in the field concerning types of comments, faculty role, and values of faculty and students, I make connections to the literature on retention, curriculum design, ancillary writing support, and faculty development and discuss considerations for institutions, writing program administrators, and faculty.

Chapter 3 explains the methods and methodology used in the design and structure of the study. The chapter offers detailed information about why a mixed methods qualitative design worked best for this project and explains how a qualitative study informs the study. With this

framework in mind, I consider the role my personal stake in the project played as a researcher and how this role informed the topic for the dissertation and resulted in the study. Next, the structure of the study, study site, and participant selection is discussed in depth, and further information is given about where and how the study was conducted. The chapter also details the phases of the project: (1) artifact analysis, (2) face-to-face interviews, and (3) data analysis. Each of the phases is described with support on why the method was selected, how it informed the study, and the step-by-step process of each phase. Next, the data analysis and the methodology used are discussed in-depth. The coding procedure and how the codes were assigned to categories that later emerged as themes is addressed in the data analysis section. In addition, I offer a discussion on trustworthiness, limitations, and audience considerations. This chapter covers the method and methodology in a comprehensive way so that future researchers can build the findings and use the framework of the study for future research.

Chapter 4 provides the results of the study and gives a detailed analysis of the writing samples and interview transcripts. The chapter addresses the emergent themes from the data analysis: background of the writer, institutional support, commenting for revision, and purpose for writing. For each of the themes, the subcategories that emerged from the data are identified and then supported with data from the interview transcripts. In the first theme, background of the writer, formal education in writing and confidence in writing is discussed. The findings show that background of the writer affects student success in writing in graduate school. As a result of an absence of formal training in writing, writers reported a lower level of confidence in writing ability. Institutional support is also addressed. This emergent theme consisted of three related sub-categories: role of faculty, role of advisor, and other. The results in this theme demonstrate how these roles and ancillary writing support influenced students' desire for help on writing and

the type support they believed they needed. Another theme addressed in this chapter is commenting for revision. Two sub-categories are tied to this theme: comments gave writers confidence and comments helped changed writing. The findings in this theme show how directive/facilitative comments are interpreted and applied by the students. The final theme addressed, purpose for writing, includes two sub-categories, academic writing goals and professional writing goals. The results in this theme show that students see their writing tied to success in their discipline and in their future profession. For each of the major themes in the study, the sub-category results and claims about the results are substantiated by transcript data from the face-to face interviews. Each emergent theme and the results from that theme are then connected to literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 addresses how stakeholders can improve student success in writing in their majors and in their professional lives through the lens of the four emergent themes. Concerning background of the writer, institutional goals and faculty expectations are discussed in addition to ways that institutions and faculty can enact better practices in supporting students on writing in their majors. Next, in commenting for revision, disciplinary faculty and institutions are identified as key stakeholders in changing faculty beliefs and practice and supporting writing pedagogy in the disciplines. Institutional support is then discussed and examines the broader issues for stakeholders, including the ways writing program administrators, disciplinary faculty, and composition faculty drive best practices through curriculum and faculty development initiatives. Lastly, the chapter looks at purpose for writing and the ways writing pedagogy and feedback practices must change for both disciplinary and composition faculty to support students' goals of writing in the major and then in their professional lives. Each section provides recommendations for stakeholders based on the emergent themes found in the results of the study and explores the

larger implications for institutions, writing program administrators, disciplinary faculty, and composition faculty.

Conclusion

When students do not revise their writing, faculty are disappointed, and they question why students did not improve their drafts. Instructors have good intentions about wanting students to revise as they think this will help students become better writers, scholars, and researchers, and hope that this practice carries forward through students' writing experiences in school and then into their professional lives. One of the most widely accepted and most utilized methods for helping students in revision is response. To that end, instructors spend a great deal of time and energy (Schreibersdorf, 2014; Sommers, 1982, 2006) on this practice. Though instructors are dedicated to helping students revise through response and desire students to have success, students continue to struggle with revision in discipline-specific courses. Stakeholders need to consider student revision in the disciplines and the ways feedback is delivered to students to more positively influence student revision in composition and WAC/WID.

While most faculty want students to have strong writing skills and wish for their students to be effective writers, teaching writing in disciplinary courses is not an easy task. The main reason for this is that disciplinary faculty are experts in their fields but do not necessarily have training or a background in teaching writing beyond what they have been taught as students themselves (Carter, 2007; Emerson, 2017). This creates a disconnect for faculty to fulfill an administration's goals without necessarily having the time or the support to meet these expectations (Gere et al., 2017). Working with students on writing is a time-consuming process but is a process that is necessary to help students become effective writers in their disciplines and beyond. A great deal of research has been done in composition studies that examines and

discusses ways to comment, how much to comment, and the effectiveness of commenting in general (Anson, 2000; Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Sommers, 1982, 2006; Straub, 1996, 1997, 2000). This scholarship continues to guide and inform best practices in college level composition courses. With the proliferation and expectations of WAC/WID programs across universities, there is a need to build on this research, along with recent studies in disciplinary writing pedagogy (Emerson 2017; Patton & Taylor, 2013; Taylor, 2011; Wingard & Geosits, 2014) so that institutions, instructors teaching in the disciplines, compositionists, and writing program administrators have a better understanding of what types of commenting will work best in content level courses and how commenting might be different in the disciplines.

This dissertation adds to the research on commenting in the disciplines by building on the work of Patton and Taylor (2013) and offers a different approach for faculty. This study found that students' formal training in writing influenced their confidence in themselves as writers and their ability to have success as writers in their disciplinary courses, resulting in students feeling like they were not adequately prepared for writing in graduate school. This creates a situation for disciplinary faculty, where faculty are not sufficiently prepared to teach writing and give feedback to students who are also not prepared to write in their majors and do not know how to revise their writing. As a result, I believe that students needed a different type of feedback from instructors to better understand how to revise their writing. In studying directive/facilitative commenting in this dissertation, I discovered that this type of feedback resulted in substantial revision and more significantly discovered that this type of commenting resulted in students revising their writing throughout their papers. Directive/facilitative commenting motivated students to change their writing because they found that the comments were helpful and gave them confidence. Based on these findings, I recommend that faculty think about the backgrounds

students are bringing to graduate school, especially as they relate to writing, and consider the ways their writing pedagogies are scaffolded to anticipate writers who have little to no formal training in writing. In addition, I believe these findings validate my claim that faculty should reconsider their commenting practices in the disciplines and that institutions and writing program administrators need to provide adequate support and development for faculty in feedback practices.

In the next chapter, I review the literature in commenting in the disciplines so that stakeholders can think through writing pedagogy in the disciplines while taking into account what they know about revision from composition studies. Analyzing this research will help stakeholders bring together past writing pedagogy scholarship in the disciplines and recent outcomes in disciplinary commenting. Additionally, this literature review will also help faculty, institutions, writing program administrators, and scholars to consider the results of this study, which suggests that to help students be more successful in revision that stakeholders need to re-see feedback practices in disciplinary writing.

CHAPTER 2

Working with and commenting on writing in WAC/WID courses presents challenges that are not unlike those compositionists face in their writing courses when working with writing: understanding the balance between higher-order and lower-order concerns, effective commenting, student engagement, and faculty/student ethos (Anson, 2000; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982, 2006; Straub, 1996, 1997, 2000). What makes WAC/WID courses unique is that they are upper-level discipline specific courses where faculty must teach students unfamiliar content and help them with writing in that subject area. This is challenging as WAC/WID faculty sometimes have more than sixty students in a section and are required to allot 15% to 25% of their course design to writing (Szymanski, 2014). Along with designated time spent on student writing, faculty also must plan their curriculum to include meaningful and thoughtful writing assignments and manage how those assignments will support instruction. WAC/WID faculty are dedicating a great deal of time to writing along with teaching and want students to have success with both learning and writing about specialized knowledge (Stern & Soloman, 2006). Asking faculty to include writing along with teaching content area expertise without adequate support (lower course caps, faculty development, writing fellows) creates a no-win situation for faculty where they are unable to meet the requirements of the university and help students with writing in the professions.

Understanding more about how WAC/WID faculty respond to student writing and how students perceive this feedback could shed light on student success in WAC/WID courses and help faculty to manage writing challenges (Lo, 2010; Schreibersdorf, 2014). In this chapter, I examine the themes in the literature and WAC/WID studies on commenting to give a more comprehensive understanding of both faculty and student perceptions in WAC/WID courses. In addition, better comprehending how this literature ties to future implications for WAC/WID

faculty, administrators, and universities including areas such as retention, curriculum design, writing instruction in WAD/WID, and faculty development, will show the significance of writing pedagogy in WAC/WID and the ways stakeholders can work to improve feedback practices to support both faculty and students.

Tracing Commenting Themes

In my review of the literature on WAC/WID and writing, along with literature in composition that made recommendations about how WAC/WID instructors should consider feedback, there were three areas that emerged as significant: 1) types of comments, 2) faculty role, and 3) faculty/student values. In synthesizing the literature, I found that these three areas shaped the ways disciplinary faculty provided feedback to students and as a result influenced how students revised their work. This section of the literature review will address types of comments, faculty role, and faculty/student values to help stakeholders to draw some conclusions about past and current practices and give a starting point for a conversation about future considerations for instructors and administrators in WAC/WID.

Types of Comments

In the literature concerning paper comments in WAC/WID classes, one of the recurrent themes was types of comments given and whether the type of comment was consistent with meaningful revision or change in the draft. Researchers grouped comments into smaller, disparate categories to name types of comments but generally types of comments fell into two major categories: surface or lower-order concerns (e.g., grammar, editing) or global or higher-order concerns (e.g., development, organization) and addressed these issues from either faculty and/or student points of view. The analysis of the literature showed that whether disciplinary faculty focused on lower-order concerns or higher-order concerns played a role in how or why

students revised. Based on the student writing outcomes from commenting type, disciplinary faculty should reconsider their commenting practices and think about long-term benefits to students.

Many of the studies found that faculty in WAC/WID classes focused on lower-order concerns. This suggests that faculty and/or disciplinary areas are more concerned with editing and grammar choices than on global concerns such as idea development and support. Summer Taylor and Martha Patton (2006), in a study of ten civil engineering faculty commenting on a student paper, found “the engineering teachers’ tendencies [were] to comment in an authoritative tone and to emphasize form and content correctness” (p. 254). Erika Szymanski (2014) in an examination of 237 upper-division biology courses found a similar pattern to Taylor and Patton: “the majority of faculty comments in [her] sample comment[ed] not on issues pertinent to disciplinary writing but, disproportionately, on lower-order concerns” (p. 1). Szymanski believed the emphasis on lower order concerns detracted from the content level knowledge that students needed help working through. Szymanski and Taylor and Patton’s findings though may be in part because correctness is held in high regard in the sciences and disciplinary faculty may see this as an immediate priority. Faculty may also be modeling their practice on past writing experiences they had as students and in writing in their fields, which reinforced what they believe they should be doing for their students. The beliefs disciplinary faculty have about lower-order concerns directly inform faculty’ ethos and influence the continued emphasis on lower-order concerns throughout writing in the disciplines.

However, there is research in disciplinary commenting that demonstrates that students who primarily receive comments focused on lower-order concerns do not learn more about writing and become more focused on correcting rather than developing ideas or supporting

claims. Szymanski (2014) found that though editing writing is important in upper-level science courses that students were not likely to learn more about writing in their discipline by having faculty focus on lower-order concerns. Students, Szymanski believed, would have an increase in surface level errors because they were writing in a specialized language but could “recognize these ‘silly’ mistakes as incorrect” (p. 6). Supporting Szymanski’s research is Richard Haswell (1983) who showed that surface level corrections “constitute a nonessential element of writing” (p. 600). Faculty may not realize that when they emphasize lower-level concerns that students are likely to choose to work on those issues rather than change or work on writing content. Lisa Schreibersdorf (2014) in a survey of 254 students and 7 instructors of an entry-level literature course found that students believed that they would more likely change comments that were focused on lower-order concerns because they had a familiarity with the terminology of “wording or grammar” and felt more comfortable with changing these issues rather than thinking through higher-order concerns. Because of the emphasis on error throughout their school careers and what they believe they know about grammar, students are comfortable with making corrections, and they are more likely to make surface level corrections rather than making global level revisions. Students therefore are not necessarily improving their writing in the disciplines but are merely making corrections to writing, which may not necessarily carry over to other writing assignments or to future writing in their majors.

The literature pointed to a tension between faculty wanting to help students with specialized language in their fields and working on more global writing concerns. Though Taylor and Patton (2006) and Szymanski (2014) found evidence of the prevalence of lower-order types of comments and believed that this type of feedback overshadowed what they felt students needed to develop as writers, other scholars implied that this type of response was needed based

on the accuracy of language necessary for communicating effectively in a particular discipline. Joel Wingard and Angela Geosits (2014) suggested in their study of 64 student papers from 3 composition courses and 10 WAC courses that commenting on matters dealing with language in a discipline was necessary as students were learning the discourse of that discipline. Wingard and Geosits posited that “directive commentary is appropriate when students who are novices in a discipline are trying to learn the conventions of a disciplinary genre” (p. 11). The authors also found however when faculty only marked lower-order concerns students “attended to editing not real revision” (Wingard and Geosits, 2014, p. 7). This finding implied that students were unable to or did not know to make substantive changes to their writing if the commenting was focused on lower-order concerns. Despite research on student learning outcomes, disciplinary faculty continue to focus on lower-order concerns because they believe that accuracy is a priority in certain disciplines and the use of specialized language is important. These two priorities stem from faculty training in writing in the disciplines. Many faculty rely on past experiences with writing and working in their specialized areas to teach students about how to write effectively, which results in continued emphasis on writing issues that will not help students progress in writing.

Although Taylor and Patton (2006) found that civil engineering faculty in their study focused on lower-order concerns, they discovered that faculty considered higher-level concerns to be more important. Faculty want students to improve their writing in analysis and synthesis of ideas and desire well-developed and thoughtful writing. Faculty know from their own experiences with writing in the professions that to be effective communicators in their fields, one must produce insightful and coherent writing. Taylor and Patton uncovered that five of the ten faculty participants in the study “prefer[red] non-authoritative comments that coach[ed] students

to think further about a topic” (p. 268), while all of the faculty used authoritative comments. This was in line with Szymanski’s (2014) findings. Faculty did comment more on lower order concerns than higher order concerns; however, faculty gave more weight in their overall paper grades to higher order concerns (Szymanski, 2014). By giving more weight in assessment to revision of global issues, this demonstrated that though faculty emphasized surface-level issues, they desired global revision. This expectation for higher-level revision is supported by Schreibersdorf’s (2014) discussion about literature faculty’s commitment to help students have success in writing. Schreibersdorf found that in literature courses the emphasis was highly content driven and that “instructors intended their comments to teach generalizable skills”; however, Schreibersdorf discovered a disconnect between what the faculty believed they were helping students learn from the comments and how the students were interpreting the comments (p. 501). Faculty were focused on improving student knowledge in the course, while students were focused on improving their writing. Considering the priority faculty in Taylor and Patton and Schreibersdorf’s research placed on higher-level concerns, that they believe issues like organization, development, and support are important, there should be more emphasis on the effectiveness of global commenting for improving higher-level concerns. Higher-order commenting would still allow faculty to model discipline-specific language while at the same time push students’ critical thinking in disciplinary areas.

When faculty addressed higher-order areas, what Wingard and Geosits (2014) called “deep commenting,” where faculty addressed global-level issues like developing and clarifying ideas, in their study which reviewed feedback and student revisions on several drafts of 64 student papers, students demonstrated “substantive revision.” These findings supported Straub’s (1997) landmark study of first-year writers concerning how students perceive faculty comments.

Straub found after surveying 142 students that they strongly preferred comments they perceived as “advice” or “comment that offered explanation” (p. 103). The comments students desired most were ones that “offered help or direction but did not take control of the writing” (Straub, 1997, p. 100). Wingard and Geosits’ study showed that students will revise based on global commenting and will make changes to writing beyond comments that are focused on editing concerns. Students then can and will revise their writing if given the appropriate type of feedback. Schreibersdorf (2014) found a similar pattern and reported that students found higher-order concern comments “meaningful” but also reported that students felt there was a disconnect between what faculty were commenting on in their papers and improving their writing for that assignment (p. 508). The findings from the student perspective were aligned with those of the faculty. Faculty found students making corrections but not making substantive changes in ideas and global issues. Students were not able to make more global type changes because they did not receive the types of commenting from faculty that promoted this type of revision. The intersection of faculty’ value of the global comment and students’ desire to revise through this type of feedback is a good starting point for considering how faculty can use commenting on content issues in WAC/WID in ways that enable students to be more effective and productive writers in the disciplines.

There may be a distinction in student expectations in writing courses, which are focused on professional writing in content areas and are gaining popularity in both English departments and in the disciplines. In these courses, students, as expressed in Taylor and Patton (2006), took the engineering class on technical writing “expecting instruction in correctness and form” (p. 269). Because students understood that the feedback and evaluation in the course was based on accuracy, students’ expectations aligned with the instructor’s practice. This result indicated that

the type of writing class played a role in whether students thought higher-order concerns should be addressed. The predominance of lower-order commenting found in this research (Taylor & Patton, 2006; Szymanski, 2014; Wingard & Geosits, 2014) suggests that lower-order concerns have value in the disciplines beyond field expectations and are not simply a matter of correctness or editing. However, some researchers believe that the preference for lower-order elements should not necessarily overshadow higher-order concerns. This is in part because research has shown that students do not improve as writers without global level feedback. It is necessary then to weigh the need for modeling content-driven language and formatting alongside more global-level commenting that promotes development of ideas in the disciplines if deep-level revision is important for students to improve as writers.

In addition to student preference for advice driven comments, researchers addressed content-specific higher-order commenting, comments that prompted students to make global changes but were connected to specialized language or knowledge. Many of the authors based their research on best practices in composition (Anson, 2000; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 2000). This scholarship however did not account for content-driven comments, and authors in the literature often referred to this type of commenting as “directive” or “authoritative” (Straub, 1996, 1997; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). Lesa Stern and Amanda Solomon (2006) in their review of 598 graded papers from across the disciplines found a “mid-level” comment present. Though, Stern and Solomon only found this type of comment in 14% of the essays, they found that the mid-level comment was related to comments that discussed “the sufficiency of quality of the evidence, supporting ideas, or thoughts that were used to support a claim” (Stern & Solomon, 2006, p. 35). These researchers made an important distinction between surface-level and higher-level comments; this may be the type of comment that could

help students move forward in disciplinary writing. Schreibersdorf (2014) highlighted this variation for writing about content that is distinctive for the disciplines: “One important difference is the extent to which instructors comment on shared course content and factual accuracy in writing” (p. 506). Faculty in the disciplines, for example, might comment on language specific to the field, which then may affect larger meaning. Wingard and Geosits (2014) also addressed that discourse-specific commenting is valuable and necessary for content area courses. Based on Stern and Solomon, Schreibersdorf, Wingard and Geosits, Patton and Taylor (2013), and the results of this study, a review of the data sets from commenting studies in the disciplines, which previously categorized comments into two categories, higher-order and lower-order might show that what researchers may have thought were directive type comments should have been classified as content-specific higher-order comments. This type of review would provide even more support that commenting is functioning differently in the disciplines and is an important area of research for better understanding best practice for marginal commenting in WAC/WID courses.

In the research on lower-order, higher-order concerns, and content-specific higher-order concerns in types of commenting, the literature suggested that there are more benefits to students in learning and revision processes when faculty addressed global issues whether those concerns are global and/or global content-specific. In global concerns, WAC/WID faculty, in the literature, valued higher-order concerns and students responded to “substantive commenting” with “substantive revision,” which demonstrates that WAC/WID faculty should focus on higher-order concerns in commenting (Wingard & Geosits, 2014). However, it is important that faculty address what the purpose, i.e. whether the comments are for assignment and/or for writing in the professions, is for the students in their comments. This would avoid the disconnect that

Schreibersdorf (2014) addressed for students in not understanding how/why to revise their writing. Although disciplinary faculty may believe that surface-level commenting is best practice, it is vital to address and work toward the types of comments that promote revision, which is something that is valued by both faculty and students. If improving student writing is a goal of a university, faculty and administrators should support faculty development and/or offer ancillary writing support in feedback practices, especially if students need this type of support (Straub, 1997; Wingard & Geosits, 2014) and if it leads students to having more success in their majors, retention, graduating, and entering their professional lives more prepared for writing in their fields (Emerson, 2017).

Faculty Role

Faculty role was also influential in the review of commenting practices of faculty. In the analysis of the literature, I found that faculty role and the perception of that role from students shaped student revision choices because students value certain teaching practices and relationships with their teachers. The ways that students view these practices, in particular the interaction between faculty and student, affects how students are motivated by the communication between faculty and student, and then as a result, feedback. Naomi Winstone, Robert Nash, James Rowntree, and Richard Menezes (2016) examined what students wanted from feedback and asked students to rate types of feedback based on “luxuries versus necessities” and found that for the relationship to work effectively a “shared vision...when students’ perceptions of excellent teaching align with those of their teachers” was important for student revision (p. 1239). Understanding how practices and relationships are functioning relative to faculty role is important because the perception faculty have of the student and vis versa directly informed how faculty constructed their comments and how students perceived the

comments faculty gave them. Stakeholders must be aware that while faculty have views on what they regard as good teaching, effective curriculum, and engaging environments, students must also consider these practices beneficial and advantageous to them.

How faculty see their professional identity in their jobs as teachers is significant because it underscores teaching philosophy and classroom pedagogy. For commenting, this becomes even more important as a faculty's philosophy behind this practice affects student revision outcomes. Francie Jeffrey and Bonita Selting's (1999) study demonstrated how role could influence practice. Jeffrey and Selting collected interview data from faculty across seven different disciplinary areas, including the sciences and liberal arts to better understand faculty identity in assessing the faculty/student relationship in commenting and aggregated their responses in three categories, "intellectual mentor," "assignment judge," and "general editor" (p. 179). In faculty responses, Jeffrey and Selting found that faculty "overwhelmingly identified themselves as 'assignment judge' and student as 'student' (completing an assignment)" (p. 179). These categories acknowledged that faculty, especially disciplinary faculty, saw their role in a hierarchical way and perhaps was reflective of how faculty believed they should be assessing their students. Jeffrey and Selting's findings that disciplinary faculty are challenged in how they envision their roles shows how complex Winstone et. al.'s (2016) "shared vision" between faculty and students is to establish. With this in mind, faculty need to be mindful of the ways their identity as teachers affects student feedback on assignments and in students' professional lives.

For students to be successful writers beyond individual assignments, the scholarship supports the idea that disciplinary faculty should be aware of their role and the influence that role brings to how they work with students. It is necessary for faculty to balance their aspirations for

student success on individual assignments and in their classrooms with mentoring students in their critical thinking skills for students to have success beyond the classroom. Straub's (1997) study on how students responded to faculty comments confirmed this goal and the power faculty have in their position as commenter. Straub suggested that "students were influenced by how a comment was presented and how it made the teacher come across as a responder" (p. 100). Students in this study did not prefer comments that they felt were "criticisms." Students viewed comments in a more positive way when they viewed the faculty as a "teacher or a guide" rather than marks of a critic" (Straub, 1997, p. 102). The student perceived the faculty as having directly influenced their perception of the comment. Straub's (1997) study is important in light of Jeffrey and Selting's (1999) research as Straub's findings indicated that students respond more favorably when students see the faculty as an "intellectual mentor" rather than a critic or "assignment judge." This shows that what faculty believe their role is and how that is communicated through classroom practices, including marginal feedback, is important for student success and what students believe will help them to be effective writers.

Another way that faculty in the literature expressed their role was through praise; faculty believed this would motivate students to be more effective writers and communicators in their disciplines. Wingard and Geosits' (2014) recent commenting study concurred with Straub (1997) in his findings on ethos and approval. They found when faculty offered a praising comment to students, students were more apt to revise their papers. This finding suggested that when students believed that faculty thought they had done some things well, they were more likely to revise their work. Praise and its effects have been well researched in composition and is a commenting practice that may be helpful to disciplinary faculty as they consider ways to connect with students (Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Straub, 1997). Sommers (1982) in her research on how

students respond to comments asserted that “comments create the motive for doing something different in the next draft; thoughtful comments create the motive for revision” (p. 149). The ways students respond to comments is ultimately what measures how successful a comment is in influencing revision, which reinforces the idea that along with students seeing the faculty as a guide or mentor, students feel more encouraged to revise their writing when they feel supported. This is important as this is a goal for faculty that students work on developing their thinking and revise their writing. WAC/WID faculty are already heavily invested in helping students to become better learners and writers, and if there was more research to develop Wingard and Geosits’ initial finding that praising comments seemed to increase revision as well as more research on the efficacy of these types of comments, WAC/WID faculty might be more likely to see these types of comments as necessary and valuable.

Recognizing how faculty view their responsibilities beyond the classroom and then convey those ideas to students through practice shows how significant faculty perceptions of their role and how they enact that role through teaching are to student learning. For example, in Schreibersdorf’s (2014) survey of faculty and students in literature courses, she found that faculty felt their role was to teach students skills and knowledge that they believed would transfer to other courses. Because faculty believed they should be instructing students about skills that would transfer, they will focus on these practices, and this view then influences how students learn about writing. In addition, past experiences, including classroom, graduate education, faculty development, university service, and research have informed how faculty view their position. This take on the faculty role extended the view proposed by Jeffrey and Selting (1999) where the focus was on the classroom. Schreibersdorf’s survey found that faculty role was changed by the way faculty understood priorities of their departments. For example, the

English department, where she conducted her survey, emphasized “critical thinking and writing skills that will serve [students] throughout their college career” (p. 503). The literature faculty’s commenting in the study on student papers reflected this role. This provides another view on faculty perceptions and illustrates the struggle that faculty have with managing institutional pressures concerning learning outcomes with what faculty trust will be most helpful for students. The research in Jeffrey and Selting’s study where faculty saw themselves as “assignment judge,” exemplified this tension. Schreibersdorf’s findings, along with the research of Jeffrey and Selting reinforces the idea that the faculty role, which has not been widely researched in WAC/WID literature, is important and perhaps more significant than stakeholders realize in how faculty work with students in their chosen disciplinary fields. Faculty role is especially important for commenting research in the disciplines because feedback is tied to faculty perceptions of their identity as professionals, and those beliefs shape comments.

One reoccurring idea that seemed to especially influence faculty role as writing teachers was that students gain skills in writing that will transfer to other courses and eventually to students’ professional and/or academic careers (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Read & Michaud, 2015; Schreibersdorf, 2014). This may be a belief that writing faculty should challenge and instead focus more on ways to help students become successful writers in the disciplines beyond transferable skills. Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle (2007) questioned in their research on transfer whether and how first-year writing prepares students for their majors and proposed that first-year writing may need to be reframed as a writing studies course that provides more specific guidance in their disciplines. Sarah Read and Michael Michaud (2015) offered another perspective and investigated transfer beyond the disciplines to students’ professional lives and researched the ways a professional writing course improves disciplinary writing skills and

suggested that a “multimajor professional writing course” may give students the types of experiences that allow for “lifelong learning” (p. 454). Despite support and development of these types of professional writing courses, both Downs and Wardle and Read and Michaud agree that the idea of transferable skills as a measure of success for administrators and disciplinary faculty is one that may be difficult to assess especially as a goal for disciplinary faculty. The consideration of transfer and what faculty believe their role is in helping students develop transferable skills is an area that scholars need to take into account as program administrators and faculty to help guide researchers in identifying best practices in working with students along with meeting the expectations of departments.

In addition to the first major theme in the literature review types of comments, the research revealed that the roles that faculty play and students’ perceptions of those roles are important to how feedback is received. The goal for WAC/WID faculty in the literature (Jeffrey & Selting, 1999; Schreibersdorf, 2014) was to help students to become better learners and writers. Further, Straub (1997) and Wingard and Geosits (2014) found that students want faculty to be guiding and advisory in their comments and were more likely to revise their papers when they believed that faculty felt like they were doing something well. The ways faculty view their role and students’ perception of that role is not at cross purposes. Faculty, even as “assignment judges,” acknowledged that they cared about students and were passionate about teaching. Faculty though separated emotional affect from what they felt were professional roles in order to situate themselves within a role formed by the institution, their backgrounds, and/or from their own experiences as students. Faculty need to better understand then how they can take the roles they see as parts of their professional and even their personal identities and conflate them to help students be both better learners and writers. If as the research suggests students have more

success with revision when they see faculty as “mentors” and “guides” then helping faculty re-see practices in department priorities, faculty development, and ancillary writing support is a crucial first step to enabling faculty to fully embrace the idea that their role when working with writing should be concerned with what will best help students in their majors.

Faculty/Student Values

Faculty and student values, consistently came up in the research and was tied to why faculty gave the comments they did, shaped how faculty saw themselves, or influenced how students responded to feedback. Faculty values across disciplines was even more significant than types of comments and faculty role as values directly affected teaching practices and time investment in giving written feedback to students. Values in this context involved teaching philosophies, classroom practices, and teaching preferences. Student values concerning classroom practices and teaching preferences are also examined because the literature analysis showed that students’ beliefs were aligned with faculty and that faculty beliefs directly affected students’ perception of their learning and influenced their revision practices.

How faculty viewed writing and the overall importance of writing in the disciplines affected how faculty interacted with writing and time spent on helping students revise. In the literature analysis, I found writing as a value associated with specialized discourse in the disciplines. For example, in Szymanski (2014) value translated to a regard for specialized discourse. Szymanski found that WAC faculty who valued “apprentice-professional” voice in assignments were more successful in having students revise. Understanding writing in this way Szymanski posited might “improve feedback practices.” To better grasp faculty perceptions of best practices in commenting and their philosophies behind types of response, Szymanski interviewed five faculty and found that upper-level biology faculty desired revision and believed

that commenting on student writing was an important part of the revision process. These faculty also valued “professional” writing and “good writing” and believed that this was important for students in the class and in their futures. By demonstrating that language choice is consequential in commenting to students as practitioners, faculty showed students that using specialized language was meaningful and tied to successful communication. Although Szymanski’s study is small, the finding was significant as it indicated that changing the way faculty presented commenting and revision to students as “writing to improve as professionals” may encourage a higher level of revision. Taylor and Patton (2006) found a value that also emphasized writing in the professions in their study of civil engineers commenting on student papers. The engineering faculty had a high regard for commenting, especially “a preference for content-heavy” comments (Taylor & Patton, 2006, p. 258). This showed that these faculty thought that student comprehension of the material was more important than lower-order concerns. However, as indicated earlier, there was a disconnect between values and practice as faculty often gave comments on lower order concerns or were more interested in students completing assignments (Jeffrey & Selting, 1999; Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006). Schreibersdorf (2014) also found that faculty value giving written feedback to students. Giving feedback to students Schreibersdorf discovered was one of the “most time-consuming responsibilities” for faculty, so faculty valued “effectiveness of written comments” (p. 520). Because of the time commitment, faculty appreciated making meaningful comments to students that helped students learn the material and revise their writing.

Students’ values were not dissimilar from those of faculty, which is an important consideration because how students perceive the responsibilities of those teaching them should influence faculty priorities. Winstone et al. (2016) in their examination of what students want in

written feedback found that students valued “excellent teaching” and believed that their “perception of their learning environment” played a critical role in how they viewed feedback from faculty. They also found that students valued learning and wanted “guidance on skills they should focus on improving” (p. 1248). Knowing that students have a high regard for pedagogy in the classroom and in feedback should be a powerful motivator for faculty to closely examine the potential of existing and potential teaching methods. Schreibersdorf (2014) found similar student values: “85% [of students] agreed that the comments were meaningful” (p. 508). This finding indicated that students valued learning and appreciated faculty making comments on their papers. Schreibersdorf also found that “72.2% of students agreed that comments showed their instructor cares” (p. 508). This finding suggested that students appreciated the time that instructors took to read and comment on their papers. These values are central to the conversation about students and revision. If students want good teaching and desire feedback from teachers, it creates an opportunity for faculty to help students be more successful in revision.

Along with commenting and understanding faculty and student roles, identifying values of both faculty and students sheds light on WAC/WID faculty pedagogy and student learning. There were several commonalities between faculty and students when analyzing values. One area that faculty and students both believe is important is learning. Faculty are invested in student learning (Szymanski, 2014), and students are dedicated to their own learning (Wingard & Geosits, 2014). Faculty and students also appreciated effective commenting that would promote revision in writing (Szymanski, 2014), and students valued commenting that they found “meaningful” and would help them revise (Schreibersdorf, 2014). In addition, Taylor and Patton (2006) found that faculty valued content-driven commenting; students wanted “guidance” to

improve their learning (Winstone et al., 2006). This finding further reinforces the analysis on types of comments—students can and will revise if given feedback that will help them become better writers. These commonalities in the literature specific to values indicated that faculty and students have comparable values regarding learning, revision, and commenting. Similar to faculty and student roles, faculty and student values are not at cross purposes, which makes faculty/student values an ideal place to begin dialogue on how to use those values to promote commenting that facilitates deeper and more productive revision. Another finding in examining the values of faculty was that faculty who prioritized “apprentice-professional” voice in writing assignments had more success in helping students to revise their work (Szymanski, 2014). This is an area that would be particularly helpful to research as it would allow WAC/WID faculty to model disciplinary language while at the same time provide feedback to students that would be beneficial for students in both learning in content-driven courses and revising writing that involves difficult and complex subject matter.

Though faculty values are difficult to measure and to assess, they play a pivotal role in disciplinary feedback processes. If faculty do not value writing, time spent in helping students revise, and students having success with writing as professionals, they are not working to create a “shared vision” with students (Winstone et al., 2016). This is not to say that faculty must all have the exact same beliefs but valuing writing in the major and working with students on their writing to promote revision are values that could promote student success and perhaps student retention. The research (Schreibersdorf, 2014; Szymanski, 2014) that these beliefs are already present for both faculty and students, creates an opportunity for both departments and administrators to work together to support and extend the work that faculty are already doing to ensure student success in writing.

Considerations for Faculty and Administrators

Examining the literature on types of comments, faculty/student roles, and faculty/student values in WAC/WID commenting research illustrated that faculty and students are committed to success in teaching and learning to write in the disciplines. With this in mind, institutions, writing program administrators, disciplinary faculty, and compositionists should rethink teaching practices and facilitate awareness of writing pedagogy so that stakeholders can support students more effectively. The literature analysis on commenting research makes clear that commenting is valuable in revision, especially global and content-specific commenting as it directly changes how students revise their writing. In addition, both students and faculty appreciate commenting for revision and desire to improve learning and writing in the disciplines. In order to encourage continued support and commitment to WAC/WID commenting and writing research, there are several findings from this commenting literature review and discussion that are important to acknowledge. The themes found in the literature concerning student learning and faculty practice can be tied to 1) retention, 2) curriculum design, 3) ancillary writing support, and 4) faculty development—which I discuss more fully in chapter 5 in conjunction with the results; these areas are important considerations for institutions, writing program administrators, and faculty. Understanding how these components work together, overlap, and promote faculty and student success is complex and requires collaboration from all stakeholders involved. William Condon and Diane Kelly-Riley (2004) in their assessment of writing and critical thinking at Washington State University give institutions a way to begin thinking about how to move forward. The authors found that WAC/WID should be a “shared commitment,” and “collective efforts lead to better prepared writers” (p. 69). Looking closely then at the implications in the literature on retention and commenting practices, curriculum design, and writing instruction in WAC/WID

shows that investment in faculty development is necessary to advocate for changed feedback and writing pedagogy in WAC/WID.

Retention

With the recent trend in assessing student learning in higher education and analyzing patterns in student retention and persistence, student learning outcomes have become even important in the literature on WAC/WID. Schreibersdorf (2014) accounted for this in her study by linking the English department to student outcomes, while Celia Lo (2010) in her research on student learning addressed the changed role of faculty in an assessment on student learning. Lo posited “with learning production now being education’s goal, students or learners take center stage, whereas faculty become facilitators of student learning” (p. 238). Universities want students to become critical thinkers and learners, but they also want students to graduate. And, with many universities struggling with enrollment numbers and budgets, retention numbers are important. However, what the administration may want to see with moving retention percentages up and their understanding of student learning is not always aligned with what is happening in classrooms. Peggy O’Neill, Cindy Moore, and Brian Huot (2009) examined methods of assessment for writing programs and stressed that writing faculty and writing program administrators were not always open to assessment for this reason (p. 14). Faculty are experts in their subject areas and have ideas about best practice for their classrooms. Assessing learning to improve numbers does not necessarily complement what faculty believe is effective pedagogy. However, there may be a compromise where both university administrators and faculty can see the benefits of assessment. Trudy Banta, Elizabeth Jones, and Karen Black (2009) emphasized that good assessment will address the process that “leads to student outcomes” and that “what students and faculty do makes a difference” (p. 16). Banta et al. suggested that there is a way to

combine practice and assessment, especially if considering the end goal of student success in the classroom and at the university. If faculty and administrators better understood the perspectives and motives of what the other group was working toward through examining the ties between classroom pedagogy, assignments, course content, course objectives, university goals, and student retention then perhaps both could see that the work of faculty was valuable, and faculty would feel that through assessment that they were contributing in an important way.

There is a connection between university outcomes and instructor practice that directly informs how both faculty and students can have success, but the competing goals of the stakeholders in this relationship can affect the ways they work with students. Anne Ruggles Gere, Sarah Swofford, Naomi Silver, and Melody Pugh (2015) examined WAC/WID stakeholders (graduate students, students, faculty) through the lens of the Sweetland Center for Writing at the University of Michigan to address how a university's institutional goal can "bump up against the lived practices and interests of WAC/WID program stakeholders" (p. 243). In their analysis, Gere et al. found that institutional goals translated into expectations and programmatic recommendations such as requirements for course content and teaching practices. For their program at the University of Michigan, they discovered that these recommendations affected instructors' pedagogical choices. This shows from a programmatic perspective the way that faculty role and institutional pressures can change teaching. What Gere et al. demonstrated in their assessment is that WAC/WID stakeholders and their priorities did affect one another in a myriad of ways and as a result were influential in student success. This relationship is important because student and faculty success directly drives student retention. Lo reinforced this idea in her study by asserting that student success in disciplinary courses is vital to both student retention and assessment as faculty are "facilitators of student learning" (p. 238). Commenting

practices in WAC/WID is an important component of the learning process and, as demonstrated in the literature review, can bridge the gap between students and academic discourse communities. This is essential in disciplinary courses as students are often unfamiliar with the content in the discipline and language of the field. The authors in the WAC/WID literature suggest that by modeling disciplinary specific language in commenting, emphasizing substantive, content-driven commentary, and praising student efforts, disciplinary faculty can be influential in student learning and student retention.

Curriculum Design

In addition to retention and assessment, the literature on curriculum design learning and writing opportunities are different in disciplinary courses than in traditional writing courses and are key to improving student revision. Michael Carter (2007) in “Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing,” argued that faculty needed to reconceive of their view of writing in the disciplines by examining the relationship between “knowing and writing” and showed that “it is the relationship among knowing, doing, and writing that is concealed by the disciplinary focus on conceptual knowledge” (p. 389). Carter’s idea that stakeholders should re-see writing in the disciplines in this way, opens up a path through which institutions, faculty, and administrators can situate commenting on student papers in the “doing,” which is directly related to the knowledge of the field. The premise of Carter’s argument was that faculty did not learn to write in their disciplinary areas through formal writing instruction but through modeling writing practices they learned in their own undergraduate and graduate courses (p. 385). Carter suggested that this history with writing informed the priorities disciplinary faculty place on writing. Because disciplinary faculty do not have expertise as writing teachers but are expected to teach writing, one of the major influences on their writing pedagogy is past experience. Since

this experience among faculty is inconsistent, faculty, institutions, and writing program administrators must examine not only practice but curriculum as well. Carter concluded that disciplinary faculty should reconceive of how they view writing and move away from the idea that teaching writing necessitates an “unacceptable sacrifice of course content” (Carter, 2007, p. 386, Holyoak, 1998). The idea Carter suggested to reframe WID was to think about writing as “ways of doing,” which he believed would bring together writing and knowing and would allow WAC/WID faculty to better help students have writing success. “Doing” could consist of not only assignments that were genre specific but also could give students the types of feedback they would need to engage in written conversations in their major, which as the literature analysis in types of comments suggests is vitally important for students having success in writing (Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). In addition, reframing WAC/WID writing as “doing” Carter posited would be more effective for faculty as they would be drawing from their own expertise to teach students writing rather than feeling pressured from WAC/WID administrators that they must teach writing as part of their courses. Re-seeing writing as integral to course curriculum, creating effective assignments, and looking at feedback to writing as “doing” in the disciplines would be beneficial to both students and faculty and perhaps even change how writing functions between disciplines.

To support pedagogical change, institutions and writing program administrators, along with faculty need to examine curricular changes that can reinforce student writing in their majors. Peter Alaimo, John Bean, Joseph Langenhan, and Larry Nichols (2009) discussed Carter’s (2007) “ways of doing” in an assessment of a curriculum for chemistry at Seattle University. The initial problem in the curriculum Alaimo et al. found was that students were not performing well on their capstone projects. Students were having problems with issues

concerning thesis, development, and organization but most importantly struggled with issues relating to demonstrating expertise in the discipline such as “inadequate theory and context”; “illogical or unpersuasive presentation of data”; and “non-professional style” (p. 17). Higher-order concerns are prevalent issues in student writing and require sustained work including feedback and practice, and for writing in the disciplines this instruction is complicated by specialized language. To better grasp the problems students were having with their writing in the discipline and to further understand if these issues were curricular, one of the areas Alaimo et al. considered was Carter’s theoretical concept and “hypothesized that learning to write a scientific paper in the style of a professional chemist might initiate students,” in what Carter suggested as “a specialized conception of disciplinary knowledge” (p. 18). The faculty revised the curriculum by focusing on integrating specialized disciplinary-specific writing instruction in a sophomore level chemistry course to include “genuine writing instruction” (p. 20). As a result, Alaimo et al. found that students had higher levels of success with “writing in a professional style”; “adopting genre-specific conventions for future design”; and “understanding the purpose of a scientific behavior” (p. 25). Students can learn best practices in understanding disciplinary-specific style conventions and modeling the language of their field (Wingard & Geosits, 2014), resulting in what Alaimo et al. believed to be showing students through dialogue and modeling how to become insiders in their chosen discourse communities. Alaimo et al. and Wingard and Geosits (2014) echoed what composition scholars know from David Bartholomae’s (1986) “Inventing the University,” that modeling the language of specific discourse community for students is the first step toward insiderness. Alaimo et al. and Wingard and Geosits suggested that this can happen through combined curriculum assessment and specialized writing instruction. Changing curriculum to emphasize specialized discourse in writing instruction is a shift that stakeholders in

the disciplines should consider for promoting student success with learning and communicating in the discourse of their fields.

Like University of Michigan, other institutions have recognized the importance of improving feedback practices and pedagogy so that students can have more success in writing along with disciplinary knowledge acquisition. Gere et al. (2015) pointed out that the stakeholders can sometimes “bump” against each other, resulting in purposes that are mismatched and cause faculty to not understand their role and lead to learning outcomes not necessarily aligned with institutional goals. Some programs however have looked at curricular changes and the ways changing the curriculum helps to facilitate increased student learning and improved student writing. For example, Alan Holyoak (1998), in “A Plan for Writing Throughout (not just across) the Curriculum,” discussed the Biology program at Manchester College and their desire to improve critical thinking and writing skills in their courses so that students can learn to “write like biologists” (p. 186). Though Holyoak was supportive of the writing instruction that takes place in first-year writing courses, he asserted that there is a “a major shortcoming among even the most comprehensive WAC programs,” which he suggested was related to specific writing development, including the types of writing students biology students needed to be familiar with for their majors and careers (p. 186). To resolve this shortcoming, Holyoak and his colleagues developed and implemented a curriculum that included writing specific to biology majors throughout thirteen of their undergraduate biology courses. Though Holyoak did not assess if students had more success in their professional lives, he found that students in the upper-level biology courses had more success on their writing assignments. For some institutions and perhaps for some disciplines, looking at field-specific curricular change may be necessary. Another institution, Seattle University, recognized through an external

assessment consultant that their history students were not having success in the major, and as a result redesigned their curriculum. John Bean, David Carrithers, and Theresa Earenfight (2005) addressed how the history faculty were motivated to re-see the department's curriculum so that its primary outcome, to "teach all its majors to think like historians," was guided by outcomes that supported success (p.9). Based on their initial analysis of student paper samples from different history courses, representing different levels of student writing, the authors found that students were not learning the necessary critical thinking skills to be successful in history, much like the initial findings from Holyoak. The history faculty piloted new assignments in two of the introductory courses with the assignment design focused on using disciplinary knowledge successfully in writing. The authors found that students had more success in "historical inquiry and argumentation" (p. 13). In addition, the authors piloted a similar approach in their finance department and found that revising curriculum to be necessary in moving students toward a higher-level of critical thinking and writing in the disciplines. Holyoak and Bean et al. found that curriculum design was impactful for their programs and both had administrative support to improve their curriculum.

Considering curriculum design and the role of writing instruction to develop and support student success is an important first step in thinking about the role of writing and how faculty work with students on writing in the disciplines. Carter (2007) shows us why it is necessary to re-see the traditional ways course content is delivered in order to promote student learning in specialized areas by considering "doing" through teaching practices and curriculum. However, thinking about the ways faculty have come to their own perceptions about writing, either based on their own writing histories or their views about writing in the disciplines, some WAC/WID faculty do not have the background or the training to integrate writing into their courses in

meaningful ways (Carter, 2007; Emerson 2017; Holyoak, 1998). The case studies of Alaimo et al. (2009), Holyoak (1998), and Bean et al. (2005) demonstrated that not only can writing be included as part of a content-driven curriculum in the disciplines but that faculty can find success in teaching writing in their areas of expertise and will embrace curriculum redesign if given support by their departments and understand the ways such curricular change supports student success.

Writing Instruction in WAC/WID Courses

In the analysis of WAC/WID commenting in literature, there were several pilot studies at individual universities, similar to universities working to revise their curriculum, to enhance writing instruction in WAC/WID courses. While at first these studies might not seem directly related to an argument that focuses on commenting in the disciplines, these types of studies are needed in conjunction with research in discipline specific commenting so that so that faculty can better use their time in working with students on their writing and engage with students in critical thinking and writing. Two studies that stand out as models for consideration by writing program administrators and faculty in the disciplines are Kathy Burke, Thomas Greenbowe, and Brian Hand (2006) who focused on assignment design and improved disciplinary writing and Terrance Jorgensen and Pam Marek (2013) who addressed required workshops to support writing conventions in a disciplinary field. These studies had goals that had similar objectives: to improve student writing; to help students apply disciplinary knowledge in critical thinking and writing; and to give faculty more time to focus on disciplinary thinking and writing. Evaluating effective means of delivering writing instruction in the disciplines is important for both administrators and faculty to assess ways to both challenge and change not only curriculum design but how faculty work with writing.

Though curriculum design, where the requirements of what is included in courses and the types of assignments that stakeholders agree will be necessary for students to acquire the knowledge for their majors, is an important step in addressing the importance of writing in the disciplines, assignment design cannot be overlooked because assignments are how writing priorities are communicated to students. Burke et al. (2006) focused on assignment design and discussed how changing a traditional lab experiment in an entry-level chemistry course could facilitate improved student learning. The authors based their study on research in collaborative learning and past student performance on lab experiments where the authors found that students learned to conduct the experiment but that they did not develop critical thinking or learning skills. To improve these skills, Burke et al. designed a lab experiment where students were not given instructions for how to complete the experiment but where students asked research questions about a scientific problem constructed by the course instructor, created a claim or hypothesis, designed an experiment, and then wrote about their findings. The authors believed that setting up the experiment in this way allowed for students to “experience scientific phenomena,” which they suggested would support student learning more effectively than imitating an experiment or following guided directions. Burke et al. developed a “Specific Science Heuristic (SWH)” to combine the elements they believed were the most important to helping students succeed in scientific inquiry (p. 1033–1034). The authors found in using this approach with students that students’ writing and thinking was more developed and addressed the “ideas of science” and that the SWH increased the connection with students to the material (p. 1036). In this case, the assignment design showed that students can interact with assignments that engage them and expect a high level of critical thinking and writing. This is a space where

faculty then can create a dialogue and consider feedback that will build on students' knowledge and improve their writing in ways that are directly tied to inquiry.

Another study examined how to support students with disciplinary writing instruction that was focused on surface level and citation issues outside of the course. The thinking behind this type of student support comes from faculty concerns about the time commitment needed to work with students on writing along with content delivery (Stern & Soloman, 2006; Szymanski, 2014). To look at whether supplemental writing instruction was effective, Jorgensen and Marek (2013) investigated whether using workshops prior to taking an introductory psychology course successfully informed students about surface level errors and APA style conventions. The study focused on whether these workshops would decrease the need for psychology faculty to work with students on surface level issues and APA style conventions. The impetus for the study was that the authors believed that psychology faculty were spending too much time on improving students' writing abilities concerning surface level and style issues, and faculty felt that they could not devote time in their feedback to focus on global level issues, particularly regarding discipline specific content. Jorgensen and Marek followed 58 students from Kennesaw State University who attended one writing workshop focused on "grammar," "mechanics," and "references," and took a "pre and post-test" and "three follow-up tests" to determine if this practice was effective (pp. 295–297). In their analysis, Jorgensen and Marek found that the workshops were successful and improved writing of the psychology students in "grammar," "mechanics," and "references" (p. 297). Although Jorgensen and Marek conducted this study with introductory psychology students, they suggested that their findings could be relevant to upper-level psychology courses and to other courses in other disciplines. The preliminary findings of both pilots (Burke et al., 2006; Jorgensen & Marek, 2013) showed that keeping

assignment design with disciplinary writing and critical thinking in mind and writing workshops to support grammar and editing conventions in a specific discipline were helpful to students and to faculty. By creating assignments that target writing outcomes (Burke et al., 2006), it serves two purposes. For students, they are engaging with an assignment that is rooted in content, and they are modeling the type of writing necessary to have success in their majors (Alaimo et al., 2009; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). It also creates an opportunity for faculty to give feedback to students on specific disciplinary concerns, whether that be scientific inquiry, analysis, working with evidence, or any other areas that faculty believe are appropriate for where students are developmentally in their learning. In freeing up faculty to focus on global concerns by creating and implementing writing workshops tailored to disciplinary writing concerns (Jorgensen & Marek, 2013), faculty will be able to allocate time to working with students on writing issues where their expertise could be more fully utilized. Having the time to work with students on these types of writing concerns supports the values that disciplinary faculty expressed in the review of types of comments and faculty roles in WAC/WID (Jeffrey & Selting, 1999; Schreibersdorf, 2014; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). Considering these findings with curriculum redesign and faculty development along with a clearer understanding of the influence of feedback in the disciplines, there is an opening for seeing the ways all stakeholders can support both student and faculty success in teaching and learning in the disciplines.

Faculty Development

Along with the importance of retention, curriculum redesign, and supplementary workshops, faculty development is one of the keys to improving student learning and perhaps the most important area of literature to examine. Some studies (Beason, 1993; Szymanski, 2014) have shown successful partnerships between composition and WAC/WID faculty where

disciplinary faculty learn and better understand best practices in composition. And other studies have advocated for more WAC/WID faculty development and training specifically in the areas that deal with best practices in commenting (Taylor & Patton, 2006). Taylor and Patton (2006) cautioned however that “we may be too quick to condemn faculty and workplace professionals after studying their responses alone, failing to offer them the opportunity to demonstrate that they can recognize and do value more effective response” (p. 269). When thinking about faculty development, it is important to consider the values, expertise, and resources at universities to facilitate effective development opportunities so that institutions can capitalize on expertise faculty may already have and create buy-in for from stakeholders. Robert Jones and Joseph Comprone (1993), in an article written during the development of WAC/WID programs, proposed that institutions need to bring together “faculty, graduate students, and discipline specific research with program development” to improve both teaching and learning in WAC/WID programs (p. 63). To facilitate the shift from the types of comments that engineering faculty make then, Taylor and Patton, like Jones and Comprone, suggested working with WAC directors on faculty development. It would be useful to consider workshops where WAC faculty are also recommending to composition faculty areas where they can help students so that composition faculty can better understand what skills are necessary for students to have success in their WAC courses.

In addition, better comprehending the role of the faculty member in modeling language and working with students through comments to revise their work in combination with curriculum redesign could provide WPAs more guidance in how to work successfully with students on writing assignments. For writing program administrators getting faculty and administration support might be difficult, but considering the faculty values addressed in

WAC/WID literature (Taylor and Patton, 2006; Schreibersdorf, 2014; Szymanski 2014) and a new study by William Condon, Ellen Iverson, Cathryn Manduca, Carol Rutz, and Gudrun Willett (2016) that demonstrated efficacy of faculty development and its ties to improved student learning and student retention, faculty and administration might be willing to engage in and provide budget for development opportunities. In their new book, *Faculty Development and Student Learning: Assessing the Connections*, Condon et al. (2016) suggested that teaching can be improved through faculty development and used data from following two faculty development training programs at two different universities, which supported the idea that faculty are better instructors after faculty development workshops. From these studies, Condon et al. found that the more faculty participated in development opportunities the more their teaching and pedagogy evolved. This is significant because faculty buy-in for development opportunities is an obstacle many writing program administrators face based on the time commitment necessary for faculty who are already over extended and the belief faculty development does not positively affect teaching (Neeley, 2017). The study also found that faculty who were self-motivated were even more likely to change or improve their teaching. Most importantly, Condon et al., found as Holyoak (1998), Bean et al. (2005), and Gere et al. (2015) alluded to that faculty were more successful in implementing changes to their teaching after faculty development workshops if their university had a culture that supported change and development. In addition, the authors addressed how teaching evolved through these development opportunities and the ways faculty continued to work on and develop those aspects of their teaching over a long period of time. This desire for improvement was based on “improved student performance,” which directly ties to the goals of most administrations. The results of the study of faculty development at both institutions showed improvement for faculty and for students but more significantly,

demonstrated improvement for students not in merely having more success in completing assignments but having more success with “higher critical thinking” (Condon et al., 2016). This finding reinforces the idea that faculty development is effective for improving student learning as well as improved student performance and that faculty development is a “worthwhile investment” for universities and writing program administrators.

Literature Themes and Implications for WAC/WID Commenting Practices

Understanding more about how types of comments, faculty/student roles, and faculty/student values influence student revision practices in a positive way can help students become better writers and more knowledgeable about discipline specific writing practices in their majors. The analysis of these reoccurring themes substantiates the idea that faculty, writing program administrators, and institutions need to improve writing pedagogy, especially concerning feedback practices, to effectively support student writing in the disciplines. Examining the literature on commenting in WAC/WID revealed that faculty and students have common goals that are necessary for success in WAC/WID courses—investment and dedication in learning and a desire to engage in meaningful revision. The literature on retention, curriculum design, writing instruction in WAC/WID, and faculty development demonstrated that stakeholders are at an important intersection for students and faculty in the way they comprehend feedback and commenting, a place where WAC/WID faculty can be crucial difference makers for students. Communicating and producing knowledge effectively is vital for academic and professional success and so writing administrators and faculty must closely examine teaching practices to better serve students in the disciplines. The combination of faculty engaging in best practices in commenting for student learning along with student engagement in this process creates an environment where both WAC/WID faculty and students can have success in their

WAC/WID classes and improve writing and critical thinking skills for other university courses and their professional lives.

This review of the literature of feedback practices (types of comments, faculty/student roles, faculty/student values) and the outside influences that affect the ways faculty conceive of and use feedback (retention, curriculum design, writing instruction, faculty development) shows how the stakeholders, their behaviors, and their beliefs play a part in how faculty work with students. The literature analysis demonstrates how the types of comments faculty give to students determine revision choices students make in their assignments and influence how students perceive revision in the disciplines. Further, faculty role and student interpretation of this role affects types of comments and is shaped by field-specific and institutional ideas about best practice. Faculty and student values inform both types of comments and faculty role and alter in subtle and non-subtle ways attitudes about learning and practice. In turn, the analysis of the literature illustrates that stakeholders need to reconsider how retention, curriculum design, writing instruction, and faculty development involve feedback practices. Each stakeholder's view is connected to and influential in how the other responds, and each layer, theme addressed is either connected to or scaffolded onto another; in practice and theory they are entwined with one another. Stakeholders are faced with a complex and multi-layered problem in the ways faculty give students feedback and must identify how faculty can be more effective in helping students have success in disciplinary writing.

To address the problem with feedback in the disciplines, I designed a study that builds on Patton and Taylor's (2013) findings that suggested that stakeholders need to be looking at and implementing feedback differently in the disciplines. The study and the results, discussed in chapters 3 and 4, uncover a different way of delivering marginal comments to students where

students had considerable success with writing. By identifying what effective feedback looks like, stakeholders can view feedback through a ground up approach—what works for students in revision can help them to become better writers and scholars, which may influence the types of comments faculty give, the roles faculty play, the values they have and so on, perhaps affecting systemic change in the way stakeholders consider writing and writing feedback in WAC/WID.

CHAPTER 3

While there is a call for more data driven research, traditionally, empirical studies have not been the norm in composition research (Haswell, 2006). And, some in composition studies have pushed back and suggested that the field might be missing the bigger issues if researchers are constrained by studies that do not allow for considerations beyond set method structures (Haas, Takayoshi, & Carr, 2012). In studying and analyzing literature, especially literature that supported best practice in composition studies, I found myself at the intersection of these methodological philosophies. Determining the type of study I wanted to conduct was an important part of the research process for this project because as a composition researcher I am concerned with student writing and persuading others in the ways we can be more effective in working with students. Reading Michael Boyle and Mike Schmierbach's (2014) ideas on principles and concepts of research was influential in this process. Boyle and Schmierbach defined research as "a process through which science is conducted," and they asserted that research should include four standards: "it is empirical; systematic; intersubjective and replicable; and cyclical and self-correcting" (p. 3). Boyle and Schmierbach prompted me to consider if scholars should be doing something that was more empirical in composition, especially as current research on disciplinary commenting references in an intersubjective way past studies in composition. With this framework in mind, I decided that I wanted to do an empirical study that could support Boyle and Schmierbach's definition of research.

The study was also informed by considering whether I would conduct a qualitative or quantitative study and my role as a researcher. In *Writing Studies Research in Practice*, Bob Broad (2012) contended that who an individual is as a researcher and one's interest in a project directly influences one's choices about whether one should consider qualitative, quantitative, or a

combination of methods. As a former writing program administrator, the numbers in quantitative research helped me see issues like retention, instructor feedback, writing center services through comparison points, trends, and tables. However, often articles that are quantitatively focused don't spend a great deal of time discussing how/why these data inform implications and practices. This led me to consider how I could tell both stories in my project—the story of the data and the social context. I realized that my study could be both empirical and not constrained by the methodologies driving the study or the method used to conduct the research by choosing a qualitative project. Janice Lauer and J. William Asher's (1988) definition of "qualitative research" showed me that I was headed in the right direction. The authors defined "qualitative descriptive" research as research that "tries to discover variables that seem important for understanding the nature of writing, its contexts, its development, and its successful pedagogy" (p. 23). The more I learned about the methodologies behind qualitative research the more I came to appreciate understanding the full picture, especially being able to view the research in a social context.

My research questions, which focused on students' past experiences with writing and types of comments that prompt and motivate revision, and the end goals of my research led me to the interview as the method that would be the most effective to uncovering not only the students' experiences with writing in this course but their beliefs about why and how they view themselves as academic writers. My thoughts on this method align with Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher's (2012) work on qualitative research methodologies. The authors asserted that not looking beyond quantitative research can cause us to "miss the powerful, vernacular sense of what social change looks like from the perspective of individuals in their own experiences and own lives" (p. 36). Their work and evolution in interviews demonstrated integrating theory into practice and showed the influence theory can have on composition research. I determined that interviewing

participants for my study would allow me to see the students' perspective on their writing histories and their live interaction with directive/facilitative commenting. Selfe and Hawisher believed that "If we as researchers, depend solely on such information [large-scale statistics] we tend to miss the human and very personal face of social, cultural, economic phenomena that so fundamentally shapes the project of education and the nature of institutions, departments, and classrooms" (p. 36). Specifically, the authors recommend moving away from the structured pre-set interview and inviting interviewees to become part of the research process through "making meaning and formulating interpretations of their experiences" (p. 39). Using this premise, I thought a lot about the ways that students could inform the study. For the interview protocol (Appendix 2), I included a question that asked students how faculty should change practices in giving feedback. Considering the interview in this way enabled me to conduct the interviews in such a manner that interviewees, based on their experiences with writing and discussion of their work, were able to apply and give advice for future faculty development opportunities. The students' shared experiences then shaped the larger conversation about writing and pedagogy in the disciplines.

Personal Stake/Interest

Although it may seem feel like personal stake/interest may not be related to a study in commenting, my personal stake and acknowledging that role was a significant influence not only on choosing the type of study I did (Broad, 2012) but on each stage of the research process. This connects to Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie (1995) in "Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research" who suggested that how researchers locate themselves and actually locating self is important to research identities and the research that scholars do. And, Ann Blakeslee and Cathy Fleischer's (2007) chapter, "Planning Your Qualitative Research

Study,” extended this idea by incorporating an awareness of the researcher role throughout the research process. The authors recommended drawing a map so that one can consider all the different aspects of the project (Blakeslee & Fleischer, 2007, p. 39). In creating my own version of a map, I listed potential research questions and a hypothesis, traced the ways my ideas could become a study, and then drafted some preliminary conclusions. As a result, Blakeslee and Fleisher’s suggested consideration of personal interest and stake in the project and plan for carrying out research defined this dissertation.

Locating myself in this research was important and necessary because my research map was a culmination of how my identities converged and led to this project. I first became interested in this issue when I was a master’s student about twenty years ago. At the time, I was a graduate assistant at a university writing center, where I worked with students on their writing in many different disciplines. One of the common problems that students faced was that they did not know how to revise based on the written feedback they received either because they had not received adequate feedback, were confused by the feedback, and/or were overwhelmed by the amount of feedback. While students were figuring out how to respond, as an educator teaching composition for the first time, I was also figuring out how to be a more effective instructor, especially with providing feedback. One of the most valuable ways for me to help students, I realized, was in my feedback and in conferencing with students on that feedback. Conferencing through feedback with students was a practice that developed out of my writing center work, which led me to create revision guides, a handout that showed students how to revise specific parts of the academic papers, so that students had an even clearer understanding of why and how to revise. When I started noticing success with my students, I began doing more research on feedback practices and presented what I had learned at the Conference on College Composition

and Communication. I continued to develop my research in commenting and presented workshops for composition faculty at the university where I was teaching. When I began my Ph.D. program at UTA, I knew immediately that I wanted to research marginal commenting and effective feedback practices for my dissertation. As my commenting research evolved, I changed my focus from marginal commenting in first-year writing courses to commenting in WAC/WID courses. I did this for two reasons. First, I identified through my literature review that there has not been a great deal of research in commenting practices for WAC/WID students, and second, I believe this is an area where I can make a difference for students and for faculty. This personal history with the topic directly led to my research interests and heavily influenced my design of the study, research questions, and claims about the literature both in composition and WAC/WID studies. In this chapter, I address this as a limitation because I do believe that at times interest and personal stake shape the direction of study in a way that needs to be acknowledged such as in the interviews with the students in the study. However, though I suggest that this is a limitation of the study during the interviews, overall, I believe my expertise, experience in the first-year writing classroom, and work in writing centers influences “locates” me in the study in a way that Kirsch and Ritchie (1995) would suggest positively influences both the research and the participants.

The Study

To address the relationships between student development and commenting practices, I conducted a mixed-methods qualitative study including, artifact analysis, interviews, and interview transcript analysis for an introductory writing course designed for entry-level graduate students in the disciplines. The description from the catalog was: “Concentration on historical and theoretical approaches to the study of language and the specific discursive practices of its

users.” I received IRB approval for this study, protocol number 2018-0196, on January 24, 2018 (Appendix 3). I examined rough and final draft writing samples for six students in the course and then interviewed students about their past experiences with writing and specific revision decisions on their drafts. The duration of the artifact analysis and the interviews was eight months January 2018-August 2018, beginning the day after the IRB approval. The combination of analyzing paper drafts and interviewing students about their revision choices was an effective method because it allowed students to reveal not only where they revised their writing but also what motivated their decisions.

Study Site

The study took place at UTA. UTA is a Research-1 state university, with approximately 49,000 students globally, including graduate students. UTA has several discipline specific courses that are writing intensive courses but does not have a WAC/WID coordinator or program. The course where the data was gathered was a pilot course, designed for first-year graduate students from across the disciplines to learn more about writing at the graduate level. The description from the UTA catalog was: “Concentration on historical and theoretical approaches to the study of language and the specific discursive practices of its users.”

The course was taught by an English Department faculty member who is an assistant professor with a background in composition and rhetoric. The expertise of the faculty member allowed her to deliver the comments in the margins without additional support in best practices in commenting or where and how to comment effectively. In addition, the faculty member was able to comment on the results of the study from a practitioner perspective and inform the final chapter, which discusses the implications of the study and future recommendations. Her background also allowed her to take on the labor of commenting, along with teaching course

content of commenting on multiple paper drafts. The faculty member did not have access to the interviewee responses or to the results until final grades were assessed in the course. The faculty member is also chair of this dissertation and consulted on the IRB process as well as the design of the study.

In addition, there was an instructional support specialist included in the course. The instructional support specialist is a graduate student in the Linguistics Department and non-tenure track faculty member who provided writing support to the students using guidelines provided by the course instructor. The specialist worked with students individually on writing projects, giving them additional feedback. The specialist did not help students interpret the comments from the instructor used in the study or help students revise their writing based on these comments.

Participants and Participant Selection

There were six participants in the study who were all enrolled in the pilot course. The participants were first-year doctoral students who entered their programs with master's degrees. Five of the students, are in engineering programs and are from the Middle East, and one of the students is in a linguistics program and is from Asia. The participants were identified using pseudonyms in the data and in this dissertation. I chose to assign pseudonyms consistent with the students' home country to more accurately reflect their identity. Their transcript excerpts were not corrected for standard written English but instead reflected what the speakers said in their own words.

Students were recruited for the study during the fourth week of class in the spring semester, January 2018. During a face-to-face class visit, I introduced myself, summarized the purpose of the study, relayed the study procedures, and asked students if they had interest in

participating in the project using an in-class recruitment text that was approved by IRB (Appendix 4). The in-class recruitment text also made students aware that their participation did not affect grade or standing in the course (Appendix 4). At that time, I passed out an informed consent that was approved by IRB (Appendix 5). Students returned the informed consent forms at that time and indicated whether they were interested in the study. Of the fourteen students enrolled in the course, nine students consented to participate. Of those nine students, six students followed through with submitting their rough and final drafts of their first major paper assignment and participated in a face-to-face interview about the comments they received and the revisions they completed on their drafts.

Data Collection

The mixed methods study consisted of three phases: (1) creating directive/facilitative comments with the faculty member appropriate to the formal assignment; (2) submission and review of student rough drafts and final drafts; and (3) follow-up interviews with students to discuss revisions made to their papers based on the comments they received on their rough drafts. In the first phase, I met with the course instructor and discussed types and characteristics of directive/facilitative comments that were useful for a summary assignment in a first-year graduate course (Appendix 1). I chose to use the same commenting research as Patton and Taylor (2013), Richard Straub and Ronald Lunsford's (1995) *Twelve Readers Reading: Responding to College Student Writing* to create the comments. Because I was building on Patton and Taylor's study, I felt this would add to the validity of my study.

I identified characteristics of directive and facilitative comments from Straub and Lunsford (1995) for the first phase of the study, shared these characteristics with the faculty member, and then applied those characteristics to create comments that included components of

both types of comments specific to summary writing in the disciplines. The instructor used these comments as a guide when commenting on the student rough drafts. The draft cycle included first and second draft feedback, and students made revisions to each draft. Though directive/facilitative commenting may be effective using a single rough draft, this study and the analysis is based on feedback on two drafts of the paper cycle.

In the second phase of the project, the faculty member placed all drafts from the first paper assignment in a secure, password-protected Dropbox account, which was separate from students' regular coursework submissions. The faculty member placed the student drafts in a password-protected Dropbox account after the students had consented to the study and before their work was graded. Student names were identifiable on the writing samples so that I could interview the students about writing decisions they made between the rough draft and the final draft of the project. I did not have access to or discuss with the faculty member grades that were assigned to the final drafts of the assignment.

In the third phase of the study, I conducted the interviews face-to-face in my faculty office. The interviews lasted thirty to fifty minutes. Interviewees were asked a series of questions about their experiences with writing and their revision choices on their writing samples (Appendix 2). The interview questions were developed to understand how and if the comments students were given on their writing positively affected revision.

To check the effectiveness of the interview protocol, I practiced delivering the questions with another qualitative researcher. What the practice revealed was that the qualitative researcher did not feel comfortable with the questions because I had not created an environment where the interviewee felt open to discussing his experiences with writing even though the questions were focused on the marginal comments from the faculty member. With the practice interviewee's

responses in mind, I revised the protocol to begin a conversation with writing. This is in line with what Kathy Charmaz (2014) recommended with interview protocol, where she suggested beginning on the “front end by questions to invite the interviewee to open up and talk” (p. 164). By adding these “front end” questions, the student interviewees were comfortable giving responses both to the questions asked about the comments on their writing and to giving advice to future writing instructors. In addition, framing the interviews in this way, allowed me to position the participants to become “part of the research process” suggested by Selfe and Hawisher (2012). The data collected in the revised section of the protocol, which was semi-structured proved to be significant in the findings, further supporting the qualitative research methodology framework for the study.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed. The digital file was transferred from the recorder and converted to a media file for the transcription. The media files were stored in a password-protected Dropbox account. The audio recordings were deleted after the transcription were completed. The transcription of the interview, student sample, coding categories, and transcription locations did not include the student names and were assigned pseudonyms. Any reference to the student interview or to the writing sample was made using the pseudonym.

Throughout phases two and three, the faculty member, who was also the chair of the dissertation, did not have access to the interview transcripts or to the data analysis. The interview transcripts were stored in password-protected Dropbox account, which the faculty member did not access. Students in the study were enrolled in the course in Spring 2018, and final grades were assessed in May 2018. The faculty member did not receive the first draft of the results or review the data analysis until October 2018. Keeping the interview transcripts and data analysis

separate from the faculty member during Spring 2018 was important as it ensured validity of the study.

Data Analysis/Methodology

The transcripts were analyzed using grounded theory based on Charmaz's (2014) work in *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Charmaz explained grounded theory methods as "flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (2014, p. 2). And Joyce Magnotto Neff (1998) in "Grounded Theory: A Critical Research Methodology" explained that grounded theory involved three data analysis "techniques": "coding, memoing, and diagraming" (p. 129). Charmaz and Neff established how and why grounded theory may be a way of interpreting data that involved the rigor of quantitative research but allows for the flexibility to interpret data from different perspectives. In addition, Charmaz posited that interviews play a central role in the data collection in a grounded theory study" (p. 161). Charmaz' claim further supported the choice of method and methodology in this study. Though Neff in her discussion of the limitations of grounded theory suggested that grounded theory is not a "panacea," I believe it does offer options to composition scholars as a bridge between the perceived seriousness of quantitative research and the perceived non-seriousness of qualitative research.

Qualitative research is where we situate teacher research, and teacher research, that is the research that writing teachers conduct in their classrooms, in my opinion has long been undervalued. Every day teachers are observing, trying out and on new practices, and changing and updating their practices and materials based on their observations. This is the type of research that improves practice and consequently improves student learning. Using grounded theory as a methodology allowed me to bring a more analytical perspective to teacher research.

By combining grounded theory with a mixed methods approach, I was able to incorporate teacher research (interviews, text analysis) with this methodology to triangulate the data and reach the conclusions and implications in Chapter 5. My idea for my study began in the classroom and in the writing center, both spaces where researchers can see first-hand whether practices are working for students, and my goal for the study was to recommend suggestions that would be implemented by teachers in their work with students. Using a mixed methods approach was essential to helping me to achieve this goal. Though the data that evolved from the transcript analysis, discussed in depth later in this section, was important to the study, text analysis of student writing and face-to-face interviews shaped the study in two important ways. First, the interviews, prompted students to reveal thoughts and beliefs concerning their writing histories and attitudes about writing that quantitative data collection alone would not have provided. The emergent themes that I discovered through using grounded theory evolved from these social, authentic exchanges (Selfe & Hawisher, 2012). Second, the text analysis of the student papers, provided me with valuable insight into the types of revision choices that students made based on the directive/facilitative comments from the faculty member. Examining the changes that students made based on the faculty comment to their writing and then tracing changes throughout their papers gave me a comparison point to reference when arriving at the conclusions and implications from the study in Chapter 5. As result, what I found was that students reporting on what they believed they did in revising their work aligned with what they produced in their drafts. Therefore, the mixed methods approach was valuable to the research process and to the final recommendations that I believe will be persuasive for teachers in reconsidering their commenting practice.

The face-to-face interviews and text analysis generated data that I then analyzed using grounded theory. The analysis produced emergent categories that allowed me to discover themes in the data and to evaluate the influence of students' affect on revision. The transcripts were coded first by labeling sections of text and then coded line-by-line. After analyzing the transcripts by chunking themes and then coding the transcripts line-by-line, I initially found twenty-five emergent themes. Next, I looked at the initial emergent themes for broader categories so that I could identify larger themes. The categories were then grouped under themes, which resulted in four major themes with two to three sub-categories under each theme (Appendix 6). At first, I could not find larger categories that I thought would work for these seemingly disparate categories. I decided to take a step back and consider my research questions, students' past experiences with writing and types of comments that prompt and motivate revision, which then led me to consider the trajectory of a writer and how a writer comes to graduate school. Doing this helped me realize that the trajectory of a graduate student writer (background before coming to school, writing in the discipline, support from the institution, and writing for the professions) could be umbrella categories for the twenty-four emergent themes. Because of the saturation in commenting specifically, which might typically fall under support from the institution, I pulled out commenting as a separate category and then collapsed writing in the discipline and writing for the professions under the same category. Four major categories then emerged from the longer list of twenty-five themes: background of the writer; purpose for writing; role of the institutional support; and commenting for revision.

Under the first category background of the writer, I included the smaller categories of formal education and confidence in writing. Each of the students gave accounts of their backgrounds in education in writing. Most of the students believed that their lack of background

and training in writing heavily influenced their ability to write in academics. For all of the students, their first formal training in writing came in preparation for the TOFEL or the GRE exams. However, there was a mismatch between their levels of writing coming to graduate school and the university's expectations of how well students could write. All of the students struggled with confidence as graduate student writers, and two of the students feared writing or found it scary.

The second major category that emerged was why students believed that writing was important or what I labeled as purpose for writing. Students' desire to improve as writers for their academic disciplinary areas and for their future professional lives were under this category. All of the students in the interviews had a strong desire to improve as writers and all saw writing as intimately tied to their future success both in school and in their future as professionals.

Institutional support was the third major category that emerged. Under this category were areas found within the institution that support students in having success in writing. From these interviews support included: student sample models, disciplinary faculty feedback, advisor suggestions and help, writing center visits, and advice from the students for faculty. Included under this category are both benefits and constraints of these supports. For example, all of the students commented how little feedback they received from their disciplinary instructors as well as how much writing their advisors did for them on major writing projects.

The final major category was commenting for revision. This category included the responses to the questions that students were asked about three revision comments. The smaller themes in this category were that comments gave students confidence and that the comments helped the students change their writing. In analyzing the transcripts, I found that students all found the comments to be "very" helpful in showing them how to change their writing. In some

cases, students were able to use the comments to make changes to other parts of their writing. Students also commented on how the type of comment helped them to feel more confident about their writing and motivated them to improve and change their writing both in sentence level and idea level revisions.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, I considered John Cresswell and Cheryl Poth's (2018) "strategies for validation in qualitative research." To validate this study, I looked closely at bias and disclosed potential partiality in the Personal Stake and Limitations sections of this chapter. Another validation technique I used was member checking of the results. After I completed the data analysis and compiled the results, I summarized the results and findings and emailed the summary to each participant in the study. Five of the six participants responded to the email, and all five concluded that the results and findings aligned with their responses to the interview questions. Cresswell and Poth asserted that this technique demonstrates that the researcher was truthful about the data analysis. I believe that the use of these two validation strategies ensured trustworthiness of the study.

Limitations

There were two limitations to the study. One of the drawbacks was the number of participants. There were six participants, which restricted the range of types of responses students would have. For example, the participants discussed the choices they made in their revision. Because there were only six participants, it constrained the larger conclusions I made on how comments affected revision decisions. However, the interviews resulted in approximately 130 double-spaced pages of transcribed material and produced a substantial amount data to analyze for outcomes. Another limitation was my involvement with the subject

matter. I actively work and teach in the English department at UTA. This influenced the direction of the interviews at times; e.g., when I asked questions about the students' writing, the students were aware of my teaching experience. Students were aware of this because I held the interviews in my faculty office. The students though set this aside and were able to honestly answer the questions. This limitation was also addressed in the "Personal Stake" section of this chapter. Overall, the findings in the study were supported by past research discussed in the findings and conclusion, which suggested that the limitations did not constrain the outcomes.

Audience

There were four different audiences considered when designing my study: institutions; university/program administrators; compositionists; and disciplinary faculty. These stakeholders were addressed at the beginning of Chapter 1 as audiences that will be interested in the study and implementing changes, and in Chapter 5, the audiences were addressed specifically as stakeholder groups to carry out recommendations based on the results of the study.

Institutions were selected as an audience because in higher education, though change and ideas for change, often come from faculty, those ideas are often not enacted if they do not align with an institution's strategic plan. Institutions in higher education support students, but they also prioritize initiatives that drive institutional effectiveness. To fund these initiatives, institutions require data and assessment that demonstrate students are succeeding and in turn supporting their strategic plans. Though they are often combined with the institution, I separated university administrators as an audience for this study because university administrators deliver initiatives that are approved at the institutional level. For this study, university administrators include first-year writing directors, WAC/WID directors, writing center directors, department chairs, and any other staff or faculty who may play a role in making decisions that concern students writing in

the major. I believe they will be interested in the project because they are highly committed to student success and supporting the strategic goals of their respective institutions. In addition, writing program administrators often coordinate faculty development, design curriculum, and make recommendations for best practices. The multi-faced role of writing program administrators means that they have to consider the different ways that a new initiative will benefit students, faculty, and institutions.

Composition faculty were identified as an audience for the research because they will likely be developing and conducting future faculty development workshops with WAC/WID faculty. Researchers and practitioners in composition are interested in students having success in writing and want what they are doing in their classrooms to help students be effective writers and communicators in their majors. Because of this, compositionists are an audience that will be invested in this topic. Though they have expertise in revision and practices in composition, the review of the literature and the results of the study were written with this audience in mind, especially with thinking through current practices and giving feedback to students in the disciplines.

In addition to institutions, university administrators, and compositionists, WAC/WID faculty were identified as a stakeholder for this project. While the other audiences play an important role in student success, WAC/WID faculty, play a crucial role in student success in writing in their majors as evidenced through the literature review and the results of this study. WAC/WID faculty support students, student success, and they have a high regard for their disciplinary areas and want students to find success in these areas in their coursework and in their professional endeavors. For disciplinary faculty some are limited by not having a background in teaching writing, not having faculty development opportunities, and/or not having

knowledge of practices that will help students. Though I addressed all of the stakeholders throughout the dissertation, I worked throughout the chapters to consider these constraints so the other audiences for the project would be mindful of how they could work with and support WAC/WID faculty to help WAC/WID faculty have a deeper understanding of revision practices and the ways that faculty commenting and revision could positively influence student success. Through identifying audiences for the project and addressing each of the stakeholders, I believe that I was able to think about recommendations for change in ways that stakeholders will find doable, especially considering in all four chapters, the common value that connects the four groups—student success.

Conclusion

The methodology that informed the study and the methods I selected for the study supported the standards of research set out by Boyle and Schmierbach (2014) that I discussed at the beginning of the chapter. First, the methods I used to gather information, artifact analysis, an in-depth semi-structured interview, and interview transcript analysis, revealed how students responded to directive/facilitative commentary on two drafts of a summary assignment. Boyle and Schmierbach suggested that empirical research be tied to answering the research questions. Both the methodology and methods were selected to directly address the research questions of the study. My study met these conditions, and I contend that the research was empirical as it was designed to study “behaviors” and “attitudes” that were related to these research questions (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2014, p. 4). Second, Boyle and Schmierbach asserted that for the systematic standard that the “researchers follow a set of rules” (p. 4). I gathered the research in a systematic way, collected the same set of writing samples from each participant, asked each participant the same interviews questions, and then analyzed the data using the protocol for

grounded theory data analysis recommended by Charmaz (2014). Based on how the data was gathered and evaluated demonstrates that the study meets the research standard of systematic. Third, the study was intersubjective in that it has a literature review, which situated my study and claim and was built on prior knowledge. In addition, the study can be replicated, especially using the same commenting guide (Appendix 1) and interview questions (Appendix 2). Exact replication for different genres of assignments and for different levels of writing might not produce the same exact results, but overall, the premise of the study could be replicated.

Finally, I believe that there can be future studies that will build on this research. Because the study was conducted in a systematic and replicable way, the research could be self-corrected. In the beginning of this chapter, I explained that I wanted to conduct a research study that fit the parameters of research determined by Boyle and Schmierbach (2014) and a study that could be convincing and persuasive to practitioners. By determining that the study conformed to the parameters of research established by Boyle and Schmierbach, I believe that the study is empirical and will be convincing, and I project that the results from the data analysis and the interpretation of that analysis in the next chapter will show the “whole picture” (Lauer & Asher, 1988; Selfe & Hawisher, 2012). Further, combining the empirical study and analysis along with my personal stake/interest in the project will allow me to make a compelling case for practitioners and for writing program administrators to reconsider commenting in the disciplines and perhaps even change their practices.

CHAPTER 4

Four major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) background of the writer; (2) purpose for writing; (3) institutional support; and (4) commenting for revision. Each of the themes consisted of two to three sub-categories illustrated in the table below.

Table 1
Emergent Themes and Sub-Categories

Emergent Theme	Responses	Overall %	Sub-Category	Responses	Overall %
Background of the Writer	54	17.36%	Formal education in writing	29	9.32%
			Confidence in writing	25	8.04%
Institutional Support	91	29.26%	Role of faculty	46	14.79%
			Role of advisor	31	9.97%
			Other	14	4.50%
Commenting for Revision	108	34.73%	Gave confidence	21	6.75%
			Changed writing	87	27.97%
Purpose for Writing	58	18.65%	Academic	48	15.43%
			Professional	10	3.22%
Total Responses	311			311	

The data were variable between categories with some categories receiving a significantly higher number of responses than others. The highest number of responses, 34%, was related to comments and how comments affected writing revision, and the fewest number of responses, 17%, was related to background of the writer. The major themes and sub-categories that emerged from the data, along with the ways the themes and sub-categories reflected the outcomes in the literature, are addressed in this section.

Background of the Writer

The first theme that emerged was background of the writer and accounted for 17% of the total responses. This category included the sub-categories of formal education in writing and confidence in writing. The two subcategories in this theme were evenly divided at 9% and 8%. The first sub-category, formal education in writing, included responses related to writing experiences in formal education; lack of formal education; and background in formal education. The second sub-category included responses connected to confidence in writing before enrolling in the course for the study. These responses were related to confidence, fear, avoidance, and academic writing. This section will address formal education in writing and confidence in writing with results that demonstrate little to no experience with writing prior to the Ph.D. and confidence in writing correlates to attitudes and skills as academic writers.

Formal Education in Writing

Each of the students gave accounts of their backgrounds in education in writing. All six of the participants had some exposure to writing in English prior to their undergraduate degrees, but they did not receive formal training in writing that they believed would have prepared them for writing in graduate school. Some of the students had “writing” experience in the U.S. equivalent to middle school/high school. Their writing experiences were not like those stakeholders might consider students having in U.S. schools, where students begin writing in elementary school and continue through high school, but instead were focused on reading and listening skills and involved very little writing. For example, Ahmed said, “I didn’t have any formal education how to write a composition or how to write an essay or article or paper in my high school. And then the same in the university—we didn’t have it.” The other students had similar experiences. Their backgrounds did not include writing courses or courses where they

were asked to write essays for academic audiences. The students became more aware of their lack of formal training when applying to graduate school. Three of the participants discussed studying for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, which is a test international students take to assess their reading and writing abilities in English and is required of all international students who are applying to universities in the United States. Before taking the test, the students discussed how they took courses and used test guides or resource books to prepare for the TOEFL exam because they did not have the background in English to pass the exam. After they were accepted into graduate programs, all of the participants addressed how underprepared they were to write in their graduate programs and discussed their struggles and hardships of not meeting expectations. One student, Omar, said he did not feel like he had any “real writing” experience before entering his Ph.D. program. Another student, Ali, did have a writing class when he came to graduate school but still did not feel adequately prepared to write in graduate school. Students’ realization of their own limitations with writing did not align with what they believed faculty expected they should be able to achieve as graduate students. For example, Cheng, revealed that he “[knew] what should be included in methods but when it comes to writing, I still have no idea how should I write.” Cheng’s statement showed that though students were aware of the meta-language that is used in academic writing and the moves that students are expected to make, faculty did not realize that students did not have the preparation/background to have success in academic writing. This was true for all of the participants who addressed their history with writing and how they had little, to no experience with writing coming into their Ph.D. programs.

Confidence in Writing

Another sub-category under this emergent theme was confidence. References to confidence by the students were made because of students' perceived idea of themselves as writers based on their lack of training in writing before coming to graduate school. Five of the six participants tied confidence to their background in writing and suggested that they could not write, were afraid to write, or did not think they were skilled enough to be successful at the graduate level. Cheng's attitudes about writing directly supported this connection. He stated, "he [had] no idea what should do" concerning writing in his Ph.D. program. Another student, Yasin connected confidence to his participation in his graduate coursework. He stated, when recounting his role as a member on a group project for his master's program, "that maybe I trust others more than me because English is not my native language, so I preferred those things because this decided our grade, so I let someone else do it." Because he did not have formal training or confidence, Yasin allowed someone else to complete the writing portion of the project. One of the other students, Ahmed, concurred with Yasin on not trusting his abilities and suggested in his interview that he was "suffering from this weakness." Like, Cheng, Ahmed and Yasin felt like they did not have the appropriate writing skills and wanted to improve their writing so that they could successfully participate in collaborative projects and have individual success as academic writers.

Confidence issues motivated all six students to enroll in the current writing course they were enrolled in, which was the course used in this study. Students referenced their enrollment in the course and related it to an increased feeling of confidence in academic writing. For example, Omar said, "these years that I'm here, I tried to improve [writing] but I didn't see any improvement but this class...my advisor see some improvement and he's telling me okay you're

going in a good direction.” Omar’s sentiment about the course echoed what other students said—that the course made them feel more prepared for the writing challenges they faced when starting to write in graduate school. Ali said, “if I have a good writing background [where] I can write I can made comments on papers. I can write a summary of a paper.” Having both the confidence in their writing backgrounds in addition to the skill set to be able to be effective in academic writing situations was important for Ali and for the other five participants.

Comparison of results to literature reviewed. Overall, the participants believed that their lack of background in writing heavily influenced their ability to write in academics. Their limited formal training in writing then affected how students saw themselves as writers. When students were unable to meet course/faculty requirements, this resulted in students not having confidence in their writing. These students’ experiences as doctoral students revealed a mismatch between their levels of writing coming to graduate school and the university’s expectations of how well students could write. This ties directly to the feedback practices addressed by Taylor and Patton (2006); Szymanski (2014); and Wingard and Geosits (2014) in Chapter 2. These studies found that students needed feedback “appropriate” to the writer’s background and level of the student. Even though the students in this study are graduate students and not undergraduate students as referenced by Taylor (2011), the results of this study demonstrate that like undergraduate students, graduate students need a different type of writing support because they too are at an early stage of learning development. The results indicate that students need to acquire a background in writing through coursework and feedback to have success and confidence with writing at the graduate level. In addition, the results support more work with curriculum design as evidenced by Holyoak (1998), Bean et al. (2005), and Alaimo et al. (2009), and writing instruction as recommended by Burke et al. (2006) and Jorgensen and Marek (2013).

It is important for faculty and administrators to understand that students' lack of formal training directly informs the types of classes and writing support that should be offered for graduate students. Faculty make assumptions about the types of backgrounds that students have in writing, especially when students have their master's degrees. This is in part because faculty believe when students have completed a master's thesis project that they have done the writing for that project independent of outside help. Faculty need to be more realistic about the backgrounds that students have so that they can better support students as academic writers. A tentative implication that I expand upon in the next chapter is the need for stakeholders to consider expectations they have of first-year graduate students whether they are beginning a master's or a doctoral program and the types of feedback faculty should use when commenting on writing. If students do not have a background in writing, faculty should question how students can successfully meet expectations and think through current feedback practices so that students can have success. It is also vital that administrators and faculty support faculty colleagues with development opportunities and resources to support students with writing—as I discuss in the implications in the next chapter—so that they can have success as scholars in graduate courses and later in their professional lives.

Institutional Support

Institutional Support was another major theme that evolved from the transcript analysis and accounted for 29% of the responses. This category involved the experiences that students had with university faculty and advisors as well as other resources such as use of models and the writing center to help students with writing in their graduate programs. The first sub-category included responses related to lack of feedback/help from faculty in writing; desire to learn from faculty who are experts; and advice for how instructors can be more helpful in writing feedback including limiting instruction of editing and teaching students how to write about and within

their disciplines. This subcategory accounted for 14% of the overall responses. The second subcategory, role of advisor, included responses of how students worked with their advisors related to writing and accounted for 9% of the total responses. The third sub-category in this theme was other resources and included responses related to experiences students had with support services outside of faculty and advisors. These resources included: writing centers, use of models, preparatory writing courses, and writing guides/manuals. This subcategory accounted for 4% of the responses. This section includes role of faculty, role of advisor, and other resources with results that show students are not receiving the support they need to have success in writing in their disciplinary courses.

Role of Faculty

The first sub-category in this theme was the role of faculty. Overall, the participants had a high regard for faculty and viewed faculty as experts in their specialty areas. Five of the six students wanted help from faculty on writing specific to their disciplinary areas and felt that this was important for improving the content in their writing. About this, Cheng believed that “when instructors are introducing those theories . . . it’s better to combine the introduction of the theory with practice for our writing.” Four of the other participants responded in similar ways to Cheng, where they believed that faculty should be helping them with their writing. One of the students thought that faculty were too busy to give advice on their writing. Concerning what the role of the faculty member in one of her graduate classes, Salma revealed, “They just gave us this project, and they graded it, but they did not give feedback.” One student, Ahmed, perceived the faculty role differently and suggested that faculty should not necessarily be helping with revision. He said, “You are my instructor. You are teaching this course . . . this is my assignment.” In their responses concerning faculty, five of the six students believed that their

writing would only improve if they received help on content from faculty who were experts in these subject areas.

Concerning feedback, students also had ideas about the type of feedback they wanted to receive from faculty based on what they believed was the role of the faculty member, specifically what they thought disciplinary faculty should be doing to help them with their writing. Responses from five of the six students concerning feedback included giving clear advice, limiting number of comments, and focusing on idea level comments. Ali stated, “it’s not like a little error like punctuation or grammatical mistakes [but] how to make the whole writings into complete sense” when he was referring to his belief that faculty should give comments to help students develop their ideas. Omar suggested however that faculty would have a difficult time with focusing on idea level comments and said that he believed that “it’s hard” for faculty “to not just check for punctuation.” The results demonstrated that not only did students desire feedback from disciplinary faculty, but they had ideas concerning best practices for faculty in giving feedback for revision.

Role of Advisor

Another sub-category in this theme was the role of the advisor. Five of the six students addressed the role of the advisor in connection to their experiences with writing and revision. Students reported that the advisor’s role was to support them through their graduate programs, work with them on writing projects, including help on their masters’ thesis projects, and help them have success with publishing academic papers. One student, Ahmed, reported receiving a significant amount of help from his advisor. Ahmed’s advisor offered suggestions along with writing most of the project for him. About this, Ahmed said, “Our advisor did the main work, and he wrote the paper himself. So, I didn’t have that much experience.” In Ahmed’s experience,

his advisor wrote most of this thesis. As a result, Ahmed did receive his master's degree, but he did not learn to write a thesis nor did he become a stronger writer. Two students, Cheng and Omar also received significant help on writing where their advisor gave detailed feedback, but both believed the help was not motivating and focused on editing. The other two students had a different experience. They received little or no feedback from their advisors on their theses. Because students did not have the appropriate type of help or support on their writing, they did not finish their masters' programs as stronger writers and therefore did not come into their doctoral programs with the type of writing background necessary to have success as scholars.

Other Resources

In addition to seeking help from faculty and advisors, five of the six students used other resources such as student sample papers, professional models, and the writing center. Yasin commented that he used models to complete assignments by looking at the sample and then changing his writing to fit the example. He stated, "before I apply to my doctoral program it was difficult, so I always tried to find something similar and change it to fit my goal." Ahmed and Salma also used models in similar ways. When the students were not familiar with the writing task, they found writing that fit that genre and adapted their writing to fit the writing situation. The students discussed using models in this way in their master's and doctoral programs and viewed this type of support as necessary to be successful writers. Salma also shared that she visited the university's writing center for help on her writing. Students use of models and the writing center demonstrated that students were interested in seeking outside resources to improve their writing.

Comparison of results to literature reviewed. The sub-categories that emerged in this theme revealed that students were not receiving the type of help they needed to improve their

writing and that students did not believe that faculty were interested in giving global feedback. These outcomes showed that there is a need for disciplinary faculty to work with students on their writing and that students want this support, especially working with revision. This confirms the studies of the research discussed in Chapter 2 concerning the types of comments that faculty give students in disciplinary courses and the emphasis on lower-order concerns (Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006). Students viewed faculty as experts who could help them on their writing but did not receive the type of feedback or instruction from faculty that they felt would be most helpful for their success in academic writing. In addition, these findings substantiate the research of Jeffrey and Selting (1999) discussed concerning faculty role in Chapter 2, where faculty's view of their roles influenced their practices. In the case of the participants of this study, similar to how faculty viewed themselves in Jeffrey and Selting, students saw faculty as "assignment judge" but wanted faculty to be "intellectual mentors." Students also sought assistance from their advisors. One advisor did much of the work for the student, while the advisors for the other two students did not have time to offer advice. These students, as are most students who fall into the early stages of student development, are open to suggestions on their ideas and writing development. They are looking to an authority, in this case the expertise of disciplinary faculty, to provide effective support. This affirms Sommer's research discussed in Chapter 1 that suggests while students want feedback, students need to understand how to read and apply feedback to their writing so that they can improve as writers. More importantly, the outcomes validate Taylor's (2011) findings that connected feedback to student development theory and suggested students prefer more directive feedback. Although the students used models and visited the writing center to try and improve their writing, they were not confident in themselves as writers and did not believe that they could have success in academic writing or

feel like they were progressing as academic writers. If students had global feedback from disciplinary faculty, this could lead to students having more confidence in their writing abilities. Like the literature revealed concerning background of the writer, these students were not able to meet the level of writing expected of them as graduate students. Therefore, stakeholders should consider Taylor's conclusions—that faculty should think about feedback differently for the disciplines.

Commenting for Revision

The third major theme that emerged was commenting for revision, which accounted for the majority of all responses, 34% of the references in the study. In the interviews, students were asked questions about comments they received on their papers written for the class in the study (Appendix 2). The sub-categories that emerged in the analysis of the student responses were “comments gave writers confidence” and “comments helped change writing.” Most responses in the analysis were related to how the comments changed participants' writing. The first sub-category, “comments gave confidence,” included responses related to how the feedback helped with confidence and how confidence motivated students to change writing. This sub-category accounted for 6% of the total responses. In the second sub-category, with 27% of total responses, were responses related to idea and sentence level changes to the students' writing and broader revision changes that students made to their writing. This section addresses the two sub-categories, “comments gave writers confidence” and ‘comments changed writing’ with a discussion of results that demonstrate directive/facilitative comments are influential in students' perception of their writing abilities and in their revision practices.

Comments Gave Writers Confidence

The first sub-category that emerged was that comments gave writers confidence. All six participants felt positive about the feedback and had a positive emotional response to the comments. Ahmed said, “When I see these comments, I see I’m on the right track. So, my writing is now I think acceptable. Not just because of this class because these comments gave me the confidence that I am writing.” Omar said about one of the responses that “the way that she wrote it, it’s optimistic and it’s actually not optimistic, but it gives me the hope that I can improve this type of writing.” In his view, Omar believed that the changes that he needed to make to revise his writing were difficult, and he did not usually see this in a beneficial way. However, the phrasing of the comment allowed him to feel good about the revision, and he had a positive emotional response to how the comment is communicated. About this same comment, Omar continued, “It’s helping me to have more confidence to okay I can do better and better.” Again, he reinforced the idea that the comment was giving him the confidence needed to have success with academic writing. The responses from the other four students were similar. Students used phrases like “motivating,” “feel better,” and “more confidence” to express their feelings about the marginal comments on their papers. Overall, the students felt more confident about their writing and therefore felt like writers. The positive affect created by the comments carried forward to students’ belief that they could have success with revising their writing based on the comment (see Appendix 1). For example in explaining the comment and how he used to revise, Cheng said that the comment “gave him a very clear indication of what I should do,” which he juxtaposed with comments he received from his advisor, which he said made him “get frustrated easily and you don’t have the motivation to revise it.” Omar commented that one of the comments motivated him to review his original research to make a content revision. The other

students had similar experiences where they understood that revision was difficult but that the comments helped them feel like they could revise and that they believed they could rewrite sections of their assignments. Overall, all six participants thought that the comments gave them a more “optimistic” view of themselves as writers, which resulted in students’ considering their revisions as doable.

Comments Helped Change Writing

The second sub-category that emerged was that the comments helped change writing. This sub-category had the greatest number of references in the analysis and accounted for 27% of the responses. Before students discussed the changes to their writing, they reframed the instructor comment in their own words. By showing they could describe the comment, the students’ interpretation of the feedback demonstrated that the comment was written in a way where they understood how to improve their writing. This was the case for all six participants in all of the cases where they described the comment (three comments for each participant). Participants then discussed the role the comment played in their revision of the writing assignment. The responses in connection to the comments included: making sentence level changes, reframing ideas, reconsidering writing throughout, and encouraging a change in writing practices in general.

The analysis of the responses showed that one of the ways students used the feedback to make changes to their writing at a sentence level, an idea level, and sometimes a combination of both. For example, when discussing revision choices based on a comment, Ali said, “I’m writing the same thing but deleting sentences or using, adding some transitional phrases.” About the next marginal comment in his paper, Ali described applying the feedback to make sentence level changes and found it to be somewhat difficult. He said, “it was tricky which sentences should I

remove.” In this case, Ali was not sure what revisions he should make because he felt at the time that “all of the sentences are important.” In this case the changes were both sentence level and idea level as Ali had to make a decision about cutting language but also had to consider what the reader needed to understand when Ali was introducing the problem. Another participant Ahmed considered how he would make the change and then applied the advice to crafting new language. He said, “I had all of the [methods] just combined with each other, so I tried to make them clear in a different comment after reading this comment.” Ali and Ahmed’s responses exemplified those of the other participants where students understood the comment, were motivated to change their writing, but sometimes had to think through their revision options in consideration of the rhetorical situation. Whether or not the participants found the revisions “tricky,” all six participants made changes to their writing for each of the comments.

In addition, the analysis of the responses based on comments revealed that the feedback prompted changes to writing throughout their papers and in three cases encouraged students to consider their writing practices generally. One student, Yasin, explained how he used an earlier comment to make changes to another draft of the paper. He said, “So the next draft, I tried to condense this thing and just give the important points.” For Yasin, the comment was not only helpful in changing his writing at that moment but also helped him in future drafting considerations. The feedback helped students to think through their writing and apply the suggestions to revise their papers. About this, another student, Ali said, “so these comments help me to make my whole summary as complete sense so that readers can read from the first paragraph and they go through the last sentence and they don’t feel any disconnection.” For Yasin, Ali, and three other respondents, they were able to revise areas of their papers based on the type of comment that was given to them by making changes on the specific section and then

throughout their essays. As a result of these revisions, the feedback carried over into three participants' views of their writing practices generally. One of the participants, Cheng said, "it's very helpful because it kind of force me to write in a very concise way. I guess it was a problem in my writing." For Cheng, the feedback motivated him to consider not only changing his writing for the paper assignment but to think about his writing and improving his practice of writing, especially his style. Another student Omar echoed Cheng in a broader way and said, "It wasn't just changing this and that, but it helped me to change the idea of how I can write more effectively." Omar, Cheng, and an additional participant's writing practices and the way the students considered their academic writing was positively influenced by the feedback and their revisions. As a result, the feedback had a significant effect on participants' view of how to be more effective writers.

In this emergent theme, students found that the directive/facilitative comments gave them confidence as writers and helped to change their writing. Their impression of the comments encouraged the students to feel positive about themselves as writers and made the revision feel doable. For all of the comments, students felt motivated to change their writing and believed that they understood what needed to be improved. Students' affect in connection to the comments in this study supports the research in Chapter 2 on types of comment from Straub (1997) where he found that students' preference for is for comments that students read as "advice" or those that "offered help" (p. 100). In this study, students' responses revealed that this approach, one that felt like a suggestion and/or consideration of their ideas, along with showing them how to achieve the revision, motivated them to change their writing.

Comparison of results to literature reviewed. In addition to believing they could make changes, the responses showed that all of the participants changed their writing based on the

comment, which reinforces the research on types of comments from Chapter 2. First, the data validated the research that addressed students' preference for and response to comments that were content focused (Straub, 1997; Wingard & Geosits, 2014). Both Wingard and Geosits (2014) and Straub (1997) found that students were motivated to change their writing and that students made meaningful revisions when given comments that were global and "directional." The results from this study directly support this research in that the comments that students were given were facilitative and directive and resulted in significant revisions. Further, the results support Patton and Taylor's (2013) research on feedback—that certain types of comments may be more effective in discipline-specific courses. In composition research, as discussed in Chapter 1, there is a preference for global commenting that focuses on idea development. Often, in disciplinary courses, students have not been able to revise based on these types of comments because they are not developmentally situated to be able to access the ideas and revise their work. Patton and Taylor (2013) suggested that a directive-type comment may be more useful for students in the disciplines. The feedback from the students directly supports this idea—that a different type of commenting is needed for the disciplines. The comments that students received were crafted as directive/facilitative comments to promote revision in summary writing. The data show that there is a link then between students' responding positively to all of the comments and making significant revisions to their work.

Beyond the sub-categories and considering the way students perceived the subcategories in this emergent theme, the data from this theme revealed that the results confirm the student values discussed in Chapter 2. Students desired "meaningful" commenting that helped them revise their writing (Schreibersdorf, 2014) and valued "guidance" that improved their learning (Winstone et. al., 2006). The responses about comments from the students corroborate this

research. The results suggest that students valued the type of feedback they were receiving and as a result, revised their writing. Students need and want feedback that will allow them to understand not only what they need to do to revise their writing but also desire some direction in how to improve their ideas. In turn, the data also supports faculty values and the research on what faculty want from student writing and that faculty viewed writing as important (Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006). Taylor and Patton (2006) and Szymanski (2014) demonstrated in their research that the ways faculty present commenting and revision as well as the types of comments that faculty give to students illustrate these values. The responses from this study show that when the values of faculty (faculty giving feedback that is both “meaningful” and “guiding” or in the case of this study directive/facilitative) and the value that students have (students desiring “meaningful” and “guiding” feedback) are aligned that students will make “substantive” and meaningful revisions based on that feedback.

Purpose for Writing

Purpose for Writing was another major theme that emerged from the analysis and accounted for 18% of the total responses. This theme included students’ writing goals for both academic and professional purposes. Within the academic writing goals sub-category were responses related to academic writing but not related to the assignment students were asked about for the study. These responses included students’ perception of academic writing, students’ desire to improve as academic writers, and writing processes involved in academic writing. The second sub-category, writing as professionals, included responses related to students’ goals of wanting to learn to write effectively in their disciplinary fields. This section addresses academic writing goals and professional writing goals with results that show that students want to develop as writers so that they can achieve academic and professional success.

Academic Writing Goals

This sub-category included examples where students expressed a desire to improve as writers for academic purposes. This sub-category was the second most saturated sub-category of all the sub-categories and accounted for 15% of the total responses. The number of times that participants referenced writing for academics and a desire to improve as academic writers indicated that the participants saw writing, academics, and their personal success as connected to each other. All of the participants referred to either strengthening writing or writing processes as integral to being more successful scholars. For example, Yasin said, “As an academic, in academics, I need to write more papers and do the papers by myself.” Yasin’s comment suggested that if he was unable to write effectively, he would not be able to have success in the classroom and as a result would not have success as a researcher. The students discussed that they have been able to avoid writing or have been able to manage writing tasks, like writing for the TOEFL or group writing work but realized to have success that it was essential that they write well on their own. Another student, Salma, ties this directly to her Ph.D. program and asserted, “I’m studying for my Ph.D. . . . and I need to know how I should start writing papers.” Salma’s response was indicative of all of the participants’ experiences with writing in graduate school. The students believed that to be successful in their programs that they needed to improve as writers. Along with a desire to improve as writers for academics, the students explained that improving their writing process, e.g., thinking about writing differently, considering how and why they are writing, was also important for academic writing. Ali stated, “one thing about writing is that we are writing academic writing. It’s not like conversational writing that we normally use for speaking.” In this example, Ali distinguished academic writing from everyday writing or speaking. All of the participants referenced “academic writing” or writing for “school”

in this way. The responses of participants demonstrated that they recognized that writing well was a crucial skill needed to succeed in writing in academics and that they were interested in improving as writers to become better learners and scholars in their disciplines.

Professional Writing Goals

A closely related sub-category was writing for the professions. Four of the six participants referenced writing beyond their graduate careers. When the students complete their doctoral programs, they indicated they will likely pursue either a career in higher education or work in a professional context. With either path, the students contended they needed to be able to write and communicate effectively to find success. Students were concerned with becoming stronger writers for this purpose. One of the students, Ahmed, discussed the role of writing in relationship to his level of expertise. He said, “I know I can talk about how a laser works . . . but I cannot write one page about that.” Ahmed felt confident about his expertise, but he did not believe that he could effectively present himself as an expert in his profession Ahmed and the other two students knew that writing well was critical for their success beyond their Ph.D. programs, and all expressed a desire to improve so that they could communicate their expertise about their respective fields.

Comparison of results to literature reviewed. Students in the study explained that they wanted to improve as writers so that they could have more success in academics and in their professional lives. First, improving as writers for academics was important as this influenced their immediate futures. If the students were unable to have success with writing in their courses, they would likely have difficulties with writing about and publishing their research. For this reason, students were motivated to become better writers. Second, students understood that they needed to be able to effectively write about their knowledge in their chosen careers. To become

more effective communicators, the students asserted that they needed guidance and support to develop as writers. This finding aligns with the discussion in Chapter 1 about reconsidering commenting, which addressed the importance of working with students on writing throughout their academic experience (Emerson, 2017). One of Emerson's (2017) recommendations, in her case study research on the success of scientists in their careers and the influence of writing, was to propose that graduate students needed to be able to write proficiently in their disciplinary fields to have success in their professional lives. In the case of these graduate students, they realized that they needed to become stronger academic writers to communicate effectively in their fields. The ways stakeholders work with students to meet their needs and goals were addressed by Condon et al. (2016) in Chapter 2 who suggested that faculty development could be tied to improved student learning and retention. For students in the study, their academic goals and desire to become stronger academic writers is not at cross purposes with the scholarship on how and why faculty should work to improve their pedagogy.

Conclusion

The themes that emerged in this study, background of the writer, institutional support, commenting for revision, and purpose for writing, demonstrated that student revision is directly connected to feedback and suggests implications for faculty, writing program administrators, and scholars in composition. When Patton and Taylor (2013) found that students seemed to be making revision changes based on directive comments where the comment occurred and then later in their drafts, the authors were not sure why this was taking place but felt that it might be significant. The emergent theme concerning the writer's background provides key evidence for why this might be the case. The results of this study showed that students are in a developmental place similar to first-year undergraduate students when they are learning a new disciplinary

language and gaining expertise in specialty subject areas. Stakeholders need to be aware of this developmental space in graduate education and consider ways to improve curriculum and pedagogy to account for students' insufficient formal training in writing, which I discuss further in the next chapter.

Students' use of institutional resources proved that support from faculty, advisors, and outside resources is key to student success in writing. Neely (2017), in her study on faculty development and faculty perceptions of their own pedagogy, uncovered that disciplinary faculty believed they did not have the background for teaching writing. She asserted that it is difficult if not impossible to "move the needle" of a belief system. This study presented findings that may help shift perceptions of faculty development in writing pedagogy. Students indicated that they needed faculty expertise and direction to improve as writers, especially when working with technical and specialized content. Though students pointed out that they used outside resources, such as consulting their advisors, writing models, and the writing center, students strongly believed that they needed assistance from faculty to become stronger writers in their fields. The evidence in this study provides faculty with an understanding of why students need support, which may help to motivate faculty to adapt or change their teaching strategies.

Reconsidering types of commenting and feedback is an area where faculty may examine their pedagogy when working with students new to a discipline. The findings from this research identified that directive/facilitative comments significantly influenced students' revision practices and resulted in improved writing in their final drafts and confidence in themselves as writers. The outcomes from the study confirmed that Patton and Taylor's (2013) initial findings in their study on disciplinary commenting can be tied to more effective types of feedback practices. The types of comments that were created for the study prompted revision by the

students at both sentence and idea level and motivated students to make changes to their drafts. In addition, the comments gave students confidence as writers, which made the revisions feel doable and allowed students to consider how the comments might shape later parts of their draft. This finding is important as it demonstrates that the preference for the global comment in composition, adapted by disciplinary faculty when giving feedback on writing, may not be best practice and that feedback in these types of courses needs to be assessed.

Beyond success on their formal papers for the study, students were motivated to become better writers and learners because of their academic and professional goals. The findings in this area showed that they are interested in becoming better writers and producing quality writing. Students in the study discussed that this is important in their academic lives as well as their future professional lives, which demonstrates that their purpose for writing is aligned with the goals of universities and faculty members.

The emergent themes found in this study can be tied to student success, curriculum design, ancillary writing support, and faculty development. These areas are important considerations for writing program administrators and faculty. Understanding more how these components work together, overlap, and promote faculty and student success is the next step for researchers and scholars in composition and in WAC/WID. The implications from this study give us a better understanding of the significance of writing pedagogy in WAC/WID and the ways stakeholders can work to improve feedback practices to support both faculty and students.

Communicating and producing knowledge effectively is vital for academic and professional success. Writing administrators, scholars, and faculty must closely examine their practices to better serve students in the disciplines. The combination of faculty engaging in best practices in commenting for student learning along with student engagement in this process

creates an environment where both faculty and students can have success in their classes and improve writing and critical thinking skills for other university courses and their professional lives.

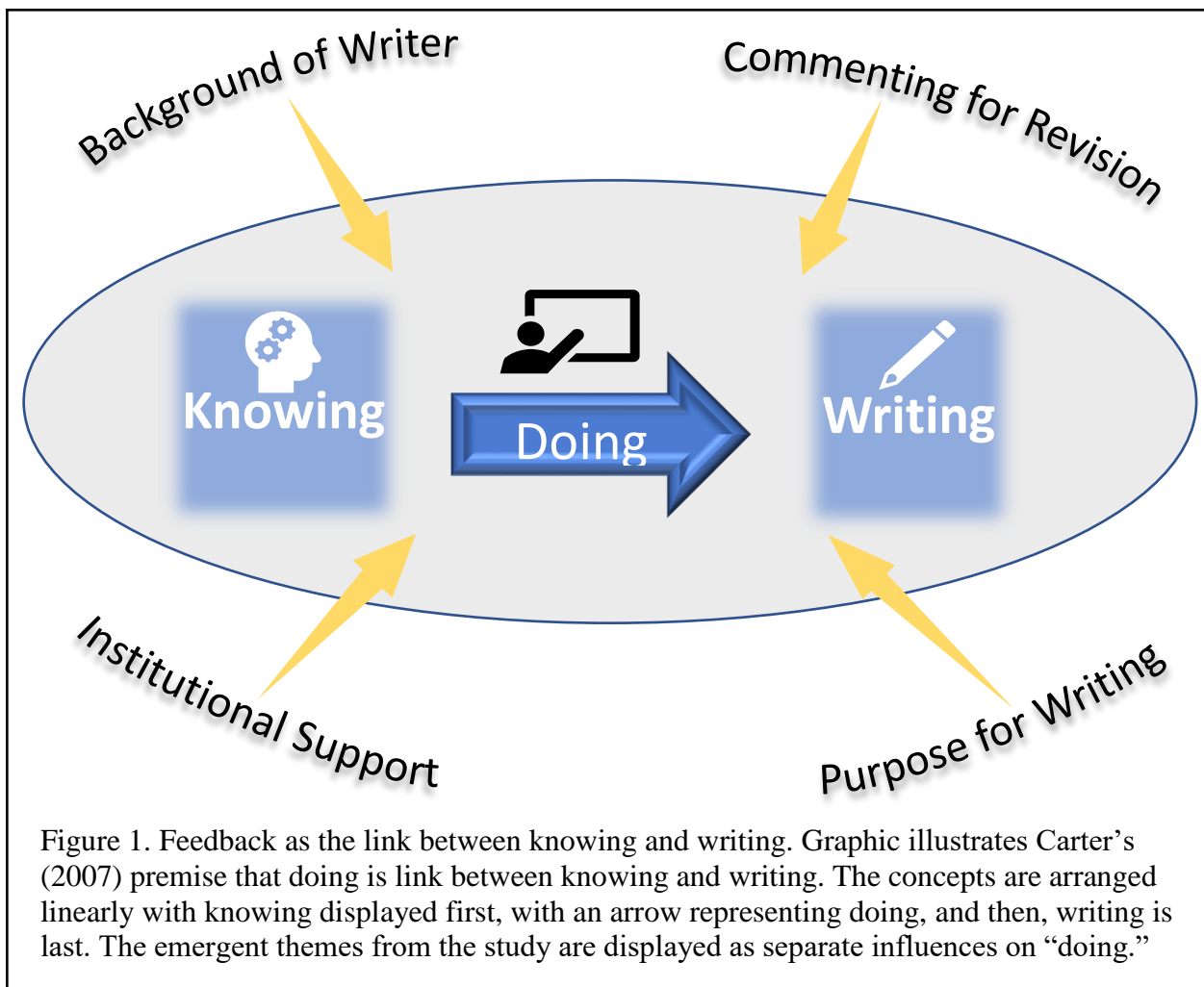
CHAPTER 5

The end goal of universities is for students to leave their institutions and have success in their post graduate lives. That success looks very different dependent on students' majors and students' chosen career or academic goals. What is clear is that to have success students need to be able to communicate their ideas through writing to be effective in nearly every professional and academic field. However, if students are not humanities majors, often the importance of writing is overlooked. Emerson (2017) discussed the assumptions that institutions make about particular fields and points to the sciences as a disciplinary area that institutions do not support in writing through undergraduate and graduate education in ways that students can be successful in their professional lives. The assumptions Emerson addressed are ones that continue to be pervasive and are not easily undone. Despite the recent scholarship in the disciplines showing that writing is essential for students writing in the major, faculty continue to be underprepared for ways to work with students on writing. Noting this trend based upon her decades of experience as a humanities-trained educator, Catherine Prendergast (2018) questioned why are "all these science profs sending their students to the university writing center for help" in a tweet, which received some backlash from some disciplinary faculty who believed writing teachers should only teach grammar and punctuation. Prendergast highlights another common assumption in disciplinary writing—that even if disciplinary faculty are requiring writing, someone else should be teaching students how to write. This belief is a widespread one throughout institutions, especially when stakeholders do not have a good understanding of students' writing backgrounds, first-year writing pedagogy, or do not have experience teaching writing themselves. What can stakeholders do then to dispel long held assumptions about why and how they should work with writing and students in the disciplines? The findings in this study demonstrated that students will and can revise if given appropriate feedback, and students in the

study reported that they desire feedback on their writing in their disciplinary courses so that they can be successful communicators in their fields. These findings in combination with the scholarship on writing in the disciplines suggest that all stakeholders involved in working toward the end goal of student success in writing in their majors, institutions, writing program administrators, compositionists, and disciplinary faculty, must resituate their understanding of the trajectory and assimilation of graduate students as writers and reconsider the feedback practices faculty use so that students can have success with writing in the disciplines.

Though the study demonstrated that directive/facilitative feedback positively affected revision, carefully considering the four emergent categories from the results (background of the writer, commenting for revision, institutional support, and purpose for writing) through the lens of the stakeholders is important so that they can have path forward to consider effective feedback pedagogy in the disciplines and enact changed practices. Carter's (2007) premise discussed in Chapter 2, that faculty should think about the relationship between knowing and writing and consider the "doing" as the place where faculty can help students find success in writing, is an ideal area to situate the findings from the study. To frame his central argument, Carter traced the assumptions and history that informed how universities understood WAC/WID and the role of rhetoric and composition. The concept Carter suggested was to think about writing in the disciplines as "ways of doing," which he believed would bring together writing and knowing and would allow WAC/WID faculty to have success in working with student writing. Figure 1 illustrates how the findings from the study, background of writer, institutional support, commenting for revision, and purpose for writing, work as influences on the "doing" in the disciplines. Looking at the relationship between knowing and writing and considering

these themes as “doing” gives stakeholders a way to think about how they can positively affect



student learning through feedback. This chapter discusses how faculty, writing program administrators and institutions play a role in each of the themes and addresses the “doing” for stakeholders, which is the crucial link between knowing and writing. Institutions, writing program administrators, compositionists, and disciplinary faculty must work together to change the assumptions about writing in the disciplines so that all stakeholders, and most importantly students, can have success as learners, thinkers, and contributors.

Stakeholder Implications

Background of the Writer

One of the findings in the study, background of the writer, demonstrated that students' insufficient experience in writing influenced their success in writing and as a result their confidence in their abilities to have success in communicating their ideas in graduate work. In addition, this study revealed that institutions need to reexamine expectations of the types of expertise graduate students have when they arrive at universities. Most graduate students enter their programs by enrolling in courses with assumptions from faculty that they *can* write and communicate effectively in their disciplinary areas, especially doctoral students. The assumption from faculty then is that their role is to push students in their expertise and then as a result that students will be able to write and think in deeper and more complex ways. When students are unable to produce writing at this level, faculty are disappointed and frustrated. This study revealed that students' inability to revise can partially be based on students' background in academic writing, which included formal training in writing and confidence as academic writers. If disciplinary faculty begin with the expectation that graduate students, even those who have completed thesis projects, are learning how to write in their disciplines and provide directive/facilitative feedback that allows for students to both understand how to revise and how to work with specialized discourse, they can change how students approach writing and revision, enabling them to have more success in their fields. Disciplinary faculty are integral to this process, and if disciplinary faculty can understand this role, be provided with institutional support to work with writing and feedback, and consider the writing backgrounds of students entering their programs, they can have a profound influence on the success of students in their program and in their post-graduate careers.

Given the results of this study, stakeholders must also consider the influence of background of the writer and the ways that background plays a role in the assumptions of disciplinary faculty and institutions. Though this study was focused on graduate students and the effects of their backgrounds on writing in academics, the assumptions of disciplinary faculty and institutions also hold true at the undergraduate level (Patton & Taylor, 2013; Prendergast, 2018; Szymanski, 2014; Taylor, 2011). Students are now expected to be able to write effectively in their majors by disciplinary faculty and in their careers post-graduation, which is why faculty may not believe that directive/facilitative commenting is necessary. Employers also expect that universities have prepared students for the writing challenges in their fields. However, institutions are not preparing students to write beyond their majors and do not realize the influence of formal training in writing for students' success in their professions. Emerson (2017) found in collecting over a hundred interviews from senior scientists, emerging scientists, and doctoral students that they believed their formal training in writing directly affected their performance as writers in their professions. As a result of her study, Emerson suggested that one's history and experiences with writing influenced writing success in one's professional life and posited that institutions must re-see writing in the sciences not as an outside disciplinary practice but as a complementary one. The needs of students are changing, and institutions and faculty must change their assumptions by considering the importance of strong writing backgrounds and providing feedback, like directive/facilitative commenting, that will promote student development in writing, motivate students to revise their writing, and increase confidence in students as academic writers.

Commenting for Revision

In examining how stakeholders think about writing and classroom practices, it is evident that disciplinary faculty play a powerful role in writing pedagogy practices through feedback. This study validated that directive/facilitative commenting is significant in promoting student revision. Further, this study found that students need and want feedback from instructors that will help them to be more effective writers so that they can have success in their post-graduate lives. This is a significant finding—students desire feedback and will as evidenced by this study change and improve their writing as a result of directive/facilitative commenting. These results demonstrate that providing tailored feedback to students is both meaningful and productive for students. Disciplinary faculty then should reconsider the ways they deliver feedback, especially directive/facilitative commenting to help students improve their writing.

Though institutions, composition faculty, and writing program administrators have an important role in reconsidering practice, disciplinary faculty are faced with the most complex task—teaching students not only specialized content but also teaching students how to write and communicate in these specialized fields. However, for most disciplinary faculty the only training/background they have with writing is as writer’s themselves (Emerson, 2017). Or, in some cases, disciplinary faculty have modeled best practices in composition, which have not been successful largely in part because composition faculty do not have to work with teaching students specialized language/knowledge. Given that faculty do not have expertise in teaching writing nor are there practices for teaching writing that are a perfect fit for the disciplines, this creates a no-win situation for faculty who are asked to create writing assignments, provide feedback, and evaluate writing. When one combines the rigors of teaching, research, university service, and publishing, it leaves little time for faculty to consider best practices for teaching

writing in the disciplines. What then does this mean for disciplinary faculty? To start, all stakeholders need to acknowledge that teaching writing in the disciplines is not simply a continuation of first-year writing courses nor is it something to merely add-in to courses because of university mandates. Instead, stakeholders need to think about the importance of writing and giving feedback and provide support for disciplinary faculty to have success.

However, for faculty to change their feedback practices, faculty must value effective teaching practices in the disciplines. Neeley (2017), as addressed in Chapter 2, studied faculty beliefs in teaching and learning and the ways those beliefs shaped three disciplinary faculty's work with writing fellows. Neeley found that outside factors influenced belief systems, including "research identities" and backgrounds. Considering that disciplinary faculty have little to no formal background or expertise in teaching writing and that their research identities are not shaped necessarily by working with students in writing, changing the ways that faculty feel about the importance of providing feedback to students is not easy. For institutions and writing program administrators, they will want to carefully scaffold faculty development opportunities, like writing fellows programs or semester-long workshops, as discussed in Chapter 2, to help faculty incorporate directive/facilitative commenting practices. This study is a good starting point for conversations with faculty as it shows why feedback is important for students to have success in writing and demonstrates that students, when they receive the type of feedback that is effective, will significantly revise their work. If disciplinary faculty could re-see the benefits to students in providing directive/facilitative commenting on their writing and building a background in teaching writing in the disciplines, it is possible that faculty could change their belief systems and teaching practices.

In addition to disciplinary faculty, institutions are associated with writing pedagogy and how they contribute to student learning in ways faculty, writing program administrators, and scholars may not have considered. Institutions have become more and more invested in data and assessment and tie their strategic planning to what the data at their institutions reveal. There is one common data number that institutions are concerned with, and that is retention (Lo, 2010; Schreibersdorf, 2014; Stern & Soloman, 2006). While data, assessment, and retention were addressed as a consideration for faculty and administrators in Chapter 2, the results of this study show the efficacy of directive/facilitative commenting in promoting revision for students writing in the disciplines. If students can write and communicate effectively in the courses for their major, then students will likely have more success in these courses and will be more likely to graduate. Though this study has not linked retention data to the study site as students in the study have not completed their programs, this would be a good starting point for future research for providing a direct connection between retention and directive/facilitative commenting. This study demonstrates that when faculty used directive/facilitative commenting with students who were writing in their discipline that students can revise their work. More significantly, in some cases students in the study were able to apply that feedback to other sections of their papers without prompting and even considered how this feedback could help them as academic writers. For institutions, they should consider the connections between retention and practice, in this case feedback from faculty, and think about larger goals beyond retention to ways students may have success in their future professional endeavors.

Institutional Support

Institutional support, which included faculty, advisors, and other resources used to further student writing is a finding in the study that shows the writing needs of students must be

addressed by stakeholders not only in providing meaningful feedback but also in assessing and thinking about faculty development and first-year writing curriculum. The study demonstrated that students who are writing in the disciplines benefit from a particular type of feedback, directive/facilitative, and that this type of feedback resulted in substantial revision from the rough draft to the final draft. This is a significant finding for WAC/WID directors and writing program administrators as it shows a type of feedback that is successful that can be used as a model to create development opportunities for both disciplinary faculty and composition instructors. It is important to note that the faculty member in the study is a trained composition instructor who has been teaching college-level writing for several years. However, the feedback style, focus on global level commenting, and delivery of feedback can with the expertise of WAC/WID directors and writing program administrators be integrated into support programs for faculty.

The first step in implementing directive/facilitative commenting for WAC/WID directors and writing program administrators is to consider the types of writing programs in place at their universities, e.g., writing centers, department chairs, first-year writing directors, and bring those groups together to establish ongoing initiatives. As part of this initial assessment of current writing programs, administrators should examine and understand the values at place in universities both as institutions and among faculty. Bob Broad (2013) explored an avenue to get at cultural values in universities that would work well for introducing directive/facilitative commenting. Broad interviewed stakeholders involved in a first-year writing program to assess the values of a writing program for creating a new grading rubric; the values drove the rubric design and encouraged faculty acceptance of a new practice. WAC/WID directors and writing program administrators could consider a similar approach by setting up interviews with

stakeholders to identify values concerning commenting practices and faculty support. Getting at the values of institutions and faculty will help administrators create buy-in (Neeley, 2017) for directive/facilitative commenting and make targeted development opportunities effective for faculty.

In addition to working with faculty and departments across campus, for universities with WAC/WID directors or similar positions, they should work closely with first-year writing or similar writing program administrator positions to look for places of alignment in faculty development opportunities related to commenting for writing instructors in both first-year writing and in the disciplines. Though it may seem like development opportunities for feedback for disciplinary faculty should not include composition instructors, it is important to consider creating partnerships with faculty in writing with faculty teaching in the disciplines for several reasons. Learning about and understanding curricular goals, pedagogical practices, like directive/facilitative commenting, and writing expectations can help faculty and administrators to have more realistic expectations for student writing at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. For composition instructors and instructors teaching in the disciplines, they can better comprehend areas of expertise and expectations for students in their respective courses. Understanding these goals and expectations can have an influential effect on how faculty respond to student writing. For example, composition instructors may be focused more on global level elements in student writing, while disciplinary faculty may be more concerned with the ways students are using content area language. If disciplinary faculty have knowledge about what students are working through in their first-year writing courses, it then helps faculty to consider feedback practices that will help students have more success with writing in their majors. Finally, writing program administrators and first-year writing instructors, based on input

from WAC/WID directors and disciplinary faculty, need to consider scaffolding curriculum. Examining first-year writing programs, beginning with developmental writing programs, writing program administrators must prioritize students writing effectively in their major with the understanding that composition is not going to undergo an overhaul and vis versa with writing in the disciplines. By working together, stakeholders can create a partnership that is beneficial for students in their majors and in their professional lives while also supporting institutional goals.

These considerations at the institutional level should concern administrators and motivated them to provide funding and support for faculty development. Condon et al. (2016) made the case for faculty development and improved student learning and student retention, and this study demonstrates a specific area where faculty development would have a significant impact on student success. As addressed in Chapter 2, there are a wide array of different types of support that may help disciplinary faculty with feedback practices including: embedded writing fellows, faculty workshops, sessions with writing program administrators, student workshops, and curriculum design. The type of support that works for one institution will not necessarily work for all as each institution has its own culture, organization, and funding. However, what writing program administrators can agree on across institutions is the need for some type of support for faculty so that they can have opportunities to better understand feedback practices for working with students in the disciplines. This may seem like an enormous task for institutions to consider if they do not have any writing program infrastructure in place. Institutions without WAC/WID directors should strongly consider creating a faculty/staff position to assess the current writing programs and practices in place and then recommend the type of support that will work best for the institution. Those institutions that have WAC/WID directors should provide funding for targeted faculty development as discussed in Chapter 2 that helps faculty with

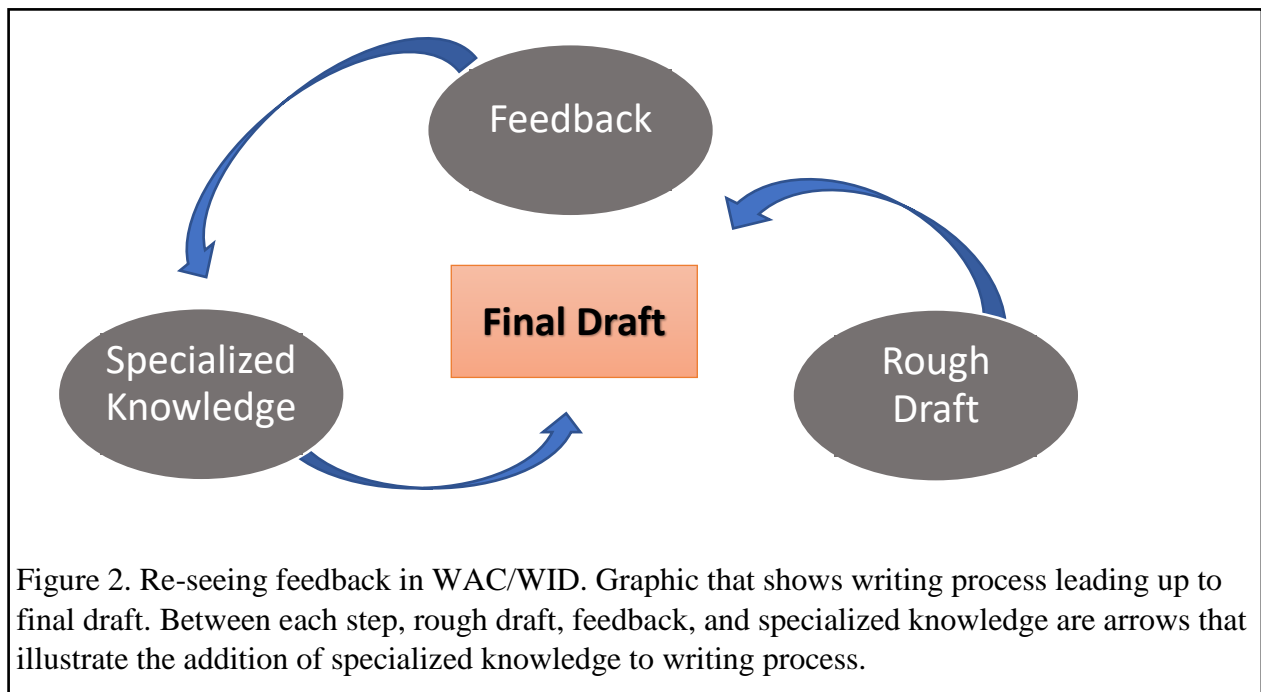
commenting on student writing in the disciplines. For institutions interested in creating a WAC/WIC program and/or providing support to existing programs, writing program administrators should consider Michelle Cox, Jeffrey Galin, and Dan Melzer's (2018) text, *Sustainable WAC: A Whole Systems Approach to Launching and Developing Writing Across the Curriculum Programs*. Institutional support will look and feel differently between universities but what should be consistent regardless of the culture of an institution's writing program is the commitment to supporting disciplinary faculty in working with students on writing starting with feedback practices. This commitment may translate into faculty who are more prepared for working with students on writing through feedback, students who are more effective in writing in their majors, higher retention rates, and most importantly into students having more opportunities for success in their professional lives.

Purpose for Writing

In addition to institutional support, this study revealed that stakeholders should strongly consider how student goals inform teaching practices. Students indicated that they view faculty as vital in helping them with writing and revision but that they were relying on advisors for writing support. Students also suggested that writing in their field is essential to having success in their classes, communicating ideas, and creating opportunities for their professional lives. This means that both disciplinary and composition faculty must better address the ways they teach writing to account for the differences in writing in the disciplines.

Though composition instructors are not disciplinary writing faculty, they are working with these students when they are undergraduate students so that they can have success in their upper level classes. One of the major findings of this study was that the type of comments that students are given changes how students revise. Taylor and Patton (2013) suggested there was

something different occurring with students and revision in disciplinary writing. This study provides evidence for their speculation. Students needed guidance beyond a global type comment in order to revise their ideas. In this study when students were provided with comments that were both directive and facilitative, they were able to revise their writing. One of the areas for compositionists who do not teach within a disciplinary framework that is often overlooked is how to work with students in revision in considering new content and/or specialized knowledge. In the past, scholars have looked at the types of comments that students were given by disciplinary faculty as surface level and considered those comments to be ancillary or to be editing focused (Szymanski, 2014; Taylor & Patton, 2006). This study shows that students need directive/facilitative feedback when working with specialized content to help to promote global level revision. Figure 2 demonstrates the place that specialized knowledge must play in the



feedback process. Composition instructors need to consider how faculty can help students learn to integrate specialized knowledge while at the same time teaching them how to develop their

writing in global ways, including such areas as organization, development, and support. This study demonstrates that this can be accomplished through giving directive/facilitative feedback. The directive feedback helps students to understand how to revise and work with specialized knowledge, while the facilitative feedback builds on this and helps students to revise with the specialized knowledge in mind.

By rethinking feedback practices in composition, faculty who teach writing can accomplish two things, better prepare students with writing in the disciplines and help students understand the meta-language of feedback so that disciplinary faculty can build on these practices. Composition faculty and writing programs administrators must take the expertise they have about students and writing and consider how they can reframe their practices so that institutions are giving students opportunities that reinforce the idea of writing as a discipline and that as Emerson (2017) suggested “complements” other disciplines. As a result, stakeholders can provide the type of support that students need to fulfill both their academic and professional goals.

Research Questions Addressed in the Study

First, the study clearly addressed the first question in the study, which investigated how past experiences with writing affect students’ understanding of comments. The study showed that students’ past experiences did influence how students think about revision and writing and the ways they interpret feedback. Students in the study reported that their backgrounds and lack of experience with writing directly affected their ability as writers, how they would fare in their disciplines, and confidence in themselves as researchers/scholars. They revealed that they had little to no formal training in writing, which students believed was at odds with faculty expectations. Though the study did prove that background does affect students’ level of

confidence as writers and long-term belief in their success as writers, more research should be done that focuses on students with some or comprehensive backgrounds in writing to determine if stronger backgrounds in writing either in secondary education for undergraduate students or in undergraduate education for graduate students positively affect students' ability in writing and revision.

The revisions by the students in the study also addressed the question concerning whether directive/facilitative comments prompted revision, and the study clearly showed that directive/facilitative comments encouraged revision. One of the purposes of this study was to continue the work of Patton and Taylor (2013) to better understand if and in what ways directive commenting was more helpful to students writing in the disciplines than past researchers had initially considered. This study showed that students found the comments to be significant in their revision process and revised their writing for every comment they received. More research should be done on how many comments are manageable for students and what combinations of directive/facilitative comments are the most effective dependent on where students are in the revision process. In addition, composition scholars should look at the efficacy of directive/facilitative comments in composition courses to reassess the emphasis on global comments, especially in first-year composition courses.

Finally, the study answered the question concerning what motivates students to make revision changes to their writing. The study substantiated that feedback and revision is clearly linked and more importantly that directive/facilitative comments are connected to student motivation. In the study, the students were highly motivated to make revision changes to their writing and revised their writing in every case. An examination of the student revisions and students' self-assessment of their writing in the interviews demonstrated that students made

changes to their writing at both sentence and idea levels, and in some cases revised their writing throughout their papers and considered applications of revision beyond the paper. This proves that while there are many pedagogies that inform student revision, feedback continues to be one of the most important teaching practices that faculty have to influence student writing. Continued research should be focused on assessing more writing and revision practices based on these types of comments at both undergraduate and graduate levels and uncovering more about why students are motivated to revise based on directive/facilitative comments.

Conclusion

Institutions, writing program administrators, disciplinary faculty, and composition faculty are all a part of and engaged with a community that strives to support student learning. Though one of the goals for stakeholders is that students have success in their courses and graduate their institutions, the larger goal is that students have success in their post graduate lives. Later, perhaps as part of this success, students will contribute to larger disciplinary communities and maybe become educators themselves. All of these stakeholders together create a writing culture and set students on a path to being effective communicators in their fields. This study revealed through the emergent themes of background of writer, institutional support, commenting for revision, and purpose for writing that feedback on writing in the disciplines is a vital and necessary part of helping students to understand and apply marginal comments and demonstrates that directive/facilitative feedback is a necessary and important part of this process. Examining stakeholder's responsibilities through the findings of the study and considering future research demonstrated not only why feedback and writing pedagogy is important in the disciplines but why faculty must actively integrate and reconsider their practices.

While at first feedback may not seem like a pedagogical practice that needs to be considered by all these groups, this study reveals the significant role that directive/facilitative feedback plays in writing revision and that it is a practice that needs to be addressed at all levels. Through feedback, stakeholders have a great deal of influence on students' writing abilities and on student success. As a result, stakeholders are instrumental in students' gaining access to academic and professional discourse communities. So, they must understand and appreciate their roles and consider how they can help students achieve this success whether that is at a funding, a curricular, a programmatic, a classroom, or a research level. In "doing," institutions, writing program administrators, disciplinary faculty, and composition faculty can create an environment where students can learn, think, and communicate effectively in their fields.

APPENDIX 1

DESCRIPTORS OF FACILITATIVE AND DIRECTIVE COMMENTS

FACILITATIVE	Examples	DIRECTIVE	Examples
*"Function to guide, prompt, question, or reflect on the writing with the teacher in a reader's role" *"Offer writers multiple options" *"Commentary tends to be maturationist and process-oriented"	*"Explain, perhaps an example." *"Why only these? Justify." *"Explain to the reader how these are connected...it is unclear how they function together."	*"Function to correct, critique, or direct." *"Constrains the writer's choices" *"Commentary tends to be interventionist and product-oriented"	*"Add your results" *"Check decimal" *"Wrong"

*based on Straub and Lunsford (1995)

Possible Directive/Facilitative Comments for Issues in Summary Assignment:

Organization

I like where you are headed with your ideas here. The ideas are not organized though to set up to lead into the substance of the summary. Consider ways to rearrange your main points.

Good start with setting up the main points. Some issues though with the organization of the ideas. Consider how the ideas are arranged throughout the summary.

Transitions

This transition works well here, but the transitions in other parts of your summary are not as effective. Consider ways to include transitions that move your reader from one section to the next.

I like how you have introduced the main ideas here, but there are no transitions from one idea to the next. Think about ways to add in transitional words and phrases to guide the reader through your ideas.

Significance

Good start leading into the significance of this piece, but I'm not clear what is significant. Consider developing your ideas on the significance of the article.

I like the ideas here, but you did not address the significance of the piece you are summarizing. Consider ways to address the significance of the article.

APPENDIX 2
PROTOCOL QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your past experiences with writing.
2. Tell me about your revision process when working on a final paper.
 - a. Why do you think this strategy/s is helpful?
 - b. How has your process changed?

The next four questions were asked in response to grader comments on the student's rough drafts. The questions were asked for each directive/facilitative grader comment. (Three comments total).

3. Please read the comment and tell me what the comment was asking you to do.
4. How did the comment make you feel?
 - a. Was the comment helpful? Why?
 - b. Did the comment motivate you to revise your writing?
 - c. Why do you think this is so?
 - d. If not, why do you think this is so?
5. Did you revise your writing here?
 - a. If yes, what type of revision did you make? Sentence level? Idea level?
 - b. Why did you make this/these writing choices?
 - c. If no, why not?
6. Did this revision choice affect later revisions you made in the paper?
 - a. Why? or why not?
 - b. If yes, can you point to a place in the text where you make a future change based on the grader comment?
7. What advice do have for instructors for their feedback on student writing?
 - a. Why do you think this would be helpful for writers?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about writing?
9. May I contact you again with follow-up questions?

APPENDIX 3

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD: NOTIFICATION OF EXEMPTION

January 24, 2018

Christina Montgomery

Dr. Estee Beck

English

The University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19035

Protocol Number: 2018-0196

Protocol Title: Directive/Facilitative Commenting in the Disciplines and its Effect on Student Revision Practices of Faculty Teaching in the Disciplines

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

The UT Arlington Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, or designee, has reviewed the above referenced study and found that it qualified for exemption under the federal guidelines for the protection of human subjects as referenced at Title 45CFR Part 46.101(b)(1).

- (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

You are therefore authorized to begin the research as of January 23, 2018.

Pursuant to Title 45 CFR 46.103(b)(4)(iii), investigators are required to, “promptly report to the IRB any proposed changes in the research activity, and to ensure that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, are not initiated without prior IRB review and approval except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject.” All proposed changes to the research must be submitted via the electronic submission system prior to implementation. Please also be advised that as the principal investigator, you are required to report local adverse (unanticipated) events to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services within 24 hours of the occurrence or upon acknowledgement of the occurrence. All investigators and key personnel identified in the protocol must have documented Human Subject Protection (HSP) Training on file with this office. Completion certificates are valid for 3 years from completion date.

The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services appreciates your continuing commitment to the protection of human research subjects. Should you have questions or require further assistance, please contact Regulatory Services at regulatoryservices@uta.edu or 817-272-3723.

The University of Texas at Arlington, Center for Innovation 202 E. Border Street, Ste. 201, Arlington, Texas 76010, Box#19188 (T) 817-272-3723 (F) 817-272-5808 (E) regulatoryservices@uta.edu (W) www.uta.edu/rs

APPENDIX 4

STUDENT IN-CLASS RECRUITMENT TEXT

Hello, my name is Christina Montgomery, and I am doctoral student in the UTA English Department. Your professor has allowed me to come and speak to you today about a study that I am conducting to better understand the role of directive/facilitative commenting in rough drafts and students' understanding and decision processes of this type of comment in revisions of their final drafts. This study has been approved by the UTA Institutional Review Board.

As part of this study, Dr. Beck will ask you to submit both your rough and final drafts to Blackboard of your first formal writing assignment as part of your coursework for this class. If you decide to participate in the study, a copy of your Blackboard submission will be moved by Dr. Beck to a secure UTA Box account. I will review the writing samples in the UTA Box account to analyze revision choices that were made between drafts.

In addition, I am interested in interviewing you about your writing experiences and the revision decisions you make on your rough drafts based on the comments you receive. The interviews will not take longer than thirty minutes. After the interviews have been completed, your name will not be used and both your writing sample and your interview responses will be assigned a number. You may decline participation in the study without penalty. Your grade will not be affected in any way whatsoever through your participation in this study and participation is purely voluntary.

If you are interested in participating, I will need you to sign an informed consent document. If you are not comfortable completing the informed consent now or would like more time to consider participating, you can drop your informed consent off at my office in Carlise Hall, Room 524. Please remember that you must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

Does anyone have any questions? You can also email me directly at christina.montgomery@mavs.uta.edu if you have questions.

APPENDIX 5

STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Christina Montgomery

Department of English

+1-817-272-2692

email: christina.montgomery@uta.edu

TITLE OF PROJECT

Directive/Facilitative Commenting in the Disciplines and its Effect on Student Revision Practices of Faculty Teaching in the Disciplines

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study and commenting and revision. You are being asked to participate in a study where you **will** submit your rough and final drafts of your first formal writing assignment to Blackboard. If you consent to the project, Dr. Beck will move your drafts to a secure UTA Box account. As part of the study, I will interview you and audio record your responses about your writing experiences and the revision decisions you make on your rough drafts based on the comments you received. This study is designed to learn more about effective commenting practices in the disciplines.

Your grade will not be affected in any way whatsoever through your participation in this study.

Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinue your participation, at any time, will not result in penalty or loss of benefits. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to investigate commenting practices of disciplinary faculty. There is a great deal of research about writing in the disciplines that calls for more research on effective writing practices in the disciplines. One recent study (Taylor & Patton, 2017) identified directive/facilitative commenting as significant in student revision practices. This study hopes to better understand the role of directive/facilitative commenting in rough drafts and students' understanding and decision processes of this type of comment in revisions of their final drafts. The findings from this research are expected to identify if and how directive/facilitative comments can help students with revision in their papers, which would help faculty to better understand types of comments that would be useful to students.

DURATION

Participation in the interview will not take longer than thirty minutes.

NUMBER OF SUBJECTS

The number of anticipated subjects in this research study is 30.

PROCEDURES

The procedures which will involve you as a research subject include:

1. Submitting your rough and final drafts of your first formal assignment to Blackboard.
2. Being interviewed and having your interview audio recorded for no longer than thirty minutes about your writing experiences and revision decisions in your formal paper.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There are no direct incentives for the participants of this study. Participants, however, may feel some fulfillment in helping research, which may lead to faculty better understanding the types of commenting that may help students with more successful revision in their writing.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no perceived risks or discomforts for participating in this research study. Should you experience any discomfort please inform the researcher. You have the right to quit any study procedures at any time at no consequence.

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation offered for participating in this study.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. However, you can elect not to participate in the study or quit at any time at no consequence.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequence.

If you decided to participate, you can decide to stop at any time, even after completing the consent form, submitting your writing, or after the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

After the interviews have been completed, the interview responses will be transcribed and assigned a number and stored on UTA's J Drive. The audio recordings of the interviews will be deleted after the transcription is complete. Your name and any name markers will be removed. Your corresponding writing samples will be downloaded from Blackboard by Dr. Beck to a secure UTA Box account and assigned a number to correspond with the interview. Your name and any name markers will be removed. The transcript data and writing samples will be saved for three years.

Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; it will be anonymous.

Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant or about the way this study is conducted, you may contact:

Christina Montgomery

Department of English

+1-817-272-2692

email: christina.montgomery@uta.edu

Any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant or research-related injury may be directed to the UTA Office of Research Administration; Regulatory at 817-272-2105 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu.

CONSENT

By signing below, you confirm that you are 18 years of age or older and have read or had this document read to you. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you make a decision regarding your participation, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature of participant

Date

Participant's UTA email address for follow-up contact as needed

APPENDIX 6

CODING CATEGORIES AND TRANSCRIPT LOCATIONS

CATEGORY	EXPLANATION	TRANSCRIPT LOCATION
<p>Writer Background</p>	<p>-writing background including primary, secondary, and higher ed writing experiences prior to Ph.D. program -confidence in writing</p>	<p><u>-Lack of formal education in higher ed</u> AH 28; AH 39; AH 100; AH 349; AH 750; YA 5; YA 31; SA 21; SA 40; SA 54; SA 60; SA 76; SA 260; AL 24; AL 32; AL 36; AL 40; AL 48; CH 12; CH 16; OM 12; OM 24; OM 36; OM 39; OM 75; OM 83; OM 87; OM 91; OM 115 <u>-Confidence in writing</u> AH 94; AH 105; AH 528; AH 533; AH 690; AH 735; YA 23; YA 34; YA 37; YA 44; YA 49; YA 56; YA 63; YA 242; SA 28; SA 91; SA 100; SA 189; CH 20; CH 24; CH 40; CH 148; CH 152; OM 733; OM 729</p>
<p>Purpose for Writing</p>	<p>-writing for academics -writing as a professional</p>	<p><u>-Writing for academic purposes</u> AH 49; AH 85; AH 121; AH 124; AH 146; AH 153; AH 567; AH 634; YA 9; YA 15, YA 17; YA 214, SA 104; SA 189; AL 56; AL 68; AL 128; AL 253; AL 257; AL 261; AL 265; CH 32; CH 40; CH 44; CH 52; CH 56; CH 60; CH 68; CH 92; CH 132; CH 236; CH 244; CH 256; CH 260; CH 244; OM 43; OM 79; OM 91; OM 135; OM 147; OM 151; OM 155; OM 463; OM 467; OM 657; OM 661; OM 733; OM737 <u>-Writing as professionals</u></p>

		AH 625; AH 629; AH 651; AH 700; AH 688; AH 735; AH 750; SA 104; CH 248; OM 215
Institutional Support	-role of faculty advisor -role of disciplinary faculty from students' perspective -types of writing support available (models, writing center, preparatory writing courses, grammar books)	<u>-Role of Faculty</u> AH 163; AH 169; AH 175; AH 198; AH 261; AH 271; AH 369; AH 487; AH 513; AH 545; AH 551; AH 567; AH 572; AH 581; AH 590; AH 596; SA 102; SA 141; SA 423; SA 440; SA 426; SA 457; SA 477; SA 486; SA 507; SA 522; CH 236; CH 240; CH 244; CH 248; AL 240; AL 245; AL 249; OM 211; OM 633; OM 689; OM 697; OM 701; OM 717; OM 721; YA 181; YA 193; YA 195; YA 199; YA 213; YA 224 <u>-Role of Advisor</u> AH 91; AH 183; YA 8; YA 24; YA 55; SA 60; SA 79; SA 135; SA 140; SA 425; CH 24; CH 28; CH 32; CH 52; CH 56; CH 60; CH 152; OM 43; OM 151; OM 235; OM 239; OM 255; OM 259; OM 471; OM 479; OM 598; OM 633; OM 641; OM 645; OM 649; OM 717 <u>-Other Resources</u> AH 39; AH 129; AH 616; YA 230; OM 119; OM 159; OM 167; OM 171; OM 175; OM 582; OM 590; OM 598; AL 36; SA 123
Commenting for Revision	-how comments helped changed writing -how comments helped with confidence -revisions based on comments	<u>-Comments gave confidence</u> AH 105; AH 111; AH 258; AH 358; AH 363; YA 73; YA 74; YA 136; AL 96; AL 100; AL 128; AL 156; CH 84; CH 124; CH 152; OM

		<p>247; OM 255; OM 391; OM 399; OM 403; OM 487</p> <p><u>-Comments helped change writing</u></p> <p>AH 229; AH 240; AH 294; AH 303; AH 330; AH 348; AH 385; AH 392; AH 398; AH 480; AH 603; YA 88; YA 106; YA 109; YA 119; YA 122; YA 142; YA 149; YA 153; YA 162; YA 165; YA 172; YA 177; YA 181; YA 213; YA 218; SA 176; SA 178; SA 187; SA 200; SA 226; SA 233; SA 255; SA 290; SA 303; SA 325; SA 339; SA 359; SA 367; SA 393; SA 413; SA 428; SA 509; AL 108; AL 112; AL 128; AL 132; AL 159; AL 176; AL 188; AL 205; AL 209; AL 220; AL 224; CH 84; CH 88; CH 92; CH 96; CH 100; CH 104; CH 116; CH 128; CH 152; CH 164; CH 172; CH 180; CH 184; CH 188; CH 196; CH 200; CH 264; OM 207; OM 267; OM 279; OM 283; OM 299; OM 311; OM 319; OM 323; OM 327; OM 339; OM 335; OM 351; OM 395; OM 407; OM 439; OM 487</p>
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