A Heuristic to Promote Inclusive and Equitable Teaching in Writing Programs

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Writing studies scholars have created and theorized pedagogical frameworks for sustaining inclusive and equitable writing instruction. We build on this scholarship by designing a heuristic WPAs can use to engage their faculty in collaborative, peer-based analysis, dialogue, and revision of writing course design (embodied in syllabi) to study and strengthen the programs' inclusivity and equity related to literacy standards, assessment, and accessibility. We argue that heuristics like this are valuable transcontextual methods for WPAs who want to further develop inclusive and equitable programmatic practices, especially to help engage White, monolingual, able-bodied, cis-gendered leaders who want to assume greater responsibility for promoting pedagogical justice in their programs.

Introduction

The field of rhetoric and composition/writing studies (RCWS) has worked to move discussions about writing from perpetual literacy crises toward concrete writing education agendas focused on more inclusive and equitable writing instruction. In doing so, scholars have theorized and created pedagogical approaches for inclusive writing instruction (e.g., Inoue's labor-based grading approach and Womack's accessible curriculum design), providing a framework for understanding and responding to these challenges. Building on this emerging tradition, we analyzed syllabi to inquire about our own programs, instructors, and epistemologies of equity and inclusivity. We then interviewed writing instructors and, in the process, discovered the potential for a more systematized approach to this kind of inquiry. The interviews prompted our design of a heuristic for writing program admin-

istrators (WPAs) to assess the inclusivity and equity of their programs, or what we call the Writing Inclusivity and Equity Project (WIEP).[1] Heuristics are useful tools for WPAs because they allow us to study our local contexts while being flexible enough for use by other WPAs to create translocal knowledge, thereby generating a wider understanding of current inclusive program designs. As three White, monolingual, able-bodied, cis-gendered women working as tenure-track (TT) WPAs, we are aware of our privilege and therefore our heightened potential for missing issues of inclusion and equity in our writing programs. This heuristic is designed to aid WPAs (especially privileged ones like us seeking to operate as allies) in practicing an intentional administration (Miller-Cochran, 2018) that prioritizes issues of equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

We set out to study our campus writing programs, located in the Northern California region of the United States. All three campuses had experienced recent hate crimes, reflecting our polarized national climate. In this environment, we wondered as WPAs how inclusion and equity manifested in our required first-year writing (FYW) courses and how they related to our institutions, region, and discipline. We also wondered what we might discover working as a transcontextual research team (Serviss, 2018), combining local and translocal perspectives to seek transferable WPA strategies and tools.

We conducted in-depth, artifact-based individual interviews seeking meaningful and actionable data for our writing programs. We learned about the experiences and paradigms that deeply inform our colleagues and our programs, providing (1) context and recommendations for local programmatic decisions and designs and (2) grassroots resources for faculty development. We share our pilot efforts here in the form of a writing program heuristic. Our hope is that this heuristic is a productive method for WPAs to understand the inclusive and exclusionary practices of their programs and for WPAs who want to extend the conversation from local to generalizable inter-institutional research. This is part of WIEP's larger goal to provide resources to help faculty take responsibility for inclusive writing programming while also contributing to disciplinary knowledge.

Equity and Inclusion in RCWS

Recent RCWS research on race, accessibility, and assessment highlights the historical and contemporary challenges of inclusive writing program and course design. This scholarship examines the presumed Whiteness, able-bodiedness, and monolingualism that underpin traditional writing pedagogy, the harm done by these norms, and the disciplinary costs we pay

when we aren't inclusive and shirk responsibility for addressing injustice. The heuristic presented here was developed in response to these conversations and their calls not only for solidarity but for action to create more just, inclusive writing programs.

RCWS' investment in gatekeeping through literacy standards, placement, and assessment has been the subject of widespread accessibility critiques (Yergeau, 2016). Recognizing that even carefully designed courses can become punitive spaces for students with non-normative bodies and minds, Margaret Price (2011) showed how typical writing pedagogies exclude many disabled—as well as able-bodied—students. Many definitions of participation, for example, privilege specific kinds of real-time participation—especially speaking in class—that are inaccessible to many students (Banaji et al., 2019; Critel, 2019). Approaches to writing processes that use time as a marker of effort, as another example, disadvantage others (Wood, 2017). To counter these kinds of inequities, RCWS disability scholars call for a universal design approach that continually (re)negotiates course policies about attendance, participation, and deadlines (Dolmage, 2005; Wood & Madden, 2014), so that context-specific accommodations become the destigmatized norm (Yergeau et al., 2013; Oswal & Meloncon, 2017; Womack, 2017).

Writing assessment scholars have also critiqued exclusionary approaches and practices premised on Whitely standardized language norms that have defined RCWS and sustained gatekeeping traditions (Inoue, 2016), reflecting the exclusionary foundations of higher education (Zenger, 2016). In light of these exclusions, proponents of racial justice within RCWS have argued that writing pedagogy should explicitly address how race shapes writing and language, which White instructors often euphemize and therefore marginalize (Davila, 2017). For example, many writing courses facilely incorporate readings by people of color as a diversity showcase contrasted against (White) norms and disconnected from their literacy traditions (Burrows, 2016). Critics have also noted that central documents guiding writing teachers, such as the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011), fail to adequately address how exclusion is built into our beliefs about issues like language policies and therefore obstruct RCWS's commitment to racial justice (Inoue, 2019; Perryman-Clark & Craig, 2019). Many have therefore argued that White scholars, teachers, and WPAs in particular must write social justice and linguistic pluralism into their programs' mission statements and learning outcomes to decenter Whiteness in writing instruction and foreground the field's awareness of the racialized nature of rhetoric and language (Wible, 2019), sharing this work with the teachers

and researchers of color who typically perform the majority of it (see García de Müeller & Ruiz, 2017; Sanchez & Branson, 2016).

The work to decenter Whiteness in writing assessment is underway in recent RCWS scholarship that has integrated conversations about linguistic diversity, cultural rhetorical traditions, and inclusivity with equitable writing assessment practices (Canagarajah, 2004, 2011; Matsuda, 2006; Smitherman, 2003), while other scholarship has illustrated the dangers already-marginalized students face when standardization pervades writing classrooms (Davila, 2017; Perryman-Clark, 2012). In addition, Inoue (2015, 2019) has advocated antiracist writing assessment ecologies where language interrogation is central and labor-based grading makes explicit issues of power and language. However, despite this scholarship and calls to embrace "code meshing" in classroom writing (Young, 2009), ongoing research has shown that standard edited American English remains the unchallenged norm (Davila, 2017; Inoue, 2015). We contribute to these ongoing efforts with our transferable WPA heuristic that highlights existing inclusive and equitable practices and prompts strategic, evidence-based curricular and pedagogical development to broaden and deepen their reach.

From Commitments to Action: Document-Based Interviews as Faculty Development Method

While RCWS has begun to offer critiques and methodologies for understanding how race, ability, and language-based exclusion shape writing pedagogy, what's often missing are applied methods and tools for translating these commitments into sustainable practice at the programmatic level. Heuristics—a tool many WPAs are familiar with from their classroom experience—can bridge this gap, especially heuristics grounded explicitly in critical and programmatic research traditions. Citing George Pólya, Janice Lauer (1970) explained that heuristic procedures are tools "'of discovery and invention...whose purpose is to discover the solution of the present problem'" (p. 396). Examples of writing program heuristics include Kristine Johnson's (2014) question-based heuristic for aligning program assessment with institutional mission and Chris Gallagher's (2010) heuristic for designing assessments that are comparable between institutions yet adaptive to local norms. Heuristics are valuable because they provide WPAs with methods for interrogating locally important program issues through a disciplinary framework of shared concerns, allowing translocal trends and flexible WPA best practices to be established. Any useful WPA heuristic, then, does four important things:

- establishes a teaching community within the program,

- facilitates faculty development as inquiry,
- allows WPAs to discover assets and needs of faculty, and
- provides actionable data that can inform future programmatic plans.

These goals are especially important in light of institutional differences in student and faculty demographics, the local political and cultural climate, and campus infrastructures, which deeply affect the current state of instruction and the resources available to support and improve it. We encountered these issues as WIEP researchers: our institutions differ considerably in terms of size, mission, student body, program design, and faculty (see table 1). However, we recognized that although our institutions varied, we shared the common problem of a diverse student body with a primarily White, monolingual, and able-bodied faculty practicing normative pedagogy. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that most FYW faculty aren't trained in RCWS and don't follow current developments in writing pedagogy. Therefore—in addition to prioritizing diversity in hiring—faculty development is crucially important in aligning writing pedagogies with both changing student populations and current best practices in writing instruction. We needed a faculty development method that:

- identifies best practices already in use;
- identifies existing problematic pedagogies, teaching philosophies, and views about students; and
- showcases effective writing pedagogies in our specific writing programs, inviting grassroots faculty development motivated by social justice goals.

Syllabi analysis, alongside interviews, offered a translocal way forward, creating data that provided insights into how programmatic teaching practices relate to disciplinary best practices (diverging from, confirming, and expanding known practices), helping with long-range program planning like curriculum development, hiring, and staffing.

Table 1. Institutional Comparison[2]

	University of California, Davis	Santa Clara University	Saint Mary's College of California
Institution type	Public; Doctoral University: Very High Research Activity	Private; Doctoral/ Professional University: High Research Activity	Private; Master's College/ University: Larger Programs
Undergraduates	30,000	5,500	2,700
% from racially marginalized groups (Asian/Asian-American, African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Latinx)	58%	44%	50%
% receiving Pell grants	32%	10%	24%
% international	16%	4%	3%
% first-generation	42%	13%	30%
% receiving disability accommodations	≤3%	≤3%	10%
Graduate training of FYW faculty	RCWS: 7%	RCWS: 15%	RCWS: 12%
	TESOL: 5%	TESOL: 3%	TESOL: 8%
	Creative Writing: 8%	Creative Writing: 33%	Creative Writing: 44%
	Lit./Cultural Studies: 80%	Lit./Cultural Studies: 41%	Lit./Cultural Studies: 32%
		Other: 9%	Unknown: 4%

We invited all FYW instructors at our three institutions to participate in our IRB-approved study of writing program equity and inclusivity.[3] We collected 42 FYW syllabi and used grounded theory-inspired qualitative coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Saldaña, 2015) to analyze them (see Ser-

viss, Sweeney, & Voss, 2018). Through this analysis, we developed a series of open-ended questions to discuss with faculty, including:

1. how they approach equity, inclusivity, and accessibility in their teaching;

2. the goals, approaches, and rationales for their course designs, particularly teaching and assessing writing; and

3. what classroom experiences, education/training, and life experiences led them to develop these pedagogies (see appendix A: Pilot Heuristic).

These conversations were document-based (see Prior & Shipka, 2003): we asked faculty to discuss their syllabi as artifacts representing their pedagogy, encouraging participants to ground discussion of their pedagogy in the specifics of classroom practice and curriculum. A wealth of information valuable both to WPAs and faculty emerged from the nine interviews we conducted. As detailed below, faculty described deep commitments to student learning, techniques they use to teach writing in accordance with these values, and ongoing questions they're still dealing with as they continually refine their classroom practice.

Participant Case Studies

University of California, Davis

In the University of California, Davis Writing Program, 90+ faculty teach required writing courses (first-year writing, writing in the disciplines/professions) and staff a professional writing minor, RCWS graduate program, and GTA preparation courses. Faculty in this largely NTT community are very focused on pedagogical and curriculum innovation (especially in writing assessment and feedback), including widespread use of contract grading, conference grading, portfolio grading, and peer review tools like *Eli Review.* Davis' independent writing program actively supports ongoing professional development: faculty have regular opportunities to explore writing pedagogy and curricular issues with visiting scholars and each other. As a result, the two participants from this writing program, Summer and Emily, dwelled on the relationships between identity formation—their own and their students'—and curricular and pedagogical innovations. Both participants have integrated professional development activities—some self-sponsored, but many prompted by program-sponsored visiting scholars—into their writing assessment design and reflection. While these participants

model ideal application of these activities, their efforts are not leveraged by the program as they might be.

Summer and Emily are both NTT faculty with extensive graduate training in RCWS and TESOL, years of writing center tutoring experience, ongoing research agendas, and administrative roles. Summer identified her writing center training and her own identity as an immigrant, first-generation college student as crucial resources informing her classroom practices and goals, affecting her application of RCWS scholarship to diversity:

> . . . Michelle Cox's diversity statement [influenced me because it] says we're not going to look for written accent. It is not part of what we do . . . I make the point [to students] that here I am with an accent. You wouldn't stop me [in the middle of class] and say "You mispronounced that word," because then the conversation stops, right? And it's also rude. So my accent is actually my best tool.

Summer's own accent—evidence of her own formation as a multilingual international college student—helped her recognize how difficult it is to do academic work in another language and to encourage students by example.

Emily made a similar move as she described her commitment to include multilingual students, tracing it to her own undergraduate experience feeling "lost as an international student studying in the U.S." Emily explained how her formation shapes her decisions and inclusivity strategies, especially in developmental and FYW courses. She described "cultivating purposeful wandering" in her students as writers and thinkers, building reflection and mentorship into her curriculum to create greater inclusivity for students. This strategy was contextualized by Emily's experiences "wandering" as an undergraduate and by her writing center work with newly arrived immigrant adult learners. Throughout the interview process Emily excavated her own pedagogies and commitments, digging through layers of personal and professional formation.

Both Summer and Emily positioned their inclusive assessment strategies as shaped as much by their formation as undergraduate and graduate students as by their disciplinary training. Emily explained that her interest in a practice she calls "conference grading" likely descends from her writing center tutoring experiences. In Emily's iteration of conference grading, students attend individual conferences where she has a conversation with the student writer about their draft in relation to a rubric, provides feedback and revision suggestions, and assigns a "current" grade. This method, Emily explained, reminds her of writing center tutoring that meets "students where they are . . . [and provides] meaningful feedback rather than a static grade."

Summer explained a similar lamination of her practices, describing her commitment to eradicate student worry about "written accent" as a result of her personal experiences not only as a multilingual person but also as a WPA preparing GTAs to encounter RCWS scholarship for the first time. Her work preparing GTAs encouraged her to fully and intentionally adopt contract grading (Danielewicz & Elbow, 2009; Inoue, 2012, 2015, & 2019) in an effort to become a more just teacher:

> I feel myself moving more and more towards [contract grading]. Embracing that . . . we basically [read in the class] Vershawn Ashanti Young's work about the academic English language. Where does it come from? How was it created? Who was benefiting from it? And those are good conversations . . . the contract really allowed me to embrace this feeling that I had that it wasn't right to have this rubric.

Summer recounted her realization that using a static rubric was "unjust," explaining how language, race, and power influenced her upbringing as an Other first in her country of origin and then after arriving in the U.S. Her experiences of language, race, and power in these contexts set her pedagogical priorities, and RCWS scholarship she encountered, concretized, and directed those priorities toward contract grading. Emily, meanwhile, identified the convergence of her personal and professional formation not only in her conference grading practices, but also in her goal of better aligning and articulating courses to create parity for all students. For Emily this articulation was a matter of student inclusion and also professional inclusion, bringing writing faculty with different teaching foci into conversations with one another more intentionally.

These two participant interviews suggest that this writing program's faculty development plans ought to include more emphasis on ongoing writing assessment innovations, the relationship between faculty experiences as students and our current teaching practices, and the potential for operationalizing scholarship as tools for self-assessment of curriculum and pedagogy. First, innovative assessment strategies—contract grading, conference grading, et cetera—are circulating in the program and ought to be highlighted and leveraged much more explicitly in future professional development events. The motivation for these strategies, according to these two teachers, is inclusivity and equity. Second, asking faculty questions about their own lives as students can bring new appreciation and urgency to calls for inclusivity and equity in RCWS scholarship. Summer and Emily are somewhat unique in Davis' writing program because they are both immigrants to the U.S. and value their immigrant experiences as assets of their student past and faculty present. While this may not be true of most writing program

faculty who are White, native-born, and monolingual, there is value in community dialogue about how studenthood impacts faculty epistemologies. At Davis the presence of Summer and Emily, for example, and their experiences as students, expands a collective capacity to reconsider how we think about inclusivity and equity and the roots of those beliefs. Third, professional development that involves teachers reading scholarship must use that scholarship as a lens for self-evaluation, challenging the most privileged and normative faculty go beyond their own experiences and backgrounds (which may be quite normative) when critically examining their own beliefs and practices. Guided conversations with these faculty participants were productive because they were specific to them as individuals and yet programmatically significant. Interviews revealed concrete resources and potential next steps that are not only actionable but also unique to this writing program and the expertise of its teaching community.

Santa Clara University

Most FYW courses at Santa Clara University are taught by full time, NTT faculty. All first-year students take a two-quarter theme-based FYW course, guided by learning objectives focused on critical thinking, information literacy, rhetorical analysis, composing in different modes, and using writing as a process of inquiry. A selective institution with high teaching standards, Santa Clara's writing program vets faculty rigorously, which is reflected in assessments that place FYW student writing achievement at or above that of students at benchmark institutions. This committed teaching culture stems from Santa Clara's mission to educate "the whole person" in the Jesuit social justice tradition, supported by robust university-wide faculty development programming. Santa Clara's experienced faculty bring numerous assets to the program, especially their graduate training and other personal/ professional experience and the reflective, critical approach they take to their teaching. However, conversations pointed to a lack of programmatic support for innovations faculty were making in their curricula, leading in some cases to unresolved tensions between goals and practices.

The pedagogies of Santa Clara faculty align with established best practices in writing instruction (such as those outlined in the WPA Outcomes Statement) and in some cases mirror the emerging inclusive, justice-oriented pedagogies that characterize the leading edge of critical writing pedagogy scholarship. Josh—an NTT White male trained in English studies—described asking students to write daily and workshop their writing both with peers and through intensive conferencing in order to foreground writing both as a practice and a process of identity formation. Highlight-

ing the reflective teaching found at Santa Clara, Marvin—a White male NTT instructor with a background in English literature—worried that the university's institutional language/policies for accessibility are insufficient. His observation that standard accommodations like extra time on tests don't address students' unequal experience of time in the writing process parallels Wood's (2017) "crip time" findings: "time is the greatest variable in writing," Marvin explained, "I do think that there's probably something to being more conscious of how I'm evaluating those students who do have learning disabilities that require more time. Because I don't feel like I in my evaluation take that into account."

While Marvin hadn't yet determined how to deal with time as an accessibility issue, Lola—a White female NTT instructor with graduate degrees in library science and literature and a certificate in composition instruction—had changed her feedback methods to better meet student needs. Shifting away from extensive commenting, Lola explained that she now delivers feedback via conference (like Emily does at Davis),a practice she encountered decades ago in her composition certificate program but had recently returned to: "I think this conferencing enables me to do a lot [. . .] they get to ask me if they don't understand what the point is that I'm trying to make or what the issue might be. And then they can ask me to explain something or to attend to something that they want feedback on." Lola's reference to the impact of RCWS scholarship via graduate training parallels Josh's crediting of his rhetorical analysis–centered curriculum to the writing program he taught in as a graduate student. Both align with the influence Dexxer—a Latinx male TT faculty member trained in RCWS—described current pedagogical research exerting on his teaching. Beyond using Santa Clara's boilerplate accessibility language, Dexxer's FYW syllabus design reflects universal design principles, which he developed based on Womack's (2017) recommendations. Universal design RCWS research also guides Dexxer's approach to negotiating the writing process with all students (not only those with documented disabilities), accommodating extension requests based on one-on-one conferencing:

> You ask some questions: "Do you think you're going to be able to get all these [revisions] in by the due date?" . . . understanding that if you're willing to be open to them saying "I need help," [you respond with] "Okay, good. Let's do that extension, no problem. Let's talk about a date."

His accommodation policies were also influenced by his experience parenting a disabled child, resulting in familiarity with the temporal and financial resources required to certify disabilities and secure official accommodations

(see Yergeau, 2016), prompting Dexxer to negotiate accessibility beyond mere compliance.

However, especially due to limited writing-specific professional and curriculum development, there is no mechanism at Santa Clara to encourage or disseminate the inclusive, accessible approaches and ideas interviewees described. More problematically, this lack of programmatic coherence and support also allows pedagogical issues to persist without the WPA's knowledge. For example, Josh's positioning of his students as mature critical thinkers articulating their identities through writing was in tension with his tendency to refer to them as "kids" and his prescriptive "College 101" syllabus policies.[4] Reflecting a different kind of tension, Marvin worried about student engagement and learning in a required writing class, hypothesizing that a locally-relevant theme (water scarcity) would capture students' interest and stimulate learning. However, he described how meeting the course's writing-focused learning outcomes challenged his use of Santa Clara's thematic FYW approach, paralleling Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak's (2014) findings:

> I think there's a lot of balls that you have to juggle in a first year writing class. You're trying to inculcate the students into the writing practices specific at the university, to study rhetoric, and to think critically, and to engage texts. And so much of that work requires a lot of time in the classroom. And so I think what I came to register was that all of those aspirations to bring this experiential interest [in water scarcity] and focus into the classroom had to be supplementary to all that.

Reflecting a different problem, Lola described student resistance to her FYW curriculum, which explores issues of race, gender, and social justice:

> I think one of my hardest [terms] was when I decided that I really wanted to undertake a hard thinking around race issues. And there's a certain amount of pushback on the construction of Whiteness, Whiteness as race, [race] being something that's not just about other people.

In light of this thematic content—especially challenging to Santa Clara's substantial population of affluent, White students—and the unfamiliar genres/modes Lola asks students to compose in, she has revised her syllabus: "So there's another category: 'What to expect: Discomfort.' You're going to have to leave behind some of what you've been told . . . You are going to think about audiences. You are going to use your own experience, and it's going to be hard." However, unlike programs that make a race-conscious, multimodal approach to FYW the norm (see Wible, 2019), Lola works

independently at Santa Clara to develop, frame, and often defend her social justice writing pedagogy.

The glimpse into Santa Clara's writing program provided by these syllabus-driven discussions shows how the absence of writing-specific faculty development has missed opportunities to leverage and extend instructors' commitment to pedagogical effectiveness, inclusion, and accessibility, as well as failed to address issues and needs within the program. Faculty are teaching many writing best practices (writing as a process, writing as social and epistemic), engaging (knowingly and unknowingly) with current issues in the field, and revising their pedagogy and curricula according to student needs. However, the program has provided few professional development opportunities for faculty to work on their curricula and pedagogy with colleagues, and none that focus on access, inclusion, and equity, despite recent university-wide faculty development events focusing on pedagogical justice. To address this, Santa Clara's writing stakeholders (the directors of the gen ed writing program, the professional writing program, and the writing center) are developing opportunities for faculty to share and develop curricula in community. We began by hosting "assignment/activity swap shop" events where faculty present their curricular innovations and discuss them with colleagues, designed to disseminate best practices throughout the program. Upcoming programming focuses on developing inclusive teaching strategies for the writing classroom, including both discussions of published scholarship and an activity based on the syllabus-analysis heuristic outlined below.

Saint Mary's College of California

FYW is taught primarily by NTT faculty at Saint Mary's College of California, with about a quarter of FYW courses taught by TT faculty in literature and RCWS. As at Santa Clara, Saint Mary's faculty have autonomy over course design, although they use a shared rubric and handbook, and the program offers an annual faculty development workshop to help teachers implement its student learning outcomes in identifying assumptions, conducting textual analysis, and evaluating sources. These outcomes are derived from Saint Mary's Lasallian mission to foster awareness of economic and social injustice and to motivate the alleviation of these injustices through a quality, student-centered education that is broadly accessible to students, regardless of their means. Through syllabi analysis and individual faculty interviews, the WPA at Saint Mary's discovered that although the mission-derived learning outcomes support inclusive learning, faculty

are at times limited by programmatic structures and concerns about student perception.

The two professors interviewed as part of this heuristic process, Tipu and Sam, are female-identified, multilingual TT scholars of color who study race, gender, sexuality, and class in different literary areas. Both professors' literary expertise guides their equitable, inclusive FYW teaching. For example, Tipu and Sam ensure that a range of genders, classes, races, and sexualities are represented in classroom texts. However, they use these readings to highlight intersectionality and social complexity, rather than as a diversity showcase (see Burrows, 2016). In her interview, Sam described carefully choosing texts for their inclusivity:

> A lot of these stories [do not] just deal with race. Each story has lots of overlaps with other issues. There's a queer character, a character that's recovering from the trauma of rape, issues of gender, social class. So it's not just about race . . . which makes it accessible on many levels.

Sam and Tipu also use their literature scholarship to deepen inclusive learning through textual analysis. For example, Sam led students through rhetorical analysis and critical discourse analysis of texts by California residents and politicians discussing immigration throughout different time periods. Sam's approach is similar to Kathleen McCormick's (1994) pedagogy of juxtaposing historical and contemporary texts on the same topic to interrogate students' ideological assumptions. While Sam did not explain her teaching in terms of McCormick's pedagogy, she described consciously drawing on pre-19th century speeches in FYW to highlight ideological differences or similarities across time in the rhetoric used, connecting her scholarship in pre-19th century literature with RCWS. Like Sam, Tipu also works discussions of equity and inclusion into her analytical assignments in alignment with student learning outcomes. Tipu described an assignment in which students pick an object and discuss "who this object might belong to . . . the stereotypes and then . . . our assumptions about the audience that we are writing for, the discourse community that we are in, what are the diverse elements in each." Tipu said that she focuses

> on questions of racism because it's closer to my own work. And I don't know if this is something that I have just felt or if it's there but I feel that because of me and who I am and where I come from students are a lot more open to talking about race and sometimes what I imagine are difficult questions about race because they see me as someone who might be either an insider or a safer space to talk about it.

Tipu suspected that her students feel safe to interrogate race because she shares her own anglophone literary research and perhaps because of her embodied identity as a woman of color.

Tipu's attention to race is multifaceted, extending to assessment and course content. Saint Mary's core curriculum requires faculty to use a shared rubric, in which two of four categories are defined as follows:

- language style/syntax: "sentences are skillfully crafted and effectively varied."
- grammar/punctuation: "the essay is almost entirely free of errors . . . "

As a Hispanic-serving institution since 2013, focusing on formal correctness is especially problematic at Saint Mary's, particularly in light of Davila's (2017) argument that "constructions of SEAE as neutral, clear, widely accessible, and nonindexical" allow composition instructors to ignore the role of race in interactions with student writing (p. 168). As a scholar who interrogates racism, Tipu worked to improve equity for students by leading a classroom discussion of the rubric:

> I also explain through my grading rubric . . . what is involved in standard English and how standard means it has been made into something that is normative, what goes into that, how diversity is even worked out in the grading rubric, and then we work on questions of how to bring diversity back.

As a class, they charter an agreement on how the rubric should be used, in which students typically request that style/syntax and grammar/punctuation be weighted less when assigning grades. Tipu's rubric use distributes power in the classroom and establishes other dialects or languages as resources.

While both professors support inclusivity, they were also hindered by concerns about their identities. Despite Tipu's commitment to interrogating race and linguistic homogeneity, she reported a sense of (dis)belonging in FYW that affects her self-presentation as an instructor in her syllabi:

> I think I still see myself as someone whose authority is going to be challenged, which is why I try to put down everything. "This is what I want you to do in class. This is how I want you to conduct yourself in class." . . . So I have something to fall back on if that challenge comes, which [it] doesn't anymore. But I think I still have that vision of myself as an early grad student coming into class . . . I've taught composition for the most part as an addition to my graduate work. It's never been sort of "This is what I'm trained in fully." I always felt I'm inside and I'm outside.

The teacher persona reflected by Tipu's syllabus policies is affected by her feeling that she is not fully a part of the RCWS discipline. Sam experiences a related issue: the disciplinary connections she recognizes between literature and RCWS help her to create inclusivity in the FYW classroom. Despite these inclusive practices, Sam also needs to establish authority in ways that some scholars in RCWS would mark as less inclusive. We found, however, that our interpretation of authority is grounded in White privilege. Sam's need to establish authority is rooted in student bias she faces as a woman and professor of color: "I want them to see me as an authority figure. I think some of this has to do with being a woman of color and not knowing where these students are coming from."

These TT literature professors bring considerable resources to Saint Mary's composition program, seeking difficult classroom dialogue that promotes equity and inclusivity. The talented and diverse faculty, along with the campus mission, promote equitable writing instruction at Saint Mary's. However, the relationship among authority, disciplinarity, and student racial bias indicates that even with these faculty and the college mission, the current methods for implementing inclusion still may hinge on White privilege, calling for further research on how accessibility, just assessment, and linguistic diversity can be implemented safely by female faculty of color, especially those teaching outside their disciplinary specializations.

Since completing these document-based faculty interviews, Saint Mary's composition program has secured an internal grant to promote further pedagogical development. We now hold monthly faculty development workshops to discuss RCWS scholarship, allowing teachers—many of whom finished their pedagogical RCWS training in graduate school—to gain more contemporary knowledge of writing studies. In addition, we have hosted a speaker on threshold concepts of writing and will host another speaker on antiracist writing assessment to specifically promote equitable and inclusive practices in writing pedagogies.

From Document-Based Interviews to WPA Heuristic

These findings prompted us to reframe our interview questions as a heuristic (see figure 1) for WPAs pursuing faculty development as inquiry. Inspired by charretting—a peer engagement tool developed in the field of architecture, refined by activist urban planners, and adapted for faculty development use by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (Hutchings, Jankowski, & Schultz, 2016)—our heuristic guides faculty through peer-based inquiry to assess their instruction in terms of inclusivity, equity, and access, informing programmatic growth and (re)design.

Preparation	Faculty Development Event	Informed Planning
Participants read assigned scholarship.

Participants review their own syllabus using the scholarship as an analytic lens. | Participants work in pairs, reviewing each other's syllabi using the scholarship as an analytic lens.

Pairs interview each other, using the syllabi to anchor the conversation.

Pairs share out discoveries with the larger group. | WPA aggregates the day's discoveries as programmatic data, highlighting exemplary techniques and needs.

WPA identifies useful RCWS resources (scholarship, models, etc.) and provides access to participants.

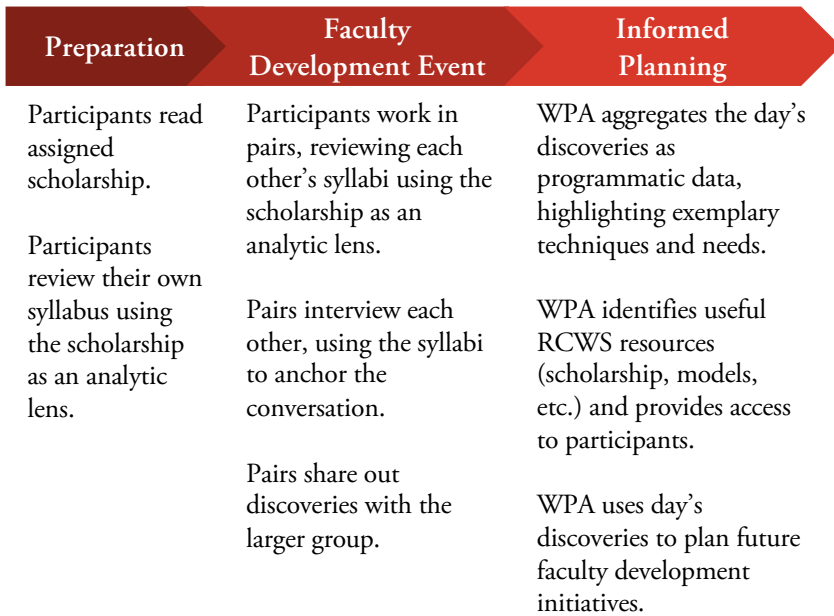WPA uses day's discoveries to plan future faculty development initiatives. |

Figure 1. The heuristic cycle.

Learning how much our faculty had to teach one another (and us), we shifted our researcher-based interviews to a peer-based inquiry guide to identify inclusive, equitable, and accessible practices, theorize/contextualize them, and share out. Figure 1 depicts how the heuristic works in practice (see appendix B for event planning suggestions). The WPA assigns two tasks to create a critical framework for the heuristic: before the event, participants are asked to (1) read a piece of foundational scholarship related to equitable and inclusive writing instruction and (2) review one of their syllabi in light of that scholarship. During the faculty development event, the WPA

- models how to operationalize that foundational scholarship by "noticing" inclusivity and equity issues in a sample syllabus;
- constitutes faculty pairs who interview each other (see figure 2);
- prompts faculty pairs to use the heuristic to analyze one another's syllabi, noting strengths and weaknesses;
- highlights exemplary techniques used across the program that surface in pair reports (to encourage their uptake by other faculty and identify colleagues who can serve as leaders in specific equitable, inclusive, and accessible pedagogies);

- offers RCWS resources to support and extend the model practices faculty discuss; and
- frames the day's discoveries in terms of future faculty development plans.

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1. Instructor background and self-perception
- What is your background and training related to writing instruction?
- How long have you been teaching writing? Where?
- What resources or experiences strengthen/challenge you most?
- How would you describe your FYW teaching persona?

2. Instructor approaches to teaching writing
- How do you teach writing? Why?
- How do you address issues of diversity?
- How do students get feedback?
- How do you assess writing?

3. Instructor's ideas about students
- Have you developed any course materials or pedagogical strategies for the FYW students in our program specifically? Which? Why?
- How receptive have students been to your teaching?
- What are the characteristics of a student who would typically thrive in your FYW course?
- How do you imagine students using your course syllabus?

4. Syllabus study
- Please narrate your syllabus contents.
- Which elements seem most essential? Why?
- What are you communicating about: 1) writing, 2) yourself as an instructor, 3) the department/ writing program, 4) the institution, 5) your beliefs about your students?

Figure 2. Interview questions for faculty pairs.

The interviews we conducted with pilot participants demonstrate the value of document-based conversations as a key part of the heuristic process that surfaces both teaching practices and beliefs. The case studies highlight how WPAs can use document-based reflective conversations to

identify and leverage the resources and knowledge bases faculty possess to offer programmatic support and encouragement for equitable, accessible, and inclusive teaching.

Conclusion

For writing program administrators, heuristics are a valuable tool for situating our local labor in research-based best practices while also accommodating flexible use by WPAS at other institutions to develop translocal practices and knowledge. In this article, we've presented a WPA heuristic that evolved from faculty interviews which sought to uncover a writing program's current practices and areas for growth around inclusive teaching. As we completed these interviews, the approach's potential emerged as a systematic WPA heuristic writing programs could use and adapt strategically. Our pilot study therefore has two interesting implications: (1) sharing a translocal heuristic that evolves from an immediate local situation can strengthen WPA research and writing programs alike and (2) the heuristic itself is a promising tool for taking action toward building more inclusive and equitable writing programs.

With both hate crimes and demands to counter systemic oppression occurring on campuses across the nation, it is crucial that we develop methods and heuristics WPAs can use to become more educated about the inclusiveness of their programs. As White, female-identified, cis-gendered WPAs working in a diverse region with diverse student populations, the need for us was especially pressing. Each of us learned something new about our program:

- **UC Davis:** Emerging writing assessment innovations are grounded not only in ongoing engagement with RCWS scholarship but in faculty self-assessment in light of that scholarship as well as their own experiences as students and language users. Faculty motivations ought to be made more visible to contextualize, amplify, and extend these kinds of innovations for the entire program.
- **Santa Clara:** Faculty are consciously developing their pedagogy to teach writing more inclusively and accessibly, but that work is self-sponsored, and therefore uneven, undersupported, and often misses opportunities to leverage relevant RCWS scholarship.
- **Saint Mary's:** Literature faculty were already implementing many equitable and inclusive practices in the FYW classroom, informed by their scholarship and disciplinary training. However, faculty's lived experiences as female-identified professors of color interacting with racially biased students limit their ability to fully integrate these prac-

tices in all areas of their teaching, raising questions about the accessibility of inclusive teaching practices to all faculty.

While these local findings are useful in guiding faculty development at our universities, the strength of the heuristic is that it allows us to look at what commonalities we share regionally. Collectively, we found that regional constraints (an RCWS graduate program desert; see Ridolfo, 2019) affected all of our programs in similar ways. Our location in Northern California makes staffing writing programs particularly difficult, with only 7 RCWS MA programs and no solely RCWS PhD programs[5] to support the state's 300+ colleges and universities.[6] As a result, we need tools that help us recognize and draw from the expertise and goals existing faculty bring while also providing responsive faculty development programming. The WIEP heuristic highlights faculty assets and WPA responsibilities. We imagine two additional next steps within own individual writing programs as a result of our case studies:

1. Use the WIEP heuristic to strategically share more RCWS research about equity and inclusivity with a wider group of faculty. One way to adapt the WIEP heuristic might be to strategically include existing participants in the facilitation team, sharing the resources they already find useful with the wider community.

2. Revise writing faculty evaluation criteria so faculty are further incentivized to articulate relationships between emerging research about inclusive and equitable writing courses and their own instructional practices.

Piloting this heuristic has offered explicit, community-informed direction for each of us as WPAs. It has also reinforced for us the value of not only creating but intentionally documenting and sharing such heuristics as embodiments of translocal WPA expertise (Serviss & Voss, 2019). We were inspired by the conversations about inclusivity and equity in RCWS that articulate our shared goals and felt compelled to operationalize them into strategic WPA practices to begin assuming our responsibilities as allies. Strategically identifying the inclusive pedagogies of our colleagues led to new appreciation both for the ongoing work/need in our programs and for the potential allies and assets in our programs that we hadn't recognized before. We also developed an even greater appetite to learn more about other WPA heuristics. We invite further work and heuristics that concretize and strengthen RCWS translocal expertise.

NOTES

1. WIEP is a multi-campus research study of writing program designs and practices focused on identifying best practices for diversity learning, equitable practices, and inclusivity to create more just writing programming.

2. Data drawn from the National Center for Educational Statistics and institutional data.

3. Approved by the University of California, Davis IRB under protocol #1204065-1; the Santa Clara University IRB under protocol #18-04-1091, and Saint Mary's College of California IRB under protocol #AY201718114.

4. Selected examples from the "College 101" section of Josh's FYW syllabus, titled "Seven Suggestions Toward Earning an A in Dr. [Josh]'s Class":

> Realize that there are only two options when you enter into a discourse: you can elevate the level of discourse, or you can drag it down. He who is responsible for the later [sic] fails to get the A. Think about this when you start to rant in an essay. . . .

> Any request for an assignment extension must be accompanied by a print-out of your current course load. Those who are overloading, and thus find themselves unable to meet my deadlines, are unlikely to gain my sympathies. The A is reserved for the student who only takes the number of courses in which she can excel. . . .

> It annoys me, when I peruse a stack of analytical essays, to have to guess as to what was the author's thesis. The best way to avoid becoming the source of such annoyance is to compose an actual thesis statement. You will help me determine which of your sentences serves as a thesis statement by using the exact phrasing, "In this paper, I will argue . . . " If such wording seems too bold for your personal usage, you're probably not ready for the A. . . .

5. There are 5 PhD programs in California with an RCWS designation, but none whose coursework is all or mostly in the field or which are designed as primarily RCWS degrees. Students who want to professionalize further in RCWS need to seek out additional opportunities as their PhD is named in another discipline (education, etc.).

6. This figure reflects the number of California 2- and 4-year higher ed institutions accredited in 2020 by the Accrediting Commission for Schools' Western Association of Schools and Colleges (see Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and WASC Senior College and University Commission).

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Appendix A: Pilot Heuristic

1. Basic demographic info:
   a. How long and in what capacity have you taught writing?
   b. What is your training in writing instruction?
2. How do you teach writing in this course? Why do you teach writing that way?
3. What are your feedback and assessment strategies?
4. How do you address issues of diversity and inclusivity in your writing classes?
   a. Connections to your research?
   b. Changes based on our students/institution?
   c. Student receptivity?
   d. Effects of your teaching persona?
5. What are the essential components of a syllabus in a writing course? Why?
6. Talk me through your syllabus. Particular follow-up syllabi topics include:
   a. Past experiences shaping syllabus
   b. Self-construction as instructor
   c. Representation of university/department/course
   d. Construction and characteristics of typical student who would thrive
   e. Accessibility options
   f. Student use of the syllabus
7. How is the syllabus integrated, initially and throughout term?

Appendix B: Refined Document-Based Interview Heuristic

Before Workshop	Interview Activity Procedures

Before Workshop

1. Select a recent writing syllabus to study.
2. Read your own syllabus.
3. Mark content related to inclusivity and equity in relationship to:
   a. Assigned readings
   b. Writing paradigms
   c. Transparent expectations
   d. Assessment methods
   e. Construction of instructor, students, and institution

Interview Activity Procedures

1. Read your peer's syllabus. Mark inclusivity and equity content.
2. Conduct 20-minute interviews of each other (see peer interview questions below).
3. Prepare to share information with the entire workshop.
4. Facilitator tracks time, announces time, and suggests 5-minute reflective writing before breaking.
5. Break
6. Facilitator asks for discoveries from participants.
7. Facilitator aggregates responses into asset/need lists visible to all participants.
8. Facilitator leads discussion about prioritizing and using results for faculty development.