Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity

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Chapter 1

Engaged Inclusivity: What Learning Enhanced is all about

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About the Author

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Abstract

Chapter 1 opens with a brief glimpse of Studio life because Western Washington University’s Hacherl Research & Writing Studio has been the testing grounds for the pedagogical innovations we suggest in this volume. While these innovations were initially motivated by increasing learning, we also noticed that they offered promising equity-based practices for forwarding engaged inclusivity. We explain our rationale for the approaches suggested by our core chapters on studio-based learning, integrated literacies, space and place, assessment, and the larger context of higher education. We also explain why we wrote the volume and why we made the publishing choices we did. The readers’ guide explains how chapters follow a pattern of presenting disciplinary and cross-disciplinary theory, identifying pedagogical and equity gaps, and suggesting principles for application. Interchapters, on the other hand, are authored by practitioners who offer a more boots-on-the-ground approach to translating philosophy and principle into practice. To set up the rest of the volume, we offer definitions of several key terms used throughout, and we provide chapter and interchapter summaries to guide readers who may choose a non-linear approach to reading.

Keywords: Signature pedagogies, studio-based learning, integrated academic literacies, improving learning, engaged inclusivity, equity practices
In the fall of 2015, Western Washington University’s Writing Center and Western Libraries’ Research Consultation Services merged to form the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. Located on the main floor of Western Libraries, the Studio caught on with students quickly; we typically enjoy more than 70,000 in-person visits a year.

About two-thirds of the visitors work alone, another third work in groups, and about 15% consult with our staff. It’s a busy place—at any given hour, 38 visitors are studying with us, although some don’t initially know they’re in the Studio. Because we’re boundary-less (no walls, no doors, no barriers), many accidental tourists stop by just because they’re attracted to our many affordances, including a choice of configurable furniture and of purpose-based zones: living room, collaborative area, focus area (includes semi-private pods and small rooms), and the classroom. Accidental or intentional, visitors choose a spot when they enter, and as they settle, a staff member comes to greet them, to explain how the space/consulting works, and to leave them a table tent with the option of summoning a staff member. Visitors usually stay, sometimes for hours. Staff periodically check on them, leaving them be when they are learning successfully on their own and offering coaching when they are stuck. Our average micro-consultation lasts around 13 minutes, although we’re likely to revisit multiple times as needed; in other words, we practice the just-in-time, serial micro-consulting consistent with studio-based learning. While we consult about most anything learning oriented, we’re most intentional about coaching research, reading, and writing.

1 Note that the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic (March 2020-present) suspended face-to-face instruction. Unless noted, statistics, descriptions, and assessments all reflect pre-pandemic operations.
2 Most, but not all, visitors are students.
3 Accidental tourists is our term for visitors who are initially unaware they are in the Studio.
4 Micro-consulting is our term for sequenced, short sessions focused on scaffolding a strategy to match a visitor’s incremental goal. On average, visits comprise 2-3 micro-consultations, each focused on emerging mini goals.
three highly interconnected academic literacies\textsuperscript{5}. It is these two signature pedagogies\textsuperscript{6}—studio-based learning and integrated literacies—that visitors find most distinctive about our Studio.

In developing the Hacherl Studio’s signature pedagogies, we found little guidance in our home disciplines\textsuperscript{7}. For instance, although libraries have led parallel initiatives like information or learning commons and offer much scholarship on space design, library scholars largely omit studio pedagogy in teaching information literacy. Writing studies and writing center scholars write more of pedagogical matters, but the few pieces on studio pedagogy too often use space as a surrogate for pedagogy, a conflation that leads to the omission of explicitly articulated studio-based learning (SBL) principles and practices. Overall, in library information studies (LIS), writing studies (WS), and writing center studies (WCS), studio pedagogies and practices receive scant attention, and when they are mentioned, discussions are space-focused and lore-based, unsupported by replicable, aggregable, and data-supported (RAD)\textsuperscript{8} research linking pedagogical practices with learning—or with equity.

Happily, our home disciplines do a much better job of presenting the theoretical underpinnings of integrated academic literacies, although they stop short of presenting an overarching approach or connecting that approach with engaged inclusivity. LIS and WCS both pursue threads connecting writing and research; WCS and WS pursue

\textsuperscript{5} In fall 2020, we added speaking and listening to the Studio’s literacy ecosystem.
\textsuperscript{6} A signature pedagogy represents a fundamental style of teaching in a discipline, profession, or area of study (Shulman, 2005).
\textsuperscript{7} We refer to library information studies (LIS), writing studies (WS), and writing center studies (WCS) as our home disciplines throughout this volume.
\textsuperscript{8} See Richard Haswell’s (2005) call for more RAD research in composition studies, for example.
threads connecting writing and reading. But even with numerous well-articulated rationales for abandoning silos in favor of a merged support approach, our home disciplines present little beyond how-we-do-it-here, ad hoc collaborations that stop well short of articulating principles and practices for integration. In short, given our home disciplines’ unfamiliarity with cross-disciplinary pedagogies, contentment with lore-based practices, bias toward space, and entrenched silos, practices in our home disciplines remain highly traditional, white-normed, and fossilized. And yet, in planning the Hacherl Studio, we were convinced students needed us to innovate for the sake of increasing learning and engaged inclusivity. Others heard of our innovations, and to date, some 15-20 institutions have consulted our model. When visiting librarians and writing center professionals asked us to point them to supporting literature, we could only haw and hem. To fill that gap, we now offer this volume as one place to start.

**What’s Engaged Inclusivity and Why does it Matter?**

As a privileged white educator, I am super nervous to write about engaged inclusivity. Little in my upbringing, my schooling, or, sadly, most of my professional development furthers my cultural competence. Worse, my professional evaluations over a 30-some year career have never required accountability for growth as an equity practitioner. That’s why I’ve ended up as a 60-something educator on the eve of retirement finally owning my own whiteliness. I have spent too many years ignoring race, and I’m not qualified to address it.

As an anthropologist, I understand the value of both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives on culture, and I understand the power of exposing bias. As a student, I wrote an ethnography of a bingo hall,

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9 For a summary of my writing-centered discontents, see [Interchapter 1A: A Critique of Pure Writing Center](#).

10 Whereas whiteness is a skin color, race scholar Dr. Frances Condon defines whiteliness as a racialized epistemology or way of being in the world (as cited in D.-J. Kim & Olson, 2013, p. 1).
discovering along the way that I really loathe bingo. My professors assured me my perspective was valid, that disclosing my bias allowed readers to triangulate with other perspectives, including some from bingo appreciators. Although I won’t speak for all authors, be aware that all my writings carry a whitely bias. I am racially naïve, I have benefitted from white privilege, and I have perpetuated racist systems. It’s more than cheeky for me to talk about engaged inclusivity and equity practice from this position of privilege.

But too many with whitely identities have kept our mouths shut about appalling injustices. Equity practices take all of us. That’s why I am emboldened by the invitation from three gracious and collaborative scholars, Brown McNair, Bensimon, and Malcom-Piqueux, to claim agency as a “first-generation equity practitioner” (personal communication from Gray to Bensimon, as cited in Brown McNair et al., 2020, p. 107). Rather than mocking my fumbling equity attempts, they generously invite me and other novices to join them in becoming equity practitioners. And so, I will speak both humbly and bravely, humbly cautioning readers to enlist whiteliness mitigation strategies as they read, and bravely calling out the white supremacy themes in our home disciplines and pedagogical practices.

—Reflections from Roberta, a novice equity practitioner

It is with trepidation that I address the bold claim we’ve embedded in our title, that is, that studio practices foster engaged inclusivity by remediating white-normed, hegemonic educational practices. Before I forward the claim, I need to first engage the terminology. When Professor James Gray coined the term “first-generation equity practitioner” (as cited in Brown McNair et al., 2020, p. 107), Gray borrowed the first-generation metaphor in referring to practitioners like me who are new to equity-based practices. In the same way first-gen college students often lack cultural capital to
navigate the academy, first-gen equity practitioners similarly lack grounding in cultural competence. I cannot call on my education, experience, or enculturation to help me understand how whiteliness shapes my educational philosophies and pedagogical practices, because “[p]ractitioners in higher education are mostly white and have not been given the opportunity to become educated or trained to be agents of racial equity” (Brown McNair et al., 2020, p. 108). As a new equity practitioner, I am actively remediating these gaps, but my process is flawed, and slow, and effortful—and regrettably without accountability\(^\text{11}\). As Brown McNair et al. note, “We have observed that even among practitioners and leaders genuinely interested in achieving equity, they do and say things that are characteristic of ‘equity novices’” (2020, p. 108). Despite my bumbling efforts, Brown McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piqueux extend novices like me an invitation, saying “[o]ur conception of first-generation equity practitioners represents a quest for a solution to racial inequity that empowers professionals to remake their practices” (2020, p. 117). It’s this invitation to remake practices that I gladly accept in exploring ways to move academic support programs away from oppressive and white supremacist practices toward equity-minded ones.

Novice status established, I rely on Brown McNair et al. for culturally competent terminology. \textit{Inclusive success} or \textit{inclusive excellence} have become buzzwords in higher education institutions (HEIs), most of whom now articulate goals around inclusion. The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) acknowledges the equity agenda while urging HEIs to move from an “equity talk to an equity walk” in building

\(^{11}\) Note how the first-gen metaphor breaks down: I have the option to avoid remediating white privilege without sanction whereas first-gen students must ameliorate knowledge/skills gaps or they will not succeed.
equity-minded campus culture (Brown McNair et al., 2020). On behalf of the AAC&U and the Center for Urban Education, Brown McNair, Bensimon, and Malcom-Piqueux critique inclusion as hegemonic in that it centers privileged academics who virtuously extend an invitation to those from identities who became marginal only because we first excluded them. Summarizing Dr. Gail Christopher, associated with AAC&U’s Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Centers, Brown McNair et al. call for reflectively examining the inclusive excellence terminology as

a representation of privilege and hierarchy because it implies that there is a group who (i) has the power to control access to excellence by deciding who is included, (ii) has ownership of what defines excellence, and (iii) requires that others must be invited to be part of this group in order to achieve excellence (2020, p. 5).

Instead, both AAC&U and Brown McNair et al. propose using the term engaged inclusivity to indicate shared ownership and agency around creating equity, thereby “transform[ing] the dialogue on inclusion from general acceptance and tolerance of difference to active institutional transformation, based on the belief that the richness of our culture is because of our diversity and a recognition of our common humanity” (AAC&U, 2019; Brown McNair et al., 2020). We use engaged inclusivity throughout this volume to signal an intentional shift away from the privileged extending inclusion magnanimously to minoritized voices and toward a perspective of collegiality in co-creating engaged inclusivity structures and practices.

Although most practitioners hold inclusive ideals, academic support programs were established as mechanisms of inclusion built on the premise that our expertise would create pathways to include the underserved in academic success. Writing centers,
libraries, and indeed many academic support units are no strangers to privilege, and the
fact that most aren’t as invitational across identities as they claim is well-investigated by
scholars in our home disciplines. Yet there is evidence to suggest that students who most
need these pathways aren’t necessarily benefitting from our traditional pedagogies,
most of which resonate with students who already have those resources. Empirical
research notes that writing centers draw students from underserved populations, even
though our literature encourages us to reject an identity of remediation. For instance,
noting that retaining our institutional privilege relies on denying a remedial mission,
Temple University’s Lori Salem (2016) confirms in her research that the underserved
attend but bemoans in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* interview that writing centers
have not built a pedagogy that actually serves [the underserved]. We should be a
laboratory for understanding the kinds of pedagogies that would work for these
students. Instead we’re busily denying that they’re there, and then applying
pedagogies that work really well for privileged students. That’s not helpful
(Jacobs, 2018).

There is plenty of evidence indicating that writing centers perpetuate fault lines around
minoritized identities, including race (Condon & Young, 2017; Diab et al., 2013; García,
2017; Green, 2016; Green & Condon, 2020; Grimm, 2011; Haltiwanger Morrison &
Nanton, 2019), sexual orientation (Denny, 2010a, 2010b; Simpkins, n.d.), language
identity (Burrows, 2016; Green, 2016; Greenfield, 2011), and socioeconomic class
(Denny et al., 2018; Salem, 2016). Salem (2016), for instance, deconstructs students’ so-
called free choice to use writing centers, asserting that students are enculturated to visit
or avoid writing centers based on pre-admission socio-cultural factors, and Denny,
Nordlof, and Salem (2018) offer empirical evidence that traditional writing center pedagogies fall short, at least for working-class students. Much, too, has been said about the regulatory role of writing centers in enforcing academic standards around language imperialism (Greenfield, 2011; Grimm, 2011), even as descriptive linguists document many varieties of world Englishes and asserts no moral advantage to any variety or dialect (Porto, 2020). Most alarming are the reasoned assertions that racism and surrogates such as language correctness provide the raison d’être of writing centers (Grimm, 2011; Lockett, 2019). If the distasteful notion of helping doesn’t immediately communicate perpetuating a system of advantage at least partly based on race (Grimm, 2011), then at least we should acknowledge our standard pedagogies strongly map to values of white supremacy culture, including perfectionism, individualism, productivity, and paternalism (Jones & Okun, 2001). For instance, traditional pedagogies like the perfectionistic “making better writers” (North, 1984), the individualistic “tutoring one-to-one” (Harris, 1986), and the productively paternalistic “minimalist tutoring” (Brooks, 1991) are all white-normed, whereas anti-racist, anti-colonial pedagogies like rhetorically negotiating world Englishes and multiple dialects, critiquing notions of correctness, learning in community, and practicing challenge to micro-aggressions are still rare in WCS scholarship (Grimm, 2011). In sum, despite consistent appeals for redressing them, racist and imperialist pedagogies persist in writing centers.

Libraries, too, are beginning to recognize the hegemony built into librarianship, both in the discipline and its practices. According to April Hathcock (2015), “[w]hiteness has permeated every aspect of librarianship, extending even to the initiatives we commit to increasing diversity.” Despite efforts to diversify, recent demographic data released by
the American Library Association suggests that 86.7% of librarians identify as white, no significant improvement over 2014 data (ALA Office of Research and Statistics et al., 2017). Critical librarianship through critlib.org has been established for some ten years, but BIPOC librarian Jennifer Ferretti (2020) suggests that the movement has been largely performative, given what Bourg (2014) calls the “unbearable whiteness of librarianship.” In the words of librarian Eino Sierpe, “[T]he library profession has been remarkably successful in nurturing an unassailable public image of virtuous liberal benevolence and near mythical devotion to the highest ideals of freedom, individual rights, and democracy,” an unearned reputation that comes “[d]espite strong and persistent links to white supremacy and a well-established record excluding minorities from its ranks” (2019, p. 1). These are tough words. If there’s an increasing acknowledgement of structural racism embedded in libraries, LIS scholars have been slower to acknowledge oppressive pedagogies. Even more than writing center practitioners (often peers), librarians (often faculty) operate from behind imposing help desks from a service model that may not actually teach students the kinds of search strategies professionals use to locate scholarship most often written in correct academic language by and for other white scholars of privilege.

Considered in this volume as one of our home disciplines, writing studio scholarship has begun to explore the power of studio practices to create institutional change (Chandler & Sutton, 2018). Since studio pedagogy emerged in the composition classroom in response to the defunding of developmental English courses populated almost exclusively by minoritized students, practitioners adopted this pedagogy for the express purpose of democratizing access to literacy and literacy processes (Grego &
Thompson, 2008). Writing studios counter white supremacy practices in several ways. Studio pedagogy avoids individualism; instead, it features learning in community. Stable communities of students across identities gather regularly to support growth not just in literacy processes but also in academic success. Although teachers drop in and out of these groups as informants, instructors are familiar with the curriculum but deliberately lack grading authority over the groups they facilitate. Students also set the agenda in these conversations, meaning that they are less “scripted” than instructor-student or tutor-student dialogues, and students are authorized to propose “counterscripts” (Chandler & Sutton, 2018, pp. 12–13). Studio pedagogy also avoids perfectionism by normalizing recursive practice, and it minimizes paternalism by authorizing students to reject practices that aren’t working and select those that are. These equity practices may be small, but they have large consequences for both students and institutions. Despite the fact that “writing studios have been created to solve institutional problems, usually on short notice and with limited funding” (Chandler & Sutton, 2018, p. 16), WS scholars recently published a volume of admittedly mostly hero stories around the power of studios to drive institutional and structural change. It’s a start.

But change has been far too slow in coming. Now 30 years invested in the academy, I am continually dismayed by how little the institution has moved along the continuum of equity. Although there is more collective good will around embracing equity as a goal, we are still falling short in developing practices that make the goal a reality. Many factors likely contribute to this overall failure. Some lack will: privilege is indeed comfortable and enjoyable. Some lack knowledge: equity practices still lack
evidence-based empirical research. Some lack agency: what can a white first-gen equity practitioner say to the matter? Some lack know-how: how does one even begin unraveling a problem generations in the making? I confess to lacking all: will, knowledge, agency, and know-how. Yet to move from an equity talk to an equity walk takes all of us, and I’m encouraged by mentors like Brown McNair et al. (2020) that first-gen equity practitioners like me can be accomplices in creating equity. But before you start thinking we developed the Studio intentionally because we desired to undo hegemony, let me confess it was mostly the other way around. Innovating and observing students’ responses to our innovations prompted equity-minded hindsight about just how oppressive our previous practices were. It’s only in contrasting visitors’ behavioral differences past and present that we truly understand the degree to which our traditional pedagogies were inclusive to those who already enjoyed privilege. These gradual realizations have created a gathering snowball of intentionality around engaging our learning community in equity practices.

Throughout this volume, we focus on do-able acts toward larger change goals, in this case, toward practices that promote engaged inclusivity. We’ve done this by decentering institutional structure, traditional silos, and lore-based practices that may never have served students well. Our do-able acts include two new signature pedagogies, an inquiry-and-improvement approach to assessment, and the willingness to consolidate programs to increase learning and reduce costs to students. Let me break it down. In Chapter 2 on studio-based learning, we see how SBL authorizes and equips students to self-regulate their learning rather than rely on non-directive questioning (WCS) or telling (LIS), neither of which scaffolded, well, much of any learning. In
Chapter 3 on integrated literacies, we see how a literacy ecology authorizes students to join the scholarly conversation and creates more transparent and seamless access to literacy growth. By treating literacies like the snarly mess they are, we avoid making students figure out what to call the problem before they decide which service desk to consult. In Chapter 4 on space and place, we show how combining cultural competence with invitational education can create a learning community, one that is not just home to staff but one that centers belonging across identities. As members of that community, staff listen to what students across identities need, respond in ways they deem helpful, recognize them as experts in the student experience, and authorize them to teach and learn with us. In Chapter 5 on assessment, we decenter evaluating to prove we’re good in favor of identifying where we can be better by welcoming traditionally excluded voices as co-inquirers rather than as objects of assessment. In Chapter 6 on sociopolitical context of higher education, we argue that even the most uncomfortable of programmatic consolidations should be seen as equity opportunities to increase learning while doing our part to keep the cost of education as accessible as possible to as many identity groups as possible. Taken together, this volume unapologetically urges a qualitative departure from the status quo, offering concrete, do-able acts toward engaged inclusivity as an aspired destination. Acknowledging retrospectively that our traditional pedagogies reify race, class, and other power differentials, we push forward with new equity practices that, while imperfect and fledgling, at least move the needle toward the kind of engaged inclusivity we hope for.
Volume Overview

The volume features two types of writing in chapters and interchapters. Traditional chapters offer a tour of LIS, WS, and WCS literature along with cross-disciplinary literature to understand the philosophy and theory underlying each chapter’s theme. Chapters culminate with implementation principles that can be universally applied or adapted across institutional contexts. What readers won’t find much of in these chapters are practices specific to the Hacherl Studio. Since abstract principles may not satisfy readers’ curiosities about how those principles can be applied, we illuminate some of our most promising practices in interchapters. Interchapters typically begin with a representative example of a particular learning issue, a pattern of staff-visitor exchanges, or an unresolved administrative dilemma; practitioners then demonstrate how they address the challenge using studio philosophy. Where chapters provide theoretical rationale, interchapters provide practitioner expertise on translating theory into lived experience. In other words, practitioners keep it real. We hope by balancing philosophy, theoretical principles, and pedagogical practices, readers will understand how our innovations can enhance equity-based learning and will envision how to implement some of these practices in their own programs, studio or otherwise.

Thematic Overview

Foundations: Chapter 1, Interchapters 1A and 1B

In Chapter 1, “Engaged Inclusivity: What Learning Enhanced is all about,” I explain the vision for equity-based pedagogies and outline the ways our home disciplines remain white-normed and oppressive in our institutional structures, theoretical approaches, and daily practices. Since implementing the innovations we outline in this volume, we more clearly see the extent to which our prior approaches...
poorly served our institutions, our programs, and our learners across identities. In addition to defining many of our terms, Chapter 1 also provides this overview of the entire content, which we hope will act as a touchstone against the potential confusion of reading non-linearly. If ever you get lost in the weeds, we invite you back to this chapter for wayfinding. In Interchapter 1A, “A Critique of Pure Writing Center,” I reflect on how my disgruntlement with orthodox, lore-based writing center practices created enough dissonance to spur sweeping changes to thinking I’d held for decades. (I’m more gruntled now, thank you!) So that readers can trace cause and effect, if you will, I also tie my dissonance to some of the Hacherl Studio’s corresponding innovations. In Interchapter 1B, “Reading Backwards,” Wyatt Heimbichner Goebel, our biologist-poet alumnus, offers a preview for Chapter 2 through one of the most compelling poems I’ve ever read about studio-based micro-consulting. Okay, it’s the only poem I’ve ever read on this topic, but you’ll see just how well it captures the ethos of studio-based learning.

**Studio-based Learning: Chapter 2, Interchapters 2A, 2B, and 2C**

Chapter 2, “Studio-based Learning Pedagogy and Practices,” explains the Hacherl Studio’s first signature pedagogy, and it outlines the principles that guide our corresponding practices, including micro-consulting. This chapter traces the conceptual history of studio-based learning (SBL) (Hetland et al., 2013; Schön, 1985) in educational theories such as problem-based learning (Barrows, 1986), scaffolding (Nordlof, 2014), and transfer of learning (Haskell, 2001). We also show how these theories connect with the kind of learning studios support: learning about, learning how, and learning to become (Crowther, 2013, p. 20). In the companion interchapters, practitioners unpack three practices we find essential to successfully implementing SBL: leaving, strategies,
and agency. In his prescient piece Interchapter 2A, “The Art of Leaving,” Eric Bachmeier offers a time-tested practice he developed some 20 years ago but that we only fully adopted in the Studio some 15 years later. Writing at a time when our writing center assistants felt obliged to sit with visitors for 50-minute appointments, Eric urged (horrors!) benevolent abandonment. For those wondering what visitors do while we’re ignoring them, read Interchapter 2B, “Channeling Dr. Frankenstein: Personalizing Strategies.” Leah Robinson offers an approach to tailoring process strategies based on visitors’ individual strengths and goals. Her work illuminates SBL’s emphasis on active learning, on scaffolding process-based strategies, and on creating opportunities for agency and metacognition. And finally in Interchapter 2C, “The ‘No Stakes Agenda’: A Unique Approach to Equity.” Rachel Myers, student-coordinator-turned-alumna, suggests an agenda-setting practice that grants visitors agency and works to ensure we avoid sending not-your-place messages to visitors of all identities.

**Academic Literacies: Chapter 3, Interchapter 3A**

In Chapter 3, “Academic Literacies as Ecology,” we argue that viewing academic literacies as a single ecology is a conceptual threshold that contentedly siloed library, writing, and writing center professionals need to apprehend. This chapter provides a rationale for re-integrating research, reading, and writing, literacies that neuroscientists and literacy scholars (see for example Baer, 2016; D’Angelo et al., 2016; McClure, 2016) tell us should never have been separated in the first place. This chapter also presents principled advice for ways currently siloed professionals can leverage incremental, do-able acts in making change, in accessing institutional resources, and in increasing

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12 *Threshold concepts* are conceptual gateways to new ways of thinking about a domain (Meyer & Land, 2003).

**Placemaking: Chapter 4, Interchapters 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D**

Chapter 4, “Placemaking through Learner-based Design,” explains the spatial contexts that facilitate learner-based pedagogies. Although space is not pedagogically deterministic, there is increasing evidence that *built environments*\(^\text{13}\) (Monahan, 2002) send implicit rhetorical messages about the pedagogies and behaviors institutions value. This chapter\(^\text{14}\) not only engages the philosophy of *space* (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991), *place* (Comber, 2016; Council on Library and Information Resources, 2005; Freeman, 2005), *thirdspace* (Soja, 1996), and *non-place* (Augé, 1995), it also engages how the byproducts of colonialism embedded in built space send dangerously harmful messages of no-place-for-you-and-your-kind (García, 2017). In the principles section, we suggest ways that *invitational education* (Purkey & Novak, 2015) practices can be augmented to create a method for learner-based anti-colonial design. In Interchapter 4A, “Make Space,” Wyatt Heimbichner Goebel returns in poetry formatted to represent the Hacherl Studio space. In Interchapter 4B, “Welcome to Your Place: The Inclusive Power of Greetings,” former student coordinator and new alumna Kellyn Wolden demonstrates the pedagogy of greetings, showing their power to invite and engage our visitors in co-ownership and in co-creating inclusivity. In Interchapter 4C, “From Black Hole to Mission Control: Study Space Exploration,” current student coordinator Evangeline

\(^{13}\) The *built environment* or *built space* refers to the collective man-made structures, features, and facilities in which people live and work (see for example Monahan, 2002).

\(^{14}\) Because there are so many spatial terms to define, we refer readers directly to Chapter 4.
Schmitt proposes ways of increasing students’ agency over their study environments, both physical and virtual. Finally, Pippa Hemsley, the Studio’s recent Assistant Director, challenges one-dimensional online approaches with an antidote that’s visionary in education but commonplace in the virtual world. In Interchapter 4D, “Unconstrained by Space and Time: Creating a Choice-Rich Virtual Studio,” Hemsley’s embedded videos demonstrate existing tools for active learning, and her text proposes a process for choosing and implementing those tools to create learner-based virtual places pedagogically congruent with physical ones.

**Assessment: Chapter 5, Interchapter 5A**

Chapter 5, “Using Assessment to Prompt Innovation,” begins by distinguishing *evaluation* from *assessment*\(^\text{15}\) and overviews the larger higher education institution (HEI) assessment landscape. Arguing that both HEIs and academic support programs attend disproportionately to proof of value, I further argue we are missing the opportunity to stay curious about how to improve equity-based teaching and learning by counter-balancing the proof agenda with an *improve* agenda. To model our own improvement efforts, we show how inquiry-based assessment helped the Hacherl Studio understand more about what visitors learned, what practices prompted that learning, what learning opportunities our staff missed, and how we innovated in response. In typical fashion, the chapter closes with assessment principles to guide professionals in recursively building an incremental assessment portfolio. In Interchapter 5A, “Holding Space in Consultations,” student-coordinator-turned-alumna Ally Duvall uses her

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\(^{15}\) In this volume, *evaluation* indicates a summative proof of value whereas *assessment* identifies evidence of learning, gaps in learning, and improvements to address the gaps.
psychology expertise to show how practitioners can pursue different learning outcomes through one method: *holding space*\(^{16}\). Using her choose-your-own-adventure format, practitioners can manipulate the same scenario in pursuit of different outcomes. Informative, and good fun!

**Value: Chapter 6, Interchapter 6A, Interchapter 6B**

In *Chapter 6, “Value Added: Mergers to Increase Learning,”* I join forces with Sarah McDaniel, former Director of Teaching & Learning, to explain how the economic climate for HEIs affects academic support programs, arguing that unit-level collaborations are increasingly essential both for fiscal responsibility and for student success (Barr & McClellan, 2018; Blumenstyk, 2014; Salem, 2014). Although gloomy sociopolitical trends precede the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, we also address how the pandemic economy amplifies them. Because scholarship in our home disciplines seems biased toward resisting consolidations rather than pro-actively negotiating them, we suggest collaborative practices for anticipating and resolving structural conflict. In *Interchapter 6A, “Pandemacademia: Sustaining Programs in Times of Crisis,”* I discuss how post-pandemic economic inevitabilities (what I’m calling *pandemacademia*) render futile the zero-sum, defend-our-borders approach currently common among writing center professionals. I show that the autonomy I previously cherished poorly served both our program and students, and I explain how a merged identity conserved institutional resources\(^{17}\) while garnering more program security and improved student learning. In response to many questions from those investigating studios, I added a

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\(^{16}\) *Holding space* means putting your needs and opinions aside in favor of allowing someone to just be (J. Kim, 2019).

\(^{17}\) In our case, the Studio’s innovative approach generated over $500,000 in private donations.
practices-based Interchapter 6B, “Just the FAQs: What Enquirers Ask about Studio Logistics.” I’m hoping this chapter satisfies reader curiosity about logistical issues such as staff development, mixed-role staffing, online practices, and change leadership.

**Advice for Readers**

In keeping with our engaged inclusivity ethos, we decided to publish open access on Western Libraries’ digital repository Western CEDAR. The format has many advantages for you as readers; you can choose your level of engagement with theory, you can choose topics of interest, or you can assign pieces for staff development—all for one low price: free. The format has some advantages on the publishing end as well; we can revise chapters as our thinking evolves, new practitioners can contribute as they have ideas, and we can work with beloved in-house colleagues instead of distant publishers. Of course, there are a few disadvantages, too. The easiest to overcome is the lack of a linear arc as readers dip in and out. We’ve made efforts to eliminate repetition while ensuring enough context for each piece to stand on its own, and we have taken pains to define most of our terminology in this introduction as well as in each chapter. However, non-chronological readers may encounter concepts for which the context is elsewhere, and chronological readers may tire of redundancy. *Mea culpa.*

Readers may also want to know that we took an anti-imperialistic approach to The Rules. We basically adhere to the Standard American Academic English (SAAE) prescriptive conventions of grammar, punctuation, and APA and Word formatting. But we did not pursue perfection because we are uncomfortable with twin roots of language

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18 It’s for this reason each chapter and interchapter carries discrete pagination.
19 I, Roberta, invested way too much time trying to fix the very large gaps at the end of some pages. When I fixed that problem, it created others. Forgive me.
imperialism and white supremacy culture (Jones & Okun, 2001). We take courage from the prestigiously published and oft-cited article by Joseph M. Williams (1981), who revealed in a surprise ending that he deliberately inserted about 100 errors, most of which went completely unnoticed by other composition scholars. Our errors are admittedly less intentional, but we resisted the urge to become “Ms. Fidditch and Mr. Flutesnoot armed with sharpened red pencils,” recognizing along with Connors and Lunsford (1988, p. 395) that compositionists have needlessly suffered the tension between affectively supporting student writers with one breath and rooting out all grammatical evil with the other. In research comparing the frequency of error in student papers from the 1930’s and from the 1980’s (spoiler: no change), they chronicle much historical angst over those 50 years; and it’s still with us today. We’re over it. We hope you are too.

We also took an anti-colonial approach to peer review. With no interest in the commodification of knowledge, we were not interested in pursuing an elusive seal of approval associated with blind review. Instead, we pursued a dialogic and relational approach to “answerability,” which Leigh Patel in Decolonizing Academic Research defines as “responsibilities as speakers, listeners, and those responsibilities include stewardship of ideas and learning, ownership” (2015, p. 74). Patel (2015, pp. 74–82) goes on to suggest that scholars and their work must be answerable to learning (transformative learning, not schooling), knowledge (knowledge about learning, not as commodity), and context (challenging oppressions, not reifying them). In pursuing our

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20 Because no author/editor is eligible, no scholarship in this volume counts toward tenure and promotion. Tenure track faculty whose proposals were accepted for inclusion ultimately chose to author for other publications with traditionally accepted metrics. The academy has a long way to go to “decolonize” research.
own standards of answerability, we solicited substantive feedback and dialogue on each chapter from knowledgeable colleagues who are unapologetically our friends. We feel fortunate to have had their generous input, and all reviewing scholars are acknowledged in the chapters they reviewed. But our answerability process continues because we are also accountable to you as readers. If you find that we have fallen short in our responsibility to learning, knowledge, and context, we invite ongoing dialogue. Please feel free to send us your thoughts using the email contact listed on each chapter’s title page.

Acknowledgments/Answerability
Many thanks to co-editor Pippa Hemsley for her response to an earlier draft; though she also claims a whitely identity, she is a more seasoned equity practitioner who has greatly challenged my growth. I wanted to ask BIPOC colleagues for reader response, but I felt uncomfortable adding to their undue burden in anti-racism work. Instead, I invite readers across identities to participate voluntarily this chapter’s answerability. Thank you.
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Interchapter 1A
“A Critique of Pure Writing Center”: The Impetus for Innovation

Roberta D. Kjesrud, Western Washington University

About the Author

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about his piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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https://cedar.wwu.edu/learning_enhanced/21

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Don’t get me wrong: most of what I’ve learned about teaching and learning I’ve learned in writing centers. But over some 30 years as peer tutor, staff, and director, I have also developed some sense we could do better. I’ve grown suspicious of a lore-based set of pedagogical practices benchmarked some 40 years ago—there’s so much more we now know about how the brain works, how learning works, how students have changed, and how inequities persist. After twenty years of practicing the same pedagogies, I got restless. Gaps bothered me that I didn’t know how to fix it. Eventually this dissonance led to our new studio and its signature pedagogies. But we wouldn’t have innovated at all if we hadn’t articulated the gaps, been open enough to investigate them, and taken action to improve based on information writers offered, some of it hard to hear. And so, with love, I offer my critique of pure writing center¹ paired with the innovations they prompted for the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio.

1. Although stand-alone writing centers are held as ideal, curricular and resource gaps disproportionally affect them.

Resource gaps affected our former Writing Center’s reach in ways that good pedagogy couldn’t fix. For instance, two weeks before the start of fall classes one year, our then-Provost called to arrange a visit. I was honored. I gushed about our program; he and his team prodded every corner of our space. I didn’t realize his visit wasn’t about us until I got a call that afternoon: he wanted our suite to house a new dean. We had ten days to move. Move where? Cue crickets. After daily nagging, I was offered a choice between a postage-stamp-sized room in a daytime-only building for administrators or a lean-to next to the parking annex. It got worse. In the two-year period that followed, we

¹ Special thanks to Linda K. Shamoon and Deborah H. Burns (1995) for modeling a healthy skepticism of pedagogical orthodoxy in their inspirational article, “A Critique of Pure Tutoring.”
were moved six times. Usage tanked; we were teaching writing to an empty room. Our itinerant circumstances got me questioning: How could we set up the program structurally for long-term security?

**Innovation: Collaborate administratively in a learning commons—yes, there’s less freedom, but there is more advocacy and collective security, which is essential for our visitors.**

2. **Most students never visit a writing center, even when they practically trip over it.**

I wanted a marketing silver bullet for this pattern, but I learned there wasn’t one through an assessment project. We didn’t ask users how to improve; instead, we asked non-users to help us understand why they were non-users. After talking to over 200 students, we noted two prevailing reasons: they didn’t leave time, and they didn’t need help. Help. This objection resonates with me, since I turned down five home improvement store staff who asked me if I needed help on a DIY kitchen backsplash. Of course I needed help! But I didn’t know the name of the thingummies I would need, so I denied being helpless, until one asked: “What’s your project?” Now *that* was a question I could answer, and soon we were choosing all the right thingummies, grouts, trowel, sponges, and spacers. (My backsplash looks great!). Time. I write at the last minute too; I shouldn’t but I do. Faculty tut-tut over procrastination, but I too am writing syllabi the night before. What pedagogical practices will lower don’t-have-time and don’t-need-help barriers?

**Innovation: Become a learning community, not a service point. Create a destination so appealing that students choose to learn there, whether or not they choose on-demand, appointment-free coaching.**
3. **Traditional pedagogies don’t yield significant writing improvement.**

In graduate school, I researched how final draft quality altered based on either teacher written feedback or multiple writing center consultations (see Buck, 1994). While teacher written feedback had no effect on first/final draft holistic ratings, writing center consultations had a slight positive but statistically insignificant effect. Most revisions were what I call cosmetic; that is, students fiddled with commas. These consultations should have been superior to ad hoc ones in several ways: consultants were deeply familiar with the course/assignment context, they met with the same writer across three visits, and the consultations were serial rather than one-shots. Yet even under these ideal conditions, writing quality didn’t change and neither did critical engagement with inquiry. Why not? Of course, the arc of growth in writing and deep thinking is long. And perhaps students didn’t put their best feet forward for many reasons. But what if our lore-based pedagogy was letting visitors down?

**Innovation: Offer incremental micro-consultations where tutors assess visitors’ strengths, scaffold a tailored strategy, and let visitors work the strategy on their own.**

4. **Writers didn’t improve (much) either.**

We’ve all heard the old song “I suck at writing.” As lore would have it (see for example North, 1984), writing centers are concerned with writers, not just their writing. But in truth, like many, our writing center addressed higher order concerns, asked Socratic questions, and gave suggestions with scant concern that most writers lacked agency over process or secure writerly identity. Session transcripts revealed that few writers evidenced metacognitive habits of mind, and tutors seldom prompted visitors to evaluate what was working and what wasn’t. When tutors coached process, they merely
described their own writing process, sans tailoring or scaffolding. Despite the writers-first encomium, our interventions prompted learning about, but rarely learning how or learning to become. In fact, I seldom heard learning goals beyond better writers (how offensive!) articulated in traditional pedagogy. How could we be so deficit-minded as to think there’s something wrong with them, and when we treat them as if something is wrong, how could students overcome poor writerly identities to become lifelong learners/writers? Who would help them love (tolerate?) writing? Where would they gain process strategies tailored to their strengths?

Innovation: Using strengths, scaffold learning about, how, and to become: cognition, affect, process, and meta-reflection.

5. Lots of our practices benefited tutors more than visitors.

Although we did have drop-in slots, we mostly required appointments, especially at high demand times. If I were turned away when I was most desperate, I wouldn’t return, either. Couldn’t we offer something to everyone rather than everything to one or two? We took nearly an hour with writers, often reading drafts aloud to get us familiar. But what a waste of time for writers! When I told one writer we only had 20 minutes so I wouldn’t have time to read the whole draft, they said something like, “Oh no worries, if it said what I wanted to, I wouldn’t be here.” Weren’t they gently telling me that reading the draft was wasting their time? Then there’s the 20 questions: what’s your assignment, what have you done so far, when is it due, all things writers know already. Isn’t there a shorter way I can get up to speed? There are other confusing boundaries: writers couldn’t drop off papers, and we wouldn’t proofread for them. But students drop off

their drafts online and check a box for grammar help. Then there’s our comfortable, non-directive approach. As a tutor I don’t like being bossy, but as a writer I like it less when responders always defer, “Well, how do you feel about that section?” Obviously, I hate it or I wouldn’t have asked, so throw me a bone! And our space: tutors used it as their home away from home. They ate, slept, and chatted about private matters in clusters. Writers had to essentially interrupt a family gathering to ask for help—ten eyes stared at the newcomer. I’d run too.

**Innovation: Become both host and guest in our learning community. As hosts, welcome students; as guests, cede control.**

**6. Collaborative writing project? Uh, we’ve got nuthin’**.

Writing center pedagogy benchmarks one-to-one consulting, but writers work in groups far more often than our literature acknowledges. Some disciplines work almost exclusively in teams, and faculty struggle supporting the group process. Many instructors simply assign groups and let students figure out how to negotiate conflict, collective goals, and tough logistics. The Writing Center should have been the place that supported them, yet our space and practices were for tutor-writer dyads. Tables didn’t seat larger groups, no accoutrements aided group process, there were no group appointments, no strategies unique to group writing, no shared screens—nothing welcoming to groups. We coached a few groups, often with just one member representing the team. Though based on collaborative learning theory, writing center practice accepts white-normed (Jones & Okun, 2001), one-to-one as the learning ideal.

What practices should we feature for group consultations?

**Innovation: Equip staff to coach groups in negotiating goals, conflict, and accountability as well as writing with a unified voice; create resources for student groups and offer embedded group consulting to faculty.**
Are these innovations the last word in equity-based and evidence-based practice? Certainly not! We still have pain points, and we remain curious. That’s why our gap-assessment-improvement loop is so helpful\(^3\). We joke that one of these years we will begin a new school year with stable, familiar practices. But five years in, there’s still no time for comfort because our practices continuously evolve in significant ways. If writing centers don’t deliberately assess to identify improvements, we will miss opportunities to question orthodoxies and improve learning. A single standard for pure writing center is probably not a thing, but if it is or ever was, there’s no time for nostalgia. Learning means growing, not just for our students but for all of us.

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\(^3\) See Chapter 5, “Using Assessment to Prompt Innovation”
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2021

**Interchapter 1B**

**Reading Backwards**

Wyatt Heimbichner Goebel, *Western Washington University*

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**About the Author**

Wyatt is a biologist and poet who graduated from Western Washington University in 2019. He is currently taking time off before pursuing graduate school in biology. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio's email: [rws@wwu.edu](mailto:rws@wwu.edu).

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rising over the canopy.
if I see a blue smoke signal
or sooner,
ready to return the next spring,
so, I leave
to maintain flourishing
you have all the tools you need
I can see that the forest is yours

I also came here to learn.
and I remember
your own uprooting,
by twisting the stem,
you pull the next flower
about the forest,
And just when I thought I knew everything
until we each have a bundle.
we pull flowers out of the understory
Together,
You watch, practice the motion, and dig a stem from the dirt.
showing you how to turn up roots.
and I pull up a single flower
just below the surface
A gentle pinch

You must have forgotten you planted them.
before the trees can throw shade.
blooming into the sun
but I notice the first spring buds
everything is winter,
At our table,

and now you can’t make out anything.
for it to all snap into place,
waiting for the glass to break,
holding your eyelids open
You spent so much time
just before the finish line.
announcing the fall
as your words tripped over themselves
I greeted the panic

Reading Backwards

Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity
Chapter 2

Studio-based Learning Pedagogy and Practices

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Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Abstract

Despite the pedagogical relevance of studio-based learning (SBL) to practitioners in academic support programs, few scholars in our home disciplines have apprehended this pedagogy. Those few who have investigated it often oversimply it, stripping SBL of its potency for increasing equity-based learning. In libraries, the concept is entirely absent despite relevance to learning commons initiatives. In writing studies, studio is most linked with revitalizing and democratizing the composition classroom, and in writing centers, studio is most linked writing in digital genres. But in disciplines as diverse as computer science and dance, SBL is richly understood as essential for incrementally scaffolding procedural knowledge and for forwarding egalitarian teaching and learning. In this chapter, I summarize the gaps in our home disciplines’ impoverished understandings and explain SBL philosophy and pedagogical practices across history and across disciplines. Finally, I propose principles for using this signature pedagogy to advance learning about, learning how, and learning to become. To illustrate the principles in operation, I intersperse composite reflections of my own Studio shifts, and I include several appendices that illuminate the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio’s micro-consulting practices and outcomes.

Keywords: Studio-based learning pedagogy, signature pedagogies, self-regulated learning, agency, scaffolding
After nearly 30 years with the Writing Center, I thought I would get misty-eyed about exchanging my writing center identity for a studio one. Now nearly six years since the Libraries’ Research Consultation and the Writing Center merged into the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio, I do not pine for the past; instead, I more often remember pain points. Before our merger, librarians served students from behind a monolithic Reference Desk where a disheartening majority of visitors timidly approached to ask: “Where is the printer?” When students did ask for research help, few consultations featured scaffolding new conceptual or procedural knowledge. Across a skybridge in the Writing Center, consultants regularly fielded more complicated concerns, but in efforts to be suitably orthodox, tutors posed open-ended questions¹, read drafts aloud, and offered comprehensive reader response in dialogues that were remarkably cookie cutter (Chandler & Sutton, 2018). Many writers came in befuddled about how to enact revising based on faculty feedback, but I knew from my own research that neither faculty nor writing center response prompted much revising (Buck, 1994). In fact, the more I analyzed writing center transcripts², the less evidence I saw that we were prompting sticky, life-changing learning. For example, in a disturbing transcript of one 50-minute session, the writer asked at the 30-minute mark, “What is it you actually do here?” Gut check: what do we do here? Motivated by dissonant moments like this, I started looking for other pedagogies to yield transformative learning that students could use for their current task and take with them into the next academic task—even into their lives.

¹ Writing center and library practitioners ask remarkably similar questions. See the State Library of Iowa (n.d.) for just one example of a standard “reference interview.”
² I have analyzed hundreds of transcripts, both from our quarterly tutor assessments and from two major IRB-approved studies featuring transcript analysis (Buck, 1994; Kjesrud, 2015).
beyond college. We found part of our answer in what has become one of the Hacherl Studio’s signature pedagogies: studio-based learning.

As I arrive for my shift, the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio is in full swing with about 40 visitors spread out across the living room, focus area, collaborative area, and The Fishbowl classroom. Several visitors are working with Studio Assistants in serial micro-consultations: visitors summon us when they get stuck, get a little advice, learn a new strategy, and keep working on their own. Sam and Chris have been working on the same research since my last shift four hours ago, so I check to make sure they’ve eaten. They haven’t. When I suggest they visit the nearby coffee and bagel shop, their eyes light up—will I keep an eye on their stuff till they get back? And can I help them find another source later? Sure! Next, I spot a health education project group I consulted weekly last term; as I approach, I note they have surrounded themselves with whiteboards, which they are using for one of the group process strategies they learned last term. They assure me they are making good progress, but could I check back in a few minutes?

—Roberta’s post-shift reflection, 2016

**Studio-based Learning Pedagogy**

**What SBL Isn’t: Space**

The literature on studio-based learning in Writing Studies (WS), Library Information Studies (LIS), and Writing Center Studies (WCS) speaks liberally to studio as space and affordances but little to studio as pedagogy. Although SBL origins first surfaced in K-12 (mid 1800s) and arrived much later in tertiary education (early 1900s), composition was comparatively late in discovering it. Writing Studio Pedagogy, or what WSP scholars simply refer to as Studio, was first formally articulated by Grego and Thompson (2008). Two main trends fueled Studio adoption—the computer age in the
1990s and the defunding of developmental writing courses\(^3\) in the 2000s. As in most disciplines, computers changed composition teaching, both in method and content. Once computers enabled collective composing during class sessions, practitioners recognized the value of mentored, learning-while-doing (studio) experiences for their students because the richest teaching moments emerge while students are actively engaging in the composing process. Yet despite emerging scholarship around computers supporting process-based learning, a strong Luddite streak in the humanities meant that literature-biased English departments were initially slow in equipping composition classrooms with technology and in embracing the new digital genres\(^4\) technology enabled. After strong advocacy from forward-thinking WS scholars (Hawisher & Selfe, 1989; Selfe, 1986), most English composition programs now rely on computer-enhanced writing labs. Hence, WSP became a sub-field of composition devoted to technology-rich laboratory instruction. Outfitting classroom-turned-studios with technology quite naturally turned scholars to spatial concerns, but some also recognized Studio as a liberatory pedagogy for traditionally marginalized students who became vulnerable to further oppression once developmental courses were eliminated. Studio has recently been more deeply theorized for its potential in creating educational justice for students whose literacy identities were undervalued in traditional genres and traditional literacy standards (Chandler & Sutton, 2018; Grego & Thompson, 2008).

\(^3\) The widespread move to defund developmental courses had disproportionate fallout for traditionally marginalized students who lost access to courses meant to foster equitable success. WS practitioners proposed Studio as an arguably better way to ensure success for vulnerable students.

\(^4\) Note the connection between multimodal genres and the justice-informed theory of multiliteracies proposed by the New London Group (1996).
Despite the prominence of the term *pedagogy* in the subfield of Writing Studio Pedagogy, scholars often use space and affordances as surrogates for SBL methods and practices. In a notable for instance, both the editors and contributing authors of *Writing Studio Pedagogy: Space, Place, and Rhetoric in Collaborative Environments* (Kim & Carpenter, 2017) express confusion about what defines studio pedagogy. Instead, the volume focuses largely on configuring studio spaces, identifying necessary technologies, and proposing ways to create a studio atmosphere in retrofitted, traditional classroom and writing center spaces. While the editors briefly discuss four primary SBL principles prominent in cross-disciplinary instantiations (Hetland et al., 2013, pp. 5–6), the volume’s prevailing emphasis is minimally on the *what* of studio teaching and learning (creative thinking and multiliteracies) and maximally on the *with what* of studio teaching and learning (flex furniture, large screens, group seating, etc.).

Around the same time composition met computers, so did libraries. By the mid-1990s, libraries were not just card-catalog digital; many of their holdings also became digitally available—or were born digital. Whereas ubiquitous personal devices now allow students to use the library without ever leaving their rooms, in the 1990s, students relied on campus computers. Libraries saw an opportunity to increase relevance and fill access needs by replacing expansive services desks with the information commons (IC). The typical IC was located on a main floor, featured lab-like workstations, included technology-enhanced classroom spaces, enabled collaborative student scholarship, and featured flexible *thirdspace* furniture and other affordances. Designers of ICs were particularly influenced by EDUCAUSE and its work around theorizing and researching

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5 See Chapter 4, “Placemaking through Learner-based Design,” for more on the *thirdspace* concept.
the role of space and technology in learning. While the IC movement in academic libraries prompted an almost immediate recovery from dwindling gate counts, some LIS scholars were left wondering what they should actually do with students attracted by space and technology. University of St. Thomas librarian and frequent *EDUCAUSE* presenter Dan Gjelten pondered:

I see that one rationale for the Commons is to “get the students to the library.” In our case, it has been very effective in attracting students...our gate count was 110 percent higher...so, it will attract students. But that begs the question—once they are in the building, what do we do with them? How do we engage them? (as cited in Lippincott, 2006, p. 7.1-7.2).

Readers should note that, despite obvious parallels, LIS scholars have never connected the commons concept with SBL, so like WS scholars, libraries became enamored of space and affordances sans pedagogy.

Although one could argue that classroom-based studio practices have limited application to writing centers, WCS scholars borrow heavily from WSP scholarship mainly due to the disciplinary affinity with writing studies. Predictably, WCS discussions of studio mirror a disproportionate attention to space/affordances and to multimodal genres. Although WCS studio scholarship introduces welcome connections between literacies and admirable support for alternate genres, WCS scholarship adds little to our home disciplines’ understanding of SBL as a method. Overall, then, we see a robust trend in our home disciplines; that is, space/affordance themes dominate our considerations of SBL. LIS scholarship emphasizes some form of commons (Bailey, 2008; Crockett et al., 2002; Lippincott, 2006), WS scholarship emphasizes first-year
writing-classrooms-turned-studios (Bemer, 2010; Grego & Thompson, 2008; Gresham & Yancey, 2004; Kim & Carpenter, 2017; Powell & Tassoni, 2008), and WCS scholars emphasizes support for multimodality and multiliteracies (Carpenter et al., 2013, 2015; Carpenter & Lee, 2016; Kim & Carpenter, 2017). Although I have titled this heading What SBL isn’t, that’s not quite accurate because our home disciplines do present a partial picture of SBL. It’s just that interdisciplinary presentations of SBL pedagogy do it better because they go beyond considerations of space or genre. Instead, SBL is presented as a method of teaching. As we will see, pedagogies can be hampered or enhanced by space⁶, but space alone neither prevents nor guarantees SBL pedagogy. In considering space before practices, our home disciplines have it mostly backward.

**What SBL Is: Method**

To truly understand SBL as a method, we now widen our gaze across history and across disciplines. As an educational philosophy⁷, SBL is rather elderly. Originating in 19th century public education, SBL philosophy in the U.S. can be traced to prominent education reformers such as Horace Mann (public education), Francis Parker (student-centered learning), and John Dewey (hands-on learning). Dewey’s Chicago-based Laboratory School, for instance, featured an early version of SBL (although it wasn’t called that); in short, many of today’s new practices are rediscoveries of pedagogies implemented in an average K-12 classroom of yesteryear. In fact, SBL has been around so long that some claim we can learn more about this innovation by looking to history

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⁶ For research on how space influences learning, see Chapter 4, “Placemaking through Learner-based Design.”
⁷ Educators tend to conflate philosophy, theory, and pedagogy. In this volume, we use philosophy as the umbrella epistemology that unifies theory and pedagogy, theory as the explanatory underpinning for how teaching and learning works, and pedagogy as the set of teaching and learning methods or practices that instantiate both theory and philosophy. As examples, Progressivism (Dewey, 2019) is a philosophy, the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) is a theory, and Problem-based Learning (Harland, 2003) is a pedagogy.
rather than the present (Lackney, 1999; Donohue, 2012). In tertiary education, the Bauhaus design school in Germany adopted SBL because its principles resonated with design charrettes\(^8\), a well-established practice in architecture schools to this day. Thanks to urban planner and educational philosopher Donald Schön (1984), SBL was introduced across disciplines, particularly those that are project- and problem-based. Problem-solving across disciplines acknowledges that there is no right answer to any problem, requiring practitioners to recursively a) brainstorm, collaborate, and propose solutions; b) test solutions by seeking incremental feedback; and c) return to the drawing board in revisioning solution 2.0. Oh how this resonates with writing and research! Since many disciplines feature some elements of creative problem solving in collaboration with others, it’s unsurprising that SBL is employed in disciplines as varied as art (Hetland et al. 2013), computer science (Silva et al. 2017), design (Brandt et al., 2013; Cennamo & Brandt, 2012; Crowther, 2013), medicine (Swanwick, 2010), nursing (Ladouceur et al, 2004), planning (Brocato, 2009; Nemeth & Long, 2012), and architecture (Kuhn, 2001).

If pedagogy is a set of methods or practices informed by theory and philosophy, then SBL as pedagogy is perhaps most clearly articulated in two volumes by visual arts K-12 teachers Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan (2013) who suggest four core methods\(^9\): 1) demonstration or lecture; 2) work time; 3) critique; and 4) display.

Demonstration generally comes from an expert who briefly (5-10 minutes) imparts a

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\(^8\) Used in fashion, design, and architecture, charrettes or design crits gather stakeholders for critiques. In an architectural charrette, for example, architects present initial designs to users who offer critiques that help architects go back to the drawing board, ensuring final plans meet stakeholders’ objectives. If you’ve seen Project Runway, you’ve seen a design crit.

\(^9\) Note that Hetland et al. (2013) refer to this as a method, not a pedagogy. I argue pedagogy is method.
concept or strategy. *Work time* gives students a chance to apply that new information on the spot during leisurely practice. *Critique* involves students’ workshopping their work-in-progress to gather feedback that is neither comprehensive nor summative; rather, it is formative, bite-sized and immediately implementable during the next increment of work time. Critiques may be provided by master crafters (teachers, peer tutors), but they can also be provided by fellow classmates who have mastered aspects of the craft that their colleagues have not. *Display* involves admiring the finished or closer-to-finished product. Since SBL is iterative, display may not occur until after several studio sessions, whether after a series of micro-consults in one visit or in many visits over time. While Hetland et al. (2013) helpfully provide a guiding method, they leave it to practitioners to discover their own accompanying evidence-based practices.

*With Sam and Chris gone to the coffee shop for a few minutes, I move on to greet new arrivals, including two who are unknowingly studying for the same linguistics mid-term; with permission, I introduce them and leave them happily collaborating. Another student overheard me explaining what we do in the Studio; although he is what we call an accidental tourist (in the Studio unintentionally), he immediately asks for résumé advice. Later I greet frequent flyers Alex and Andy, two highly anxious accounting majors who work in the Studio daily. They don’t need anything today, but when I asked them why they come, they say they haven’t written in a couple of years so they are terrified of the writing proficiency course they’re in this term; they say making a habit of studying in the Studio seems wise “in case they get stuck.”*

—Roberta’s post-shift reflection, 2016

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10 You can’t make this stuff up—these stories are pinch-me real, I promise.
What SBL Is: Principles

Although practitioners in the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio have developed—and continue to develop—many practices unique to our context (see Appendix A, pp. 32-33, for specific examples), we found many to borrow from in disciplines that have more thoroughly articulated SBL pedagogy and more frequently assessed its outcomes. While the minutiae of daily practice must be contextual, I devote the remainder of this chapter to articulating generalizable principles of SBL as a signature pedagogy.

1. SBL features holistic learning for whole learners.

Design educator Philip Crowther (2013, p. 20) asserts that SBL pedagogy addresses all types of knowledge corresponding to all types of learning, including learning about, learning how (see also Schön, 1985), and learning to become (see also Dutton, 1987). These three types of learning map well to the revised Bloom’s taxonomy first suggested by Anderson and Krathwohl (2000) and perfected for visual presentation by Iowa State University’s Center for Learning and Teaching (CELT). This revised taxonomy overlays Bloom’s singular cognitive process dimension with a knowledge dimension that moves from concrete to abstract knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive. Figure 1 maps the types of learning featured in SBL to Bloom’s revised taxonomy: learning about includes factual and conceptual knowledge, learning how includes procedural knowledge, and learning to become includes metacognitive knowledge. In building our pedagogy, we identified practices that attend to all six moves in the cognitive process dimension so that we support student learning.

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11 To view either interactive or PDF versions of this multi-dimensional taxonomy, visit https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revised-blooms-taxonomy/
about academic literacies, in learning how to manage literacy processes, and in learning to become lifelong learners who can self-regulate scholarly practices to enrich their lives.\footnote{For a visual showing how suggested principles link to Hacherl Studio practices, see Appendix B, pp. 34-35.}

**Figure 1**

*SBL types of learning mapped to Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy* (Iowa State Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Learning</th>
<th>Knowledge Dimension</th>
<th>Cognitive Process</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about</td>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>Periods usually go inside quotation marks in American English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Sources carry more credibility if they are balanced and disclose bias.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>Strategy: Thinking of an example will help me apply new facts/concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Strategy: Thinking of an analogy will help me analyze facts/concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Strategy: Playing the “believing/doubting game” will help me evaluate facts/concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>Strategy: Using a matrix can help me synthesize ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to become</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Strategy: Reflecting on my process helps me become a confident scholar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{The believing/doubting game asks writers to first believe facts/concepts and then doubt them; it was first introduced as a critical thinking strategy by Peter Elbow (1998).}
Although the Hacherl Studio primarily supports literacy-related learning, we embrace the principle of supporting holistic learning and learners and the corollaries bulleted below.

- **Attend to all learning.** Studio staff support learning, period. When we encounter visitors with needs beyond our expertise (rocket science, for example), we may not be able to coach factual or conceptual knowledge, but we can coach process and metacognition. For instance, we can ask “What strategies do you typically use for understanding a difficult concept, and how are those working for you right now?” Or we can offer new comprehension strategies if visitors tell us their go-to strategies are letting them down. Then again, staff may not be directly involved in learning; we also support learning by just sponsoring it in our space. Many visitors learn without any intervention from staff, and many seek intervention during some of their visits and none during others.

- **Support learners.** Concepts and processes take a back seat at times to just being human. *We hold space*\(^\text{14}\) for whole people and their complex emotional and physical needs. Learners can’t always just get to business in learning, so we also address motivation, affect, or whatever human need is most pressing in the moment. Sometimes we send visitors home to nap (or offer them a couch) and send them out for food (or give them food); other times, we help them register for classes or connect them to the Health Center. Many visitors simply use our spaces to have lunch with a friend or relax between classes. Because, you know, it’s hard to learn without lunch.

- **Scaffold from strengths.** Visitors are smart people who have learned about, how, and to become many things apart from what brings them to the Studio. We probe prior knowledge and show them how to apply it to their new situation. Scholars call this *transfer of learning* (Anson & Moore, 2017; Carillo, 2015; Devet, 2015; Driscoll, 2011; Driscoll & Jin, 2018; Haskell, 2001), but we call it *upcycling*, a term that resonates immediately with our sustainability-focused Pacific Northwest audience. Once we identify visitors’ strengths, our goal is to redesign and repurpose past learning successes by introducing new strategies tailored to those strengths\(^{15}\).

- **Equip for the future.** By coaching strategies for metacognitive reflection, we equip visitors to reflect on past learning, evaluate how that learning connects with present learning, and predict how they will use new learning in the future. For instance, in a typical sequence of micro-consultations, we ask a visitor to articulate their learning preferences, we choose and scaffold a strategy aligned with those preferences, and we leave visitors to implement the strategy. When we return for the next micro-consultation, we *go meta*\(^{16}\) by asking the visitor to evaluate how well the strategy met their goal and to speculate what adjustments they can make for the next working increment. By serially going meta, we equip visitors for future learning, both in the next micro-consultation but also for learning after they leave the Studio.

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15 Leah Robinson offers a method for tailoring strategies in *Interchapter 2B, “Channeling Dr. Frankenstein”*.  
16 *Going meta* is our term for prompting visitors to reflect metacognitively.
2. SBL invites learning community.

As discussed in Chapter 4, “Placemaking through Learner-based Design,” traditional learning spaces imply a hierarchical power dynamic that academic support spaces may unintentionally replicate. Libraries are perhaps the most invitational of campus places because they offer long hours, configurable spaces, and no-appointment-needed support. Paralleling Western Libraries’ as much as possible, the Hacherl Studio offers a boundary-free, drop-in environment that fosters social connection; it has become a de facto learning community. To foster that community, staff act as both hosts and guests. In our host role, we use many of the same invitational strategies used to make party guests feel pampered. For instance, we invite visitors to use all affordances as if they were their own. Instead of passively waiting for visitors to seek help, we engage even unintentional visitors proactively, which establishes connections with those who have questions they either can’t articulate or feel shame in asking. Is there any among us who have denied needing help when in fact we did? In enacting invitational learning (Purkey & Novak, 2015), we intentionally keep our space open even when we’re not staffed. Our learning community often arrives in the mornings before staff and stays in the evenings after staff leave.

But hosting isn’t our only role; we also act as guests—that is, we act as if visitors own the place (because they do). Being invitational acknowledges that learning often happens without us and sometimes in spite of us. Many visitors spend longer hours in the Studio than the length of staff shifts, so visitors as often welcome us as we welcome them. When I arrive for a shift, it’s common for me to hear a frequent flyer17 say, “Hey

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17 Frequent flyer is our term for visitors so regular that we are on a first-name basis.
Roberta, time for your shift now, eh?” Unsurprisingly, visitors demonstrate ownership by arranging the furniture and affordances as they wish, so it’s not uncommon for groups to build pop-up offices or to drag tables around. Visitors use the Studio for their own learning purposes, including conducting focus groups for psychology research, creating a round-up of white boards for solving math equations, and gathering for test review sessions. As guests, we as staff decenter our own expertise in favor of multidirectional teaching and learning: learning goes up, down, and sideways as visitors learn from visitors, staff learn from visitors, and staff learn from each other. Wearing my host hat, I introduce visitors who are studying for the same test, but wearing my guest hat, I step aside to let visitors learn from each other without my interference.

Our learning community taught staff how important groups are to the learning process. Before the Studio, neither our library nor writing center facilitated much beyond one-to-one collaboration. But since our space is so inviting to groups (fully a third of our visitors learn with friends or classmates), we finally realized what our visitors already knew: learning communities are a high impact practice (Kuh, 2005; Kuh et al., 2015). At first, we scrambled to develop practices for connecting with groups, facilitating them, and supporting the group process. Though it’s still an area for growth, we now offer strategies, tools, and workshops to aid collaborative work, and we also offer classroom-embedded group support for team-based research-writing assignments. By cultivating a guest mindset, we have been schooled in how much learning is done collaboratively, about how groups function and malfunction, and about how coaching...

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18 Fun story: One visitor, now an alumnus, often had friends drop by to find him in the Studio. On more than one occasion, I have said, “Sorry, he’s not in his office right now, would you like to leave a message?”
practices for individuals can often fall short of meeting group needs (Thalmann et al., 2016).

Learning in community means that members of the community share resources to promote learning for everyone, not just the learning of a few. Whereas library reference desks and writing centers cater in boutique fashion to individuals’ learning needs, SBL supports the learning of the entire community. In any given hour, the Studio hosts 35 visitors along with 4-5 Studio Assistants offering micro-consulting on demand. Enacting a philosophy of no-visitor-turned-away, practitioners coach multiple learners in sequence or even together despite doing different assignments. Since spending time leisurely exploring the nuances of one visitor’s assignment or a draft may mean ignoring another visitor, we maximize learning by iteratively scaffolding incremental goals. While one visitor works on task A, we check in with another working on task B. At first blush, the pedagogy may seem efficiency-driven; in fact, it is efficient. But the true motive is equitable access; micro-consulting multiplies learning for all by ensuring we cater to everyone, not just to those who plan ahead in making appointments (who among us doesn’t have last-minute needs?), and by ensuring that no one is turned away during high demand. One might expect visitors to resent our split attention, but instead visitors seem invested in each other’s success. Particularly at crunch times, a one-for-all, all-for-one team atmosphere prevails. Visitors know that if they share Studio Assistants with others, other visitors will return the favor.

3. **SBL scaffolds learning-by-doing in iterative micro-consultations.**

Although less discussed in our home disciplines, scaffolding holds a prominent place in educational theory (Harland, 2003) and in SBL pedagogy (Hetland et al., 2013;
Hogan et al., 2018). Scaffolding involves planning specific supports that move learners from existing to new learning. To build successful scaffolds, practitioners must be skilled at rapid assessment to determine the zone of proximal development\textsuperscript{19} (ZPD) and at choosing strategies and approaches that bridge to the new learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976). Scaffolding success is key because nothing kills learners’ motivation, agency, and persistence faster than failure. Given that SBL emphasizes three kinds of learning—about, how, to become—practitioners choose scaffolds appropriate to each type of learning. Traditional LIS\textsuperscript{20} and WCS pedagogies, however, rely primarily on one type of scaffold: dialogue\textsuperscript{21}. John Nordlof (2014) traces the origins of WCS dialogic methods to our social constructivist roots\textsuperscript{22}. Although Nordlof notes numerous recent mentions of scaffolding in WCS scholarship, he suggests we have stopped short of using scaffolding as an explanatory theory. Much current research, yes, even some of mine (Kjesrud, 2015; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013, 2015; Nordlof, 2014; Thompson, 2009) starts from the question “In what ways does writing center dialogue scaffold learning?” If we believe Nordlof (and I do!), then research should start not with practice but with theory. More assessment and research into identifying a full range of scaffolding techniques and correlating them with types of learning would significantly forward practitioners in choosing evidence-based scaffolds\textsuperscript{23} appropriate to specific learning goals.

\textsuperscript{19} Simply put, the ZPD is a learner’s next learning increment on a scaffold. Identifying a ZPD too small leads to boredom but too big leads to failure.

\textsuperscript{20} LIS scholars rarely discuss either scaffolding or social constructionism. For instance, my recent search for scaffolding in ACRL journals returned fewer than ten results.

\textsuperscript{21} Note that I use dialogue to indicate both verbal and non-verbals, such as body language and gesture.

\textsuperscript{22} See Nordlof (2014, pp. 50–54) for a cogent synopsis of how social constructionist theory has justified dialogue as the main teaching practice of writing centers.

\textsuperscript{23} See Appendix C, p. 35, for our first attempt to correlate scaffolds with specific types of learning.
This kind of theory-driven, explanatory research is quite rare in our home disciplines, but I suspect most practitioners intuitively know that dialogue poorly scaffolds learning how. Who among us jumped on a bike and rode smoothly away after having a long chat with an expert? Yet I spent much of my writing center career hoping talk would magically move writers from crummy to polished drafts in 45 minutes or less. Many of my dialogue-based sessions were scaffolding disasters; I pushed students too far too fast and heaped upon them a demoralizing amount of unactionable information. If watching students’ brains explode was inconclusive, I saw other hard evidence. In my own graduate research (Buck, 1994), I saw that writers simply didn’t substantively revise their writing; instead, they fiddled with commas. Was it because they simply didn’t know how to revise? So what learning did my lengthy dialogues scaffold? I was forced to conclude not nearly enough.

**Iterative dialogue for learning about**

While acknowledging a place for Socratic dialogue, educational theorist Diana Laurillard prefers a more intentional conversation framework24, which she defines as “a way of capturing the iterative, communicative, adaptive, reflective and goal-oriented actions with feedback...necessary to support the complete learning process...[which] has to operate on two levels, discursive and experiential” (2008, p. 140). Although she argues that highly intentional dialogue can scaffold growth in cognition, Laurillard suggests that learning about is only one piece of optimal learning, which she says requires holistic attention to these specific elements25:

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24 Laurillard presents a comprehensive visual representation of a highly iterative conversational framework for supporting the formal learning process (2008, p. 142).

25 Although Laurillard’s elements nearly match the SBL method, she does not mention studio-based learning.
• a task goal;
• a working environment for the learner to practice their actions;
• meaningful feedback on their actions in relation to the goal;
• the opportunity to revise and improve their actions;
• the encouragement to adapt and reflect in the light of experience (2008, p. 142).

In distinguishing between discursive (conceptual) and experiential (task/output), Laurillard locates the problem with dialogue: while it adequately scaffolds discursive learning, dialogue does not scaffold experiential learning. As learners cycle recursively through goal, action, feedback, and revised action, practitioners can use dialogue to help learners identify their goals and to give learners expert feedback, but practitioners must scaffold actionable strategies to advance procedural learning. Traditional writing center or library dialogues, then, adequately scaffold learning new literacy concepts and possibly, as Mackiewicz and Thompson (2013) posit, motivation.

**Scaffolding strategies for learning how**

Although growth in cognition and motivation are important outcomes of our dialogic practices, Laurillard (2001, 2008) raises a troubling limitation that scholars in our home disciplines have not acknowledged: dialogue simply cannot adequately scaffold learning how. To create space for experience and practice, practitioners must know when to stop talking and ask visitors to start doing\(^\text{26}\). Oddly, leaving visitors is uncommon in traditional pedagogies. In libraries, librarians act (e.g., finding sources), and in writing centers, tutors act (e.g., giving reader response); but we are content for

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\(^{26}\) For more on the importance of leaving learners, see Interchapter 2A, “The Art of Leaving” by Eric Bachmeier.
visitors to remain oddly passive. In studios, crafters practice their crafts: dancers dance, artists create, programmers code. And so in the Hacherl Studio, visitors research, read, write, and learn. Practitioners set visitors up for action by choosing or inventing (and offering a rationale for) one or more specific strategies chosen to match visitors’ strengths and goals. And then we scaffold experiential learning in three steps: *I do* (practitioner demonstrates or models the strategy), *We do* (visitor tries the strategy with practitioners observing and offering feedback if necessary), and *You do* (practitioners leave; visitors implement). Scaffolding action builds in time cues, suggests a natural closure to each interaction, and keeps both practitioners and visitors engaged. I can so easily natter on explaining what a literature review is and telling visitors how to research and write one, but effective scaffolding relies on my equipping visitors with do-able acts to get them creating said review. They may need multiple micro-consultations before they have all the strategies they need, but they leave with tangible stuff—sources, writing, a plan—rather than a head full of ideas they later forget. All talk and no action, Laurillard would say, leads to a little learning but not to deep learning. Learning how requires action.

But not just any action will do. Scaffolding strategies does not yield learning unless learners can successfully implement them. In short, practitioners must not only scaffold; they must scaffold success. In responding to criticism that social scientists have been ineffective in solving wicked problems, organizational behavior psychologist Karl Weick (1984) proposes a strategy he calls “small wins.” Since thorny issues prompt a level of arousal and agitation that quickly overwhelms, Weick suggests that we can only make progress when we “recast larger problems into smaller, less arousing
proves...[and] identify a series of controllable opportunities of modest size that produce visible results...” (1984, p. 40). These incremental wins amass over time to make big changes, but the small-win approach has the advantage of reducing cognitive load, lowering affective filter, and minimizing arousal (stress) (1984, pp. 44–46).

Learning how to research-write may not be on par with solving climate change, but we know that students often catastrophize: “I’m going to bomb this assignment, be forced to drop out of school, and end up a loser for life.” For students to succeed in learning how, practitioners must not only prompt action, they must keep the actions small and ensure that visitors win.

Our practitioners initially resist leaving visitors to work on their own, partly because they doubt their own abilities to scaffold small-win strategies and partly because they miss feeling needed (for me, it was mainly the latter). Choosing strategies for visitors is admittedly tricky: sometimes I select a strategy that’s a poor match for the visitor, and sometimes, I scaffold inadequately. (Sometimes I do both.) Experience helps me avoid these glitches, but so too do explicit repair strategies like reading visitors’ body language while they are working alone, checking in sooner if I sense confusion or impending failure, and tweaking strategies based on visitor feedback. Not feeling needed takes some getting used to, because unlike traditional sessions, visitors’ aha moments now happen after I leave; I miss the feel-good reward. But eventually I realized action promotes more learning all around. Staff learn important leadership skills like how to assess rapidly, practice executive decision-making, and leverage small successes for larger goals (Meyerson, 2001; Weick, 1984). Visitors take full credit for problem-solving because they rightly attribute success not to us but to themselves. As visitors gain
success through two or three micro-exchanges, we see growth in self-regulated learning, both at the person level where they often indicate, “I have the ability to do this task” and at the task level where they often say, “This task is not so daunting after all” (Efklides, 2011). Even if they don’t articulate increased agency, visitors’ actions show it: after the first two or three micro-exchanges, most dismiss us in favor of crafting their own way forward. (An aside: I now find being dismissed even more rewarding than an *aha*.)

**Metacognitive reflection for learning to become**

Although learning to become may not be an explicit part of all library or writing center missions, it’s the main mission of higher education institutions (HEIs). If our programs are central to that mission (and they are), we must find practices that scaffold becoming lifelong learners. But scaffolding learning to become is as daunting to practitioners as becoming good research-writers is to most of our visitors. Most visitors give us the same speech: “I suck at research and writing.” Changing an I-suck core identity takes so much more than a 50-minute traditional session. Let me be clear: I don’t think our Studio has entirely figured out scaffolding to become. But I do see that iterative dialogue, action, and meta-reflection support an about-how-become sequence better than our traditional sessions. For instance, serial micro-consultations virtually guarantee metacognitive reflection27 on actions, because when we return after leaving, we instinctively ask “How did that strategy work for you?” or to borrow from Bachmeier28 “So what did you come up with?” Even this prompt models for visitors the need to take periodic steps back from their work and evaluate how it’s going. When

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27 In her proposed MASRL model, a model that incorporates metacognition and affect in self-regulated learning, Efklides (2011) posits a reciprocal relationship; that is, better metacognition and affect improves self-regulation and vice-versa.

things aren’t going well (like when I was drafting this section), learning to stop doing something faster, harder, stronger, longer, just stop: to rest, to reflect—that is learning to become a meta-aware, self-regulated learner. These metacognitive micro-exchanges take place over an entire academic arc, not just in one visit. Since the Studio becomes a learning community to many, studio as place and as pedagogy supports becoming.

Visitors stay long, come often, and in the process incrementally experience what we hope are enough becoming increments to notice unhelpful I-suck self-talk, to accrue new successes, to appreciate their strengths and preferences, to evaluate attitudes and strategies that enable or disable, and to make self-adapted choices in becoming agents in lifelong learning.

*Source Searchers Sam and Chris, bageled and coffeed, are back and fired up. Can I help them find another source? Absolutely! But hold up, the health education project group has hit a snag; they simultaneously summon me to help them make sure their joint paper doesn’t contain five different voices. Since I’m pretty sure the group will take longer to sort, I tell them I’ll first check with the Source Searchers to get them started...is there something productive the team can do for 10 minutes? “Sure, we can try formatting some tricky citations for you to check.”*

*When I join Sam and Chris, I mention the Team Health group also needs me but that I think we can build on a strategy they were working on before: picking up on subject delimiters I noticed in the first pass. Soon they discover a promising trail, so they wave me away: “Roberta, we’ve got this if you want to check on that group for a bit. But can you come back in 20?” Team Health, here I come! And the first thing Team Health says when I return is, “Good timing, now we’re actually ready!”*

—Roberta’s post-shift reflection, 2016
Acknowledgements
I am deeply grateful to Shareen Grogan (Writing and Public Speaking Center Director, University of Montana; former President, International Writing Centers Association) and Dr. Kelsey Hixson-Bowles (Assistant Professor, Literacies & Composition, Utah Valley University) for their insightful feedback on an early draft.
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## Appendix A

### Anatomy of a Face-to-Face Studio Micro-consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Staff/Visitor Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>Most visitors (80%) self-select seating in their zone of choice; they get to work. Some visitors (20%) approach a small kiosk on a mission for help; they select a seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>After visitors settle, staff sit down with them to ask “What are you working on today?” and “How is school going?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff explain Studio pedagogy and how to use a table tent displaying Visitor status: Hard at Work, Taking a Break, or I Have a Question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard at work</td>
<td>Staff leave visitors to work on their own, checking back every 30 minutes or so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Break</td>
<td>Staff ask if they need creature comforts but otherwise leave visitors to relax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Question</td>
<td>Staff sit down with visitors and ask how the project is going, how they feel about it, what their immediate goal is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff ask visitors about what is going well, what their strengths are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff suggest a strategy that will help visitors achieve an immediate goal. Strategy is negotiated/revised based on visitor input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff models strategy, the <em>I do</em> step of scaffolding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visitors try the strategy for a few minutes with the staff standing by, the <em>We do</em> step of scaffolding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff leave; visitors work on their own, the <em>You do</em> step of scaffolding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return</td>
<td>Staff return when summoned or after 10-20 minutes; Staff guide visitors in meta-reflection to assess strategy and progress toward goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on the visitor’s self-assessment, the most common next steps:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff tweak the strategy for a better match to the visitor’s strengths, then leave for another round of You do (25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staff scaffold a new strategy based on the visitor’s new incremental goal (30%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Visitors ask to keep working on their own till they get stuck and use the table tent to summon help (45%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return Again</td>
<td>Micro-consultations are recursive until visitors have met their goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

**Pedagogical Principles/Practices Heuristic for Studio Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Holistic Learning</th>
<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>Iterative Scaffolding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affect:</td>
<td>Are basic needs met to satisfy necessary conditions for learning?</td>
<td>Inviting: How are we attending to hosting visitors in our living room?</td>
<td>Goals: What rapid assessment strategies are we using?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcycling/Transfer:</td>
<td>What strengths and prior learning can visitors draw from?</td>
<td>Uninviting: In what ways are we being unintentionally uninviting to our visitors?</td>
<td>Action: When and with what strategies are we leaving visitors to act on their own?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning About:</td>
<td>What cognitive process moves need to be scaffolded?</td>
<td>Shared authority: How are we attending to being good guests in our visitors’ living room?</td>
<td>Feedback: What size bite of feedback are we offering?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning How:</td>
<td>What gaps in procedural knowledge can be addressed?</td>
<td>Collaboration: How are we facilitating visitors working together?</td>
<td>Goal: What new goal emerges after the preceding action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Become:</td>
<td>What life-long learning, scholarly identity growth can be achieved?</td>
<td>Group feedback: What collective feedback are we offering based on group patterns?</td>
<td>Action: What new/revised strategy are we offering for the next increment of action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group strategies:</td>
<td>What strategies are we offering for negotiating conflict, organizing group process, expressing one voice?</td>
<td>Feedback: What metacognitive reflection are we facilitating?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C

### Scaffolding Cognitive and Procedural Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Moves</th>
<th>Factual (about)</th>
<th>Conceptual (about)</th>
<th>Procedural (how)</th>
<th>Metacognitive (to become)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tell facts &amp; rules</td>
<td>• Explain concepts and rationales</td>
<td>• Suggest/tailor strategy</td>
<td>• Describe current &amp; possible identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give examples</td>
<td>• Share resources</td>
<td>• Model strategy (I do)</td>
<td>• Reflect visitor’s identity back to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice strategy together (We do)</td>
<td>• Notice unhelpful behaviors/attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Give feedback</td>
<td>• Notice strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating Moves</td>
<td>• Prompt recall of prior knowledge</td>
<td>• Ask questions to prompt connecting ideas and building new knowledge structures</td>
<td>• Upcycle prior process strengths</td>
<td>• Offer choices and guide analyzing risk/reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elicit goals/requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Leave work time for independent practice (You do)</td>
<td>• Guide reflection on work time</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Prompt self-awareness</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hold space</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend to basic needs like eating, moving, resting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity
2021

**Interchapter 2A**

**The Art of Leaving**

Eric Bachmeier, *Western Washington University*

![Image by Jose Antonio Alba from Pixabay](image-url)

**About the Author**

Eric wrote this piece while he was an undergraduate assistant in the former Writing Center. Now a recovering English teacher, Eric enjoys helping others answer questions, solve problems, locate information, and discover books as the Library Media Specialist at Bellingham High School. If Mr. B is not reading or coaching distance runners, he’s probably running, biking, skiing, hiking, or traveling, often with his wife, Aimee, and children, Alden and Uma. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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**RECOMMENDED CITATION, APA 7TH ED**

In the course of my year as a Writing Center Assistant, I’ve been introduced to a number of helpful techniques for guiding students’ writing. I have learned to read drafts with a global-to-local focus, to ask open-ended questions, and to identify patterns of error for students to focus on for editing and future writing. These techniques were all suggested to me by the directors of the Writing Center. In addition to these skills, I employ several techniques that I crafted from my own experience. The most interesting and effective technique that I have developed is a practice I call *leaving*.

A form of leaving happens in every writing session, usually the end when the student exits the session. But my kind of leaving usually occurs in mid-session. When a session develops to the stage where a visitor needs to write (a sentence or two, an introduction, a conclusion), I say, “Go ahead and work on that, and I’ll be right back.” I then leave the table and move to an area where I can monitor the visitor’s progress until it appears that they have finished. Once visitors stop writing, I return and ask, “So what did you come up with? Would you like to read it to me?” After they read me their creations, I give them appropriate feedback.

Leaving might sound like a strange technique for guiding writing, but I’ve observed several reasons why it works. First, I believe leaving is effective because it removes the pressure of writing for an audience and thus creates a more natural writing environment. Who sits at home and writes while other people sit nearby and observe them? Not me. By leaving the area, I give writers the solitude that most people require for composition. Leaving is good because it allows students the space to relax and to write. Second, leaving is a productive technique because it establishes a mini deadline. When I leave the area, visitors do not know when I will be back, but they get the sense
that the period of my absence is the best time to write. The students expect me to expect them to complete their task while I am gone, and they usually do. I give them as long as they need (within reason), and when I see they have finished or are winding down, I return. Since I have not been present for the visitors’ creations, they are generally willing, even eager, to share them with me. Finally, leaving is nice because it gives me a chance to stretch my legs and chat with my friendly colleagues. This brief respite enables me to return with extra vigor for the remainder of the session.

I first practiced leaving while working in an hour-long appointment with one of my regular weekly visitors. It is best to use leaving with experienced students who feel comfortable with the surroundings; for instance, I would not advise leaving toward the beginning of a first-time visitor’s session. Doing so might make the visitor feel abandoned. Leaving is also best employed when visitors have time for actual work. Visitors who come in with 20 minutes to desperately revise a 10-page take home final essay may not appreciate the fine art of leaving. Leaving involves some risk, but if practiced wisely, it can be a safe and effective technique for prompting the writing process. Try it once or twice and then decide if leaving is for you. So “go ahead and think about it.” Because the time has come for me to leave.
2021

**Interchapter 2B**

**Channeling Dr. Frankenstein: Personalizing Strategies**

Leah Robinson, *Western Washington University*

About the Author

Leah is a first-time writer with more passion for language than for what she eats for breakfast. She loves teaching and hopes to inspire others through education in the future. Leah sees writing as something all can use to express themselves without ridicule. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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**RECOMMENDED CITATION, APA 7TH ED**

My Studio strategy reserve ran dry. The only thing going through my head was “Well now what; I’ve pulled out all my strategies, but nothing is working!” Allow me to explain. I was working with my Practicum partner, let’s call them “Rio,” on editing strategies. “I have been struggling with editing assignments due to my dyslexia. I don’t know how to go about it,” Rio said. After walking through a few strategies, I asked, “Are any of these helpful to you?” Rio replied, “I don’t know, some of these I’ve tried before, but they haven’t fully worked.” Parts of some suggested strategies were working for Rio, but other aspects threw them off course. I had to innovate. Instead of relying on the standard editing strategies I learned from my Studio training, I broke apart pieces of different strategies and remixed them into a tailored editing strategy designed to help my partner spot errors. This scenario marks the beginning of my practice in tailoring what I like to call “Franken-Strategies.”

Franken-Strategies foster agency because students are central to the strategy creation process. When working on common concerns like editing, I found that visitors all had something in common—a lack of agency around the editing process. Most students lacked confidence when self-editing because they feared errors would negatively impact their grades. Others didn’t even know how to start the editing process because past strategies didn’t help them; still others had no strategies at all. Because Franken-Strategies are built based on individual needs and experiences, using them

---

1 Practicum Partners are students who sign up to work weekly on their literacy development (usually for credit) while co-enrolled in courses with intensive research, writing, or speaking assignments. Studio faculty develop learning plans based on students’ academic goals for the term. Studio Assistants then meet with enrolled partners to develop strategies that meet those learning goals while completing their research-writing intensive assignments.
gives students the opportunity to design personal methods tailored to their strengths. They gain agency from learning strategies that are specifically designed for them. And with more agency, they can edit (or research, or draft, or revise) comfortably on their own.

In the past, Rio learned that people with dyslexia should edit by isolating a paragraph at a time from the rest of the paper. Since that wasn’t completely working, I simply modified the strategy a bit to suggest isolating each sentence in a new strategy I call “Paragraph Breaking.” In this case, the Franken-Strategy took a bit of what Rio already knew and added an extra element to make the strategy a better fit. First, I asked Rio to isolate one paragraph of writing.

_I’m meant to be writing at this moment. What I mean is, I’m meant to be writing something else at this moment. The document I’m meant to be writing is, of course, open in another program on my computer and is patiently awaiting my attention. Yet here I am plonking down senseless sentiments in this paragraph because it’s easier to do than to work on anything particularly meaningful._

Once Rio isolated a paragraph, I asked them to break it up by giving each sentence additional space in between. The extra space allows them to read each sentence in isolation.

_I’m meant to be writing at this moment._

_What I mean is, I’m meant to be writing something else at this moment._

_The document I’m meant to be writing is, of course, open in another program on my computer and is patiently awaiting my attention._

_Yet here I am plonking down senseless sentiments in this paragraph because it’s easier to do than to work on anything particularly meaningful._
Because the sentences are isolated, Rio could more easily read each aloud and edit as needed without being distracted by other text. Once finished, Rio could delete the extra spaces and compress the paragraph. And that’s it! The strategy is in the name: Paragraph Breaking!

Anyone can Franken a new strategy after learning the three steps for creating one. First, figure out where a failed strategy got muddy. Second, focus on upcycling. And third, understand the end goal—the ‘magic,’ so to speak, of what the Franken-Strategy is trying to achieve. Asking questions creates an opportunity for students to reflect on previous learning. I always ask students about what works and what doesn’t so we can use that information to tailor a new approach. For example, when I asked one student, let’s call them “Jordan,” to reflect on their process for a past assignment, Jordan realized that things got muddy when they tried typing an outline but that they enjoyed creating one with notecards. Creating space for reflection helped both us better understand the student’s writing process and allowed us to move forward with creating a strategy.

Reflecting on process connects to the next step of creating a Franken-Strategy: upcycling. Upcycling is a process of re-using bits of previous strategies and then notecards for their current project. However, Jordan realized notecards wouldn’t work as well for this assignment because the paper was much longer—it would take too much time to use dozens of notecards and later type them up. To create the perfect Franken-

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2 Upcycling (also called transfer of learning) involves accessing past learning, in this case, processual learning, and applying that knowledge to current and future learning. Our Studio prefers the term “upcycling” because it connects with our environmental consciousness while also implying that nothing is wasted – there is always a new application for previous learning.
Strategy, we realized that we needed to keep the positive aspects of notecards but with digital efficiency. That’s when we discovered a website that creates online notecards. Jordan created notecards digitally, and voilà, they were instantly transformed into Word for further drafting. Jordan and I took our understanding of their learning preferences and tailored them for this new contest to create Franken-Strategy magic.

While Jordan’s new strategy worked the first time, Franken-strategies may need some adjustment. Post-strategy revising is the process of evaluating the tailored strategy after the student tries it out. You might be thinking, “If the strategy is personally customized for the student, why wouldn’t it work?” The simple answer: an incomplete assessment of the student’s needs and preferences. While you can learn a lot about needs and preferences in a short time, it’s easy for both parties to miss important details, resulting in Franken-Strategy that is better but still lacking. Being able to reflect on and revise Franken-Strategies after an initial trial is a vital skill in achieving magic. Fortunately, their puzzle-like design makes Franken-Strategy revising simple.

Since the entire strategy is made from a collection of small pieces, when one piece doesn’t fit, students just exchange for one that does. Students can really take over their own revising at this point. After reflective prompting, they now know what works best for them, they can tell when things get muddy, and they can usually pick the next piece to try out. When students are involved in revising their Franken-Strategies, they can turn a near-perfect strategy into one that unlocks their own success. With enough practice, students will reach a point where they understand their own learning well enough to tailor entire strategies without a tutor. This is agency. By allowing students to
exercise agency, Franken-Strategies push the boundaries of what a strategy can be. Not just means to an end, Franken-Strategies release students’ creativity. See what happens when you create space for students to combine imagination with their own learning.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to my external reviewer, Oregon State University Writing Center Consultant Alexandra Walchli, for her formative comments on an early draft.
Interchapter 2C

The No-Stakes Agenda: A Unique Approach to Equity

Rachel Myers, Western Washington University

About the Author

Rachel graduated from Western with degrees in sociology and women, gender, and sexuality studies. In her three years at the Studio, she mixed her passions for equity/inclusion into writing tutoring techniques. She will pursue an advanced degree in social research while working with higher-education students and staff. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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I could sense the worry and tension the minute they walked in. They looked frazzled—like they had been stressed all week and were falling behind. But they also looked purposeful, so I could tell that they had an agenda. When I greeted them (let’s call them Chris), I was hit with a flood of information about their huge assignment, their lack of progress, and their need to work quickly and effectively. Chris disclosed that they had obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which often made them obsess too long over a task and pick out every little flaw. But they had a proposition: Chris would set a time limit for each task, and I would be their personal reminder to let them know when they needed to move on. Well, this request was different from the usual! I could tell that my typical consultation tactics would not work here. Instead, I knew it was best to go with Chris’ suggestion and let them work on their own. And that’s how the no-stakes agenda was born.

A no-stakes agenda (NSA) is a mindset that studio assistants have while going into a consultation. Instead of putting forward specific goals, the assistant evaluates the student’s needs and works towards the student’s success. Letting go of my own agenda requires me to reflect on and set aside any assumptions I might be leading with when entering in a consultation. To accomplish an NSA, I remain adaptable and allow visitors to have control. While it may seem counterintuitive, the flexible NSA approach helped Chris feel successful in their writing because they received the support that they authentically needed. Contrast this with a more traditional consulting agenda: to improve thesis, find sources, perfect grammar, or other things we think are pressing fixes.
Maintaining rigid scripts in consultations does not provide flexible support and can discourage students who do not feel like these structures fit their learning processes (Chandler & Sutton, 2018). Rigid scripts can occur when writing assistants get into a routine with students in consultations. It is very common for all consultations to start off the same: asking for background information on the assignment, taking an initial run-through of the draft, asking the student for their concerns, and then find a solution for that problem. Many consultants are most comfortable starting all sessions with these scripts, partly because visitors tend to have similar questions about their writing and partly because tutors can get stuck in the problem-solution rigidity of consultations. But Chris was not at a place to accept help with revising or editing quite yet, so if I had insisted on looking at their syllabus or assignment, I would have just delayed their progress and may have alienated them. Relinquishing a more traditional script, I did not ask them about their assignment at all. Instead, I took an NSA approach, adopting their agenda as my own.

In cultivating an NSA approach, consultants honor visitors’ agency because they respect their agendas and their abilities to use their skills effectively for their own learning. The NSA allows students to decide what they want to work on without holding them to my own or others’ traditional standards of research and writing. Interactions with students become less scripted and less transactional; they are in control of the consultation and have agency over their learning. When I allow students agency over their learning, they create their own expectations about their writing rather than needing to meet my ideals. Over time, the NSA allows students take ownership of their own writing, develop their instincts, and manage their learning process.
The flexibility of NSAs creates opportunity for greater educational justice. With Chris for instance, I was able to create an equitable learning environment even though their needs differed from others; the structural flexibility allowed for their needs to be met and reminded me that my agenda should always be in the best interest of the student. A space is only equitable if it can easily accommodate requests without making anyone feel like their needs deviate from the norm. In reflecting back on my interaction with Chris, I know they felt more empowered — they know they belong. Prompting this confidence in every student is important because I know there are barriers to academic success for many identities. Ensuring equity is something universities are prioritizing, but enacting equity requires structural change. Studio-based learning practices can be one structural solution to equity-related challenges. By providing flexible accommodations to students through NSA practices, libraries, writing centers, and studios can flip the power structure and work toward equity. Although not the sole solution to educational justice, NSAs promote both agency and inclusivity by challenging my own scripts and by allowing students like Chris the power to propose “counterscripts” (Chandler & Sutton, 2018, p. 13). By giving each student thoughtful attention and adapting specifically to their needs, I am creating an equitable learning environment.

When my shift was over, Chris was still on track. I left knowing that I had played an important role in supporting their learning. Holding space for students to make progress is a powerful thing, and a no-stakes agenda creates that space. Chris needed a way to flesh out their ideas on their own and learn the skills of being able to manage their writing process without my interference. If I had changed the course of the
consultation, they would have continued in their patterns of obsessive thinking rather than having agency to continue drafting ways that work best for their needs. By encouraging a practice that strives for flexibility, we inherently create a learning environment that is more equitable, because it puts student needs first and above all else.

Acknowledgements
For her formative comments on an early draft, I offer special thanks to Clarice Gilray, former Writing Consultant at Oregon State University.
References


https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/books/studio/chapter1.pdf
Chapter 3

Academic Literacies as Ecology

Roberta D. Kjesrud, Western Washington University

About the Author

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Abstract

Although many library scholars and some compositionists have issued reasoned and persistent calls for an integrated approach to research and writing instruction, support for these academic literacies remains structurally siloed. Scholars in our home disciplines challenge these siloes with strong logic along with examples of locally driven, project-based collaborations between libraries, writing courses, and/or writing centers, but these collaborations are scarce and exhibit little staying power. Further, they seldom include support for the orphan literacy: reading. In this chapter, I present rationale for a new paradigm acknowledging academic literacies as one united ecology. In this chapter, I echo forward-thinking scholars in our home disciplines by proposing that research-reaching-writing become a merged ecosystem within the academic literacies ecology, and I further propose that a natural consequence to this paradigm includes uniting academic support, communities of practice, and disciplinary scholarship. I also suggest ways practitioners can exert bottom-up change pressure on seemingly intractable institutional and disciplinary structures. To that end, I provide principles and practices for professionals to “leverage small wins” (Meyerson, 2001; Weick, 1984) on the way to a systemic innovation: literacies as ecology.

Keywords: academic literacies, library instruction, writing centers, writing instruction, reading instruction, academic support programs, change leadership, pedagogical innovation
Studio Assistant (SA): What brings you to the Studio today?

Visitor (V): I just want to see if my education paper makes sense.

SA: Great! What part are you most concerned with?

V: Seems like the conclusion is kind of...well, I don’t really have one.

SA: Let’s look. Oh, your paper is on multiple intelligences; I’ve always been interested in that topic. Hm, I see this last citation is from “freeresearchpaper.com.”

V: Is that cited correctly? I’m using MLA.

SA: The formatting is spot on. I’m thinking about the source itself. Could we look at it together?

V: Sure, it’s just a website with a paper on multiple intelligences. I need at least one web source, and this quote is exactly what I need to back up my argument.

—Transcript from a session in the former Writing Center

For most of my career, I smugly thought of writing as the primary literacy. Perhaps that’s why when I facilitated the session glossed above, I barely addressed both the specious source and the visitor’s proof—rather—than— inquiry agenda. Maybe it’s understandable: my identity is grounded in Writing Studies (WS) and Writing Center Studies (WCS). Early career, I treated literacy as discrete and linear: first you research, then you read, then you write. I’m not sure if I thought other literacies didn’t need to be taught or if I just thought someone else should teach them, but, sadly, in both my classrooms and the Writing Center, I held a very narrow sense of writing. I developed staff development curricula featuring theories of teaching and learning, composition, and WCS practice orthodoxies. All well and good. But even though I assigned tutors projects requiring primary and secondary research, I attended little to either their reading or secondary research processes. Tutors picked up my unenlightened ways. In
practice consultations using the above visitor’s draft, they too ignored issues with reading, researching, and inquiry, and they missed literacy interdependencies, even in excruciatingly obvious areas like evaluating source perspectives, integrating source ideas, and quoting and citing. While I have always known good reading and research were crucial to good writing, somehow I didn’t truly know it until I joined Western Libraries, where my Library Information Studies (LIS) colleagues helped me understand how gaps in writing always accompany gaps in reading and research. Embracing this connection made me gulp. The thought of learning new tricks daunted this old dog, but I knew I had to renovate my paradigm—and my practices.

Treating academic literacies as a single, interdependent ecology now resonates in ways the younger me couldn’t imagine living with but the current me can’t imagine living without. As units of an ecology, ecosystems rely on the symbiotic relationship between constituents so that all thrive. Whereas ecosystems are interactive collectives made up of biological actors and their non-biological contexts, ecologies are ecosystems writ large; that is, an ecology considers how an entire constellation of ecosystems works together symbiotically. In the same way ecosystems thrive best when what benefits one also benefits another, an entire ecology operates the same way: an ecology can be sustained only when the associated ecosystems are thriving. Although the ecology metaphor does not yet prevail in our home disciplines, some LIS and WS scholars have toyed with ecological metaphors. For instance, the Association of College & Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Frameworks document calls information an ecosystem (2016, p. 7); other LIS scholars stop short of calling information literacy an ecosystem, but they use ecosystem vocabulary and imagery. Baker and Gladis (2016), for example, discuss
making teaching information literacy sustainable in a campus system, and Jacobson (2016) proposes a model for the “metaliterate learner” in information literacy, the
diagram for which resembles an interconnected ecosystem¹. In his award-winning
volume, Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for
a Socially Just Future, Asao Inoue (2015) introduces writing assessment as an ecology
(I would argue he means ecosystem), which he proposes is made up of several
interconnected elements. Both examples show how some scholars have begun thinking
of literacies as systems. It’s a start I hope to take further. In this chapter, I cultivate a
systemic view that moves us beyond nascent notions of literacy interdisciplinarity to a
complete paradigm shift: academic literacy² as ecology. I also outline how students
benefit when practitioners apprehend and support literacies as symbiotic and
interdependent rather than discrete. Finally, I propose scholarly and disciplinary
behaviors that would help practitioners usher in this new paradigm. Make no mistake:
I’m calling for nothing short of a complete makeover in our home disciplines.

**Literacy Connections in Library Scholarship**

If I asked LIS, WS, and WCS scholars to represent academic literacies in a Venn
diagram, I feel confident all would draw an overlap, particularly between research and
writing. Scholars have analyzed this overlap through the uncanny parallels between
information literacy and writing dispositions. In response to the outcomes’ movement in
higher education (e.g., Sheridan, 1995), the Association of College & Research Libraries
(ACRL) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) independently

¹ See Figure A.1, which presents a visual of “The Metaliterate Learner” (Jacobson, 2016, p. 429).
² For this chapter, academic literacy/literacies will be used to represent the literacies necessary for critically
engaged lifelong learning, including (but not limited to) critical, digital/multimodal, information, listening,
metacognitive, multicultural, political, professional, quantitative, reading, scientific, speaking, visual, and writing.
adopted standards-based outcomes first and frameworks-based ones later. For the most part, neither organization references the other literacy; in fact, given the lack of shared publications, it’s possible neither organization knew of the other’s efforts. But in 2003 and 2004, writing studies’ scholar Rolf Norgaard initiated bridging writing and research, publishing in a prominent LIS journal a conceptual approach for what he calls “writing information literacy” (2003) and a pedagogical approach for “writing information literacy in the classroom” (2004). Norgaard highlighted the common habits of mind students need to navigate these literacy processes as well as the common fight against the reductive perception among students and faculty that writing and researching are mechanistic skills rather than intellectually engaged, rhetorically informed knowledge-making pursuits. Although he says he could have called both pieces “writing and information literacy,” Norgaard explains that

> with that "and" in place, and with our disciplinary territories marked...we could easily share our stories of teaching and service and content ourselves with a bit of friendly theory-swapping.... [T]he title is meant as a provocation...that both fields might benefit in important ways from eliding that "and." Each can and should "write" the other, not just write to and about the other (2004, p. 225).

More than a decade later, Norgaard and his librarian colleague Caroline Sinkinson (2016) reflectively bemoan that, apart from locally driven, ad hoc efforts, neither LIS or WS embraced the attempt to conjoin these literacies.

Norgaard’s theoretical point of view, however, did spawn continued discussion among LIS scholars (Baer, 2016; Elmborg, 2006; Elmborg & Hook, 2005; Escobar & Gauder, n.d.; Gamtso et al., 2013; Gauder & Escobar, 2014; Grettano & Witek, 2016;
Mazziotti & Grettano, 2011; McClure, 2016; Todorinova, 2010; Witek & Grettano, 2014; Zauha, 2014). Many LIS and some WS scholars began comparing ACRL and WPA outcomes documents. For instance, LIS scholar Mazziotti (now Witek) and WS scholar Grettano (2011) offer a side-by-side comparison of ACRL and WPA’s standards-based outcomes, making a compelling case that both literacies rely on a common set of Bloom’s intellectual moves. Just as Mazziotti and Grettano’s standards-based comparison went to press, both WPA and ACRL moved away from skills-based checklists to dispositional habits of mind³, prompting Grettano & Witek (2016) to re-examine literacy parallels. After carefully mapping aspirations from both frameworks, these instructors implemented at their university a first-year composition syllabus featuring student learning outcomes straddling both literacies. Figure 1 below excerpts a section of Grettano and Witek’s Table 3.1 outlining the parallels between WPA and ACRL frameworks (2016, pp. 234–235).

**Figure 1**

*Parallels in WPA and ACRL frameworks*⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WPA Framework</th>
<th>ACRL Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“conduct primary and secondary research using a variety of print and nonprint sources” in the “Develop Critical Thinking Through Writing, Reading, and Research” experience</td>
<td>• Searching as Strategic Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Authority Is Constructed and Contextual</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information Creation as a Process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scholarship as Conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information Has Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Research as Inquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ See WPA’s *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011) and ACRL’s *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016).
⁴ WPA and ACRL framework quotes as cited in Grettano & Witek, 2016, p. 234.
If this small taste of parallel frameworks doesn’t convince, I invite you to read the entire volume hosting their work, *Rewired: Research-Writing Partnerships Within the Frameworks* (McClure, 2016). In the editor’s introduction, McClure asserts that “information literacy and writing instruction [are] family members who share DNA but grew up in different worlds” (2016, p. v) and that research-writing—or what Norgaard (2003, 2004) first called “writing information literacy”—is now an established term for what is a single, intertwined, and recursive process. McClure suggests these processes were always intended to be instructed together. LIS scholar Sharon Mader, Dean Emeritus from the University of New Orleans Library, concurs, saying that McClure’s volume seeks to reunite kin who were “separated at birth” (2016, p. vii). While the WPA/ACRL frameworks unify the *Rewired* volume, contributors represent over a dozen universities that have intentionally revised their undergraduate writing curricula, partnering in significant ways with teaching librarians and including information literacy outcomes in their first-year writing and writing in the disciplines (WID) courses. Section three of the volume notably features assessment demonstrating that joint instruction amplifies both information literacy and writing outcomes. Similarly rooted in analyzing the parallel frameworks, LIS scholar Andrea Baer (2016) suggests writing-library collaborations are logical and worthwhile, but since she also acknowledges they are politically difficult, she stops short of suggesting integration.

**Literacy Connections in Writing Studies/Writing Center Scholarship**

If the library world was busy embracing literacy connections in 2016, so too was writing studies. While the two volumes we just considered were published for an LIS audience, *Information Literacy: Research and Collaboration across Disciplines*
Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity

(D’Angelo et al., 2016) was published for a composition audience. Also themed around the profound connections between frameworks, the D’Angelo et al. volume introduces shared vocabulary and values around multimodal literacies, threshold concepts, transfer of learning, and metaliteracy. Although heavily slanted toward partnerships between English composition and libraries, the volume includes two angles that both McClure and Baer miss: integrating information literacy in WID and researching employers’ values around writing information literacy. While the Information Literacy volume suggests methods for increasing institutional conversation and structural mechanisms for ensuring attention to information literacy (see for example, Chapter 20: “Bridging the Gaps,” pp. 411-428), it also stops short of pressing disciplinary professionals to embrace academic literacies as a unified ecology. In fact, as banner a year as 2016 was with overdue responses to Norgaard’s 2004 argument for joint literacies, all three volumes fail to suggest mechanisms for uniting research-writing. Collectively, these scholars present disappointingly little transferable, principled how to unite literacies, but to their credit, they present a lot of compelling why.

If LIS and WS scholars barely move the needle in shifting the paradigm, writing center studies (WCS) scholars nearly fail to notice there’s a paradigm to shift, even though writing centers may be in the best position to unify literacies in practice. Long ago, Elmborg and Hook’s (2005) volume promoted writing center-library collaborations aimed at providing joint support for research and writing, yet chapter authors represent initiatives that stop miles short of integration. Like other LIS and WS scholars, they describe episodic partnerships for offering combined workshops or joint hours during crunch weeks. Yes, they prompt new vision by featuring a range of models, but they also
feature many of the personality driven partnerships Norgaard fears (2004). Two notable chapters, “Roots Intertwined” (Currie & Eodice, 2005) and “Yours, Mine, and Ours” (Leadley & Rosenberg, 2005) address Norgaard’s concerns by outlining methods of creating sustainable, systemic institutional support for collaborative models, but ironically, the collaborations described in these chapters didn’t survive these authors’ departures for other institutions. Clearly sustainability requires more than good ideas and good will. And just as clearly, even systemic models don’t stick unless practitioners fully embrace a united literacy ecology.

Of course good will does matter, so LIS scholar Elise Ferer (2012) takes a meta-analytic approach to identifying what LIS and WCS professionals desire of each other. Since LIS scholars publish their interests over twice as often as WCS scholars, Ferer had a much easier time identifying what librarians want from their writing center collaborators: co-outreach (p. 545), get-to-know-you-and-your-service activities (p. 546), space sharing (p. 547), co-teaching student/faculty workshops (pp. 548-49), and most of all “the training of tutors and/or writing center staff in library resources, research skills, and/or information literacy” (2012, p. 549). From scant WCS literature, Ferer finds just one thing writing center professionals want from library collaborators: help with promotion (p. 551). Since both LIS and WCS scholars publish in journals unlikely to be read by the other, it’s hard to imagine how either profession will get what they want. Ferer goes on to push more aspirational ideas for partnering, but I can’t help noticing that LIS professionals seemingly express much more vision for integrating

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5 The call for proposals issued by Habib and Nomubiru (2019) for a specially themed issue of writing center and library partnerships slated for Writing Lab Newsletter: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship suggests nascent engagement in connecting literacies, but given the publication, the audience will likely be limited to WCS readers.
literacies than WCS professionals, whose desires are limited to enlisting the other’s help with promoting siloed writing support. It’s as if WCS literature is channeling the writing-smug younger me.

While the foregoing literature represents a two-pronged approach to literacy partnerships (library with writing, or library with writing center) rarely does literature represent collaborations among all three. But one case study at West Virginia University represents an LIS-WS-WCS trilateral partnership in first year composition (Brady et al., 2009). Although the various prongs play unequal roles (librarians are embedded, the writing center is not), all provide collaborative support for information literacy (IL), including three writing center tutors cross-trained in IL. Although the authors make helpful recommendations to guide would-be collaborators in other institutional contexts, the aim of their venture focuses exclusively on reporting IL outcomes as separate from writing outcomes, a contradictory failure to challenge literacy siloes. In a more recent but rare example contrasting bilateral and trilateral approaches, Napier et al. (2018) compared the outcomes of bilateral library–writing support against the outcomes from trilateral library–writing–writing center support. In the bilateral group, students received a library workshop consistent with traditional one-shots, whereas in the trilateral group, students received scaffolded workshops, first by studio staff who attended to framing an inquiry followed later by a library session focused on finding sources. The researchers (a collaborative group of librarians, writing faculty, and studio personnel) found that students in the trilateral group demonstrated greater proficiency with IL outcomes as measured through the holistic assessment of students’ final writing, that is, embedding library IL sessions in writing classes “improve(s) students’ ability to
locate and evaluate information, but students continue to struggle with the ‘use’ component of information literacy” (2018, p. 1). While this research offers compelling evidence for an integrated pedagogy, I note the practitioners take a sequential rather than integrated approach to literacy instruction, and like others before them, the researchers perpetuate discrete literacies by parsing outcomes.

**Reading: The Orphaned Literacy**

If scholars have made halting progress in envisioning a merged research and writing landscape, reading remains a whistle stop when it should be a destination. According to the 2015 *Nation’s Report Card* on reading, just 37% of high school graduates read at grade level or better. Although not all graduates go on to college, these numbers indicate that up to two thirds of first-year students may be significantly underprepared for college-level reading (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015). Although students rely on it more than any other literacy for success in college, reading remains mostly an orphan literacy, possibly because we subconsciously hold a once-for-all-time acquisition myth about reading. Neuroscientists beg to differ. From a human evolutionary perspective, reading is a new invention that the human brain is still evolving to accomplish (Dehaene, 2010; Wolf, 2008). By activating millions of neurons, readers’ brains manage parallel and collateral processes to achieve comprehension: decoding man-made symbols, recoding them to make meaning, holding meaning in working memory, storing meaning in long term memory, and retrieving meaning from storage. We may associate reading with leisure, but the reading brain is working very hard indeed.
Although it’s beyond my scope to consider all the cognitive demands of reading, I will illustrate its complexity using just one process: memory. The reading brain first holds meaning in the working memory. Previously called short-term memory, working memory is not merely short in duration, about 2 seconds, but it’s also limited in capacity, 2-7 chunks of information (Baddeley, 2007). Although affected by information complexity, familiarity, and interest/motivation, working memory is something like a small sieve that gradually dumps its contents as the brain continually fills with new. No wonder what I read sometimes goes in one eye and out the other! In effect, that’s precisely what happens, because unless my brain prepares schema for filing information received from my overflowing working memory, older input simply trickles away.

Communication between working and long-term memory must be continuous, meaning the brain must remain highly active and engaged. In short, the cognitive load for reading makes it neither easy nor passive. Unless readers are coached in a highly metacognitive process, we often aren’t aware until we finish of a “Wait, what?” comprehension gap. Yet despite increased qualitative and quantitative demands of college reading both textual and digital, students are rarely supported in reading dense texts and unfamiliar genres. So, although faculty wring their hands at how little assigned reading students complete and although students have known comprehension difficulties, no discipline truly owns reading by offering adequate scholarship and evidence-based instructional practices.

Literacy practitioners seem to intuitively know we should be doing something more to support reading, so a handful of scholars have begun researching students’ reading behaviors (Carillo, 2015, 2016; Horning et al., 2017; Horning & Kraemer, 2013; Jamieson, 2013). Some call into question how much (little?) reading college students are
doing and how much (little?) they comprehend it. For instance, in The Citation Project’s (CP) intertextual analyses of 174 first-year papers collected across 16 colleges, researchers found that nearly 70% of citations were from the first page of a source (Jamieson, 2013). Further, in over 1900 pages of research-based writing, students rarely summarized the overall gist of source texts, preferring instead to copy one or two strategic sentences—just like the visitor in this chapter’s opening transcript. Calling this hunter-gatherer practice “sentence-mining,” Jamieson and Howard (2013) point out that the data are equivocal: students may or may not be reading beyond the first page, and students may or may not be capable of the kind of deep reading it takes to synthesize complex concepts across multiple sources. Shockingly, we simply don’t know.

Some scholars focus on reading behaviors particular to digital texts (Horava, 2015; Jabr, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Wolf, 2008). Nielsen’s usability studies (Nielsen, 1997, 2013, 2015) suggest that typical web reading behavior involves scanning and cherry-picking more than reading print. Using gaze plot tracking, Nielsen’s group studied exactly which parts of web text were read thoroughly so that they could make usability recommendations regarding all-important web layout. Concluding that screen reading seems to invite more scanning, browsing, and hunting for keywords, Jabr (2013) notes that while engaging digital texts, readers fail to employ the same kind of metacognitive learning regulation that they do with physical text. As a result, screen readers generally more poorly comprehend and retain what they read. These scholars avoid judging one type of text as superior, but neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf (2008) claims that screen reading may alter the human brain for good. Noting that it took her weeks of screen fasting before she could once again get lost in a good book, Wolf claims her brain had
changed so that she could no longer summon sustained focus on physical text. LIS scholar Tony Horava (2015) notes these and other tendencies after reviewing Wolf and others, but he goes on to conclude that librarians have a role to play in teaching students how to become more critically aware of the strategies they are using. Jabr (2013) would agree, but although the metacognitive awareness students need to manage their text/screen strategies should be instructed, the reading process will likely remain unsupported without a literacy-as-ecology paradigm.

By now the need for reading instruction should be clear. Students come to college reading under grade level, unprepared for new academic genres, and lacking adaptive strategies for physical and screen reading. One might argue students lack preparation for college-level research and writing as well, but although both utterly rely on a reading foundation, there’s far less academic support for reading than either research or writing. The answer to this compelling need is obviously not to create a new support silo; instead, inviting reading into the ecosystem essentially uses reading as a bridge in uniting support for all three. Since these three literacies rely on the same conceptual and processual cognitive skills as per Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2000), keeping them artificially separate is a folly sustained only by fossilized traditions and pedagogies.

**Shifting Paradigms: Literacies as Ecology**

Implementing a new paradigm ideally requires new structures. Some readers may have the professional agency to propose new structures; many don’t. Whereas I take on a top-down approach to structural and institutional change in Chapter 6, “Value

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6 For a visual representation of academic literacies as ecology, see Interchapter 3A, “Modeling Ecology,” or the Literacies Clusters Rosette represented in the Appendix, p. 3.34.
Added, in this chapter I focus on a bottom-up approach. Yes, structures affect practices, but practices can also powerfully affect structures. This bottom-up approach works even for those who are not well-positioned to alter structure. As organizational behavior expert Debra Meyerson (2001) suggests, we can all lead transformative change in low drama, high impact ways by working incrementally with respect, patience, and courage. Meyerson builds on the work of organizational theorist Karl Weick (1984), who sought to explain and counteract humans’ paralyzing failure to act when confronted with overwhelmingly large-scale problems such as world hunger. In an approach he calls “leveraging small wins,” Weick urges starting with do-able acts not only because such acts accrue but also because they often light the way to the next do-able act. Dr. Ken Hudson (2020) suggests that the small-wins approach promotes inclusive ownership; that is, everyone in an organization has agency in shaping big change.

In urging practitioners to get busy winning small, I suggest do-able acts for professionals based on gaps I have noted within each home discipline. Of course, my perspective is biased. For LIS professionals, I can only offer an etic gaze: I perceive gaps in scholarship and practice that insiders may dispute—or I may have missed something obvious to insiders. For WCS professionals, I offer an emic gaze: I perceive gaps in scholarship that outsiders may not—or I may be blind to something obvious to outsiders. Adopt what resonates; leave what doesn’t.

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7 Astute readers will recognize leveraging small wins as part of scaffolding, which is essentially leveraging bite-sized strategies to yield big learning.
Principles and Practices for LIS Professionals

1. ** Adopt an evidence-based pedagogy. **

   Although MLS/MLIS program curricula have evolved, many still feature only one or two courses on pedagogy, shortchanging teaching librarians in major ways (Norgaard & Sinkinson, 2016, p. 16). Teaching rarely enjoys the same level of attention in LIS that it does in WS, possibly because information literacy is typically co-curricular rather than curricular. For instance, writing in the disciplines (WID) enjoys nearly universal acceptance on most campuses, but there is seldom a corresponding movement in information literacy. WS professionals are rarely credentialed without years of composition teaching experience, but LIS professionals may or may not have similar opportunities. In short, writing enjoys curricular positioning in ways information literacy doesn’t, which may explain why LIS as a discipline languishes behind WS in articulating a common core of pedagogical practices and in designing curricula, syllabi, and assignments.

2. ** Value teaching over service. **

   Lacking an articulated LIS pedagogy forces practitioners to use service as a surrogate (Norgaard & Sinkinson, 2016, p. 17). Service models rarely reward pedagogically based assessments, shortchanging librarians’ intellectual engagement in researching evidence-based innovation. The service model may be responsible for fossilizing the point-and-click demos so common to one-shot bibliographic instruction and in let-me-find-you-sources librarianship. Neither equips students for life-long

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8 As my Seattle Pacific University librarian colleague Liz Gruchala-Gilbert (personal communication, June 28, 2020) points out, the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic forces a reliance on online learning that may prompt a permanent flipped classroom approach to demos. When in-person instruction resumes, librarians can offer workshops that allow students to go deeper into merged literacies.
learning. Pleasing faculty customers may also keep LIS professionals from using their expertise to challenge ill-conceived research-writing assignments (Norgaard & Sinkinson, 2016). For example, for many years our librarians served students completing source scavenger hunts without engaging faculty in conversations about ways to make assignments more authentic and more likely to advance information literacy dispositions. In a teaching mindset, students must be equipped with research strategies for life-long learning pursuits, be they academic, employment, or self-sponsored learning, and faculty must be guided in developing assignments and practices that truly scaffold those outcomes for students.

**3. Acknowledge that writing means information literacy.**

Sometimes my LIS colleagues seem a little miffed that writing gets more institutional attention than information literacy. Most higher education institutions (HEIs) have writing requirements, so faculty ask more about how to teach writing than research/reading. I may hate that faculty still complain, “Johnny can’t read/write,” but at least these exaggerations mean they care about both literacies. I admit I’ve heard far fewer say, “Johnny can’t research,” so my LIS colleagues may perceive a lack of interest. But when students and faculty say *writing*, they mean information literacy, even if they don’t use the jargon. In the silo paradigm, practitioners see literacy as a zero-sum game in which support for your literacy means less support for mine. Embracing a merged literacy ecology means we all row for the same team. If it helps advance research-oriented dispositions, just call information literacy *writing*. Because it is.
4. **Share library political capital in literacy communities of practice.**

LIS practitioners currently enjoy an interdisciplinary political capital that WS and WCS professionals often do not. Since most campus stakeholders view libraries as the intellectual, interdisciplinary crossroads of HEIs, teaching librarians often develop close connections with faculty teaching courses with research-based writing assignments. In contrast, faculty often unfavorably associate first-year writing and writing center programs with English departments, causing a disciplinary credibility gap. Librarians routinely work across disciplines or are directly embedded in departments, but writing professionals typically remain unincorporated unless librarians represent a literacy ecosystem. Most HEIs also have a much larger cadre of teaching librarians than writing professionals, so a more expansive community of practice would be helpful in advancing literacies. For instance, at my University, we consider ourselves short-handed with just a dozen teaching librarians, but, despite a significant writing requirement, we employ just one cross-disciplinary, part-time writing professional. Their situation is not just lonely; it is impossible to be impactful without shared professional connections.

**Principles and Practices for WS Professionals**

1. **Attend to academic literacies in first-year composition.**

   Faculty in the disciplines seem to believe first-year composition a one-size-fits-all course that will inoculate students against bad writing for all time. When students show up in departmental majors, faculty may believe students are underprepared because of poor first-year curriculum or inadequate graduate student instructors. Although we know literacies develop over a lifetime, these faculty may have a point. Equipping
students with a full range of academic literacies may be the holistic approach departmental faculty are asking for.

2. **Invite LIS and WCS into the composition community of practice.**

Because composition suffers a skills-based stigma (even tenured composition faculty are often lower on the food chain than their closest colleagues in English Literature), you’d think composition faculty would band together with literacy professionals suffering a prestige gap. Instead, some WS faculty assert their importance over both LIS and WCS scholars, enacting a stereotypical kick-the-dog trope. In my HEI, for example, past first-year writing graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) outsourced grammar teaching to the writing center in favor of loftier curricular goals. Once GTAs and tutors developed even a nascent community of practice, outsourcing stopped and partnership started.

3. **Share curricular political capital.**

If librarians have interdisciplinary capital, WS faculty have curricular capital. Many HEIs require one or more lower-division writing courses and capstone or writing intensive experiences, but few grant formal credits for library or writing center learning. In an ecology paradigm, writing expands to include reading, researching, and even listening and speaking. If competing in the old paradigm is subtractive, collaborating in the new paradigm will be multiplicative. I harbor a not-so-secret desire to re-brand Writing in the Disciplines (WID) as Inquiry in the Disciplines (IID) because the proposed name communicates a literacy ecology united to serve the inquiry curriculum all disciplines hold in common. Until this revolution, WS practitioners should make
space for literacy writ large in their curricula so students gain experience with the holistic approach to the literacies their future careers demand.

**Principles and Practices for WCS Professionals**

1. **Cultivate pro-active centrality to institutional mission.**

   Sports coaches often say the best offense is a good defense. Maybe that’s why some WCS professionals cultivate a protectionist stance toward campus collaborations (Harris, 2000; Salem, 2014; Sunstein, 1998). But I urge WCS professionals to flip the script: a good offense is the best defense. A holistic approach to literacy increases student participation, contributes to inclusive success, connects with HEIs’ core missions, and yields outcomes of value to campus stakeholders and future employers (Cyphert & Lyle, 2016). Studios and writing centers that coach holistic literacies alert students to the normalcy of an integrated process; more importantly, WCS professionals in a holistic community of practice alert faculty to the dangers of teasing out individual literacies. No literacy can be elegantly acquired or practiced in isolation; they must all grow together.

2. **Research and share the student perspective on literacy learning.**

   Whereas LIS and WS practitioners arguably connect most tightly with faculty, WCS practitioners connect most tightly with students; together, they afford a potent 360-degree view of teaching and learning. Writing centers know which course assignments are universally dreaded or confusing because students are simply more comfortable self-disclosing in a peer-ethos thirdspace. WCS professionals are uniquely positioned to research students’ literacy learning behaviors in ways that can help other HEI stakeholders understand the acquisition process, and we are also uniquely positioned to sponsor undergraduate research on teaching and learning in ways that
augment the democratization of knowledge-making. This approach is fundamentally anti-oppressive and bears deep fruit for transforming the academy.

3. **Offer a deep well of strategies to scaffold growth in cognitive and processual literacy understandings.**

LIS and WS colleagues offer a wealth of classroom-based strategies, but when generic strategies need to be altered on the spot to meet individual learning preferences or universal design, WCS practitioners who work primarily one-to-one have more experience with individualizing process strategies. Over my years in the classroom, I gained a modest toolbox of writing process strategies. But now as a Studio veteran coaching the full range of connected literacies, I have developed exponentially more. Further, I am well-practiced in the principles behind adapting strategies to individual learner preferences.

4. **Lead the campus in linking literacies and communities of practice.**

Because student learners come to us practicing the full range of academic literacies, WCS practitioners seem well-positioned to act as what Malcom Gladwell (2002) calls “connectors,” people at the nexus of multiple social networks. Now almost six years into our approach to our Studio’s merger of research, reading, and writing, we think like connectors. For instance, we began asking ourselves what other literacies (quantitative, digital, speaking/listening) connect within an academic literacy ecology? To what extent does the whole ecology rely on common cognitive moves, and in what ways can those moves be scaffolded with similar strategies? In thinking these questions through, we identified connections between presentational literacies, writing and

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9 For more on tailoring strategies, see Interchapter 2B, “Channeling Dr. Frankenstein.”
speaking, and receptive literacies\textsuperscript{10} (reading, listening, researching), so the Hacherl Studio began adding support for listening and speaking. Now that our Tutoring Center falls under the same organizational umbrella, we are exploring connections with quantitative reasoning. Since the Tutoring Center enjoys greater credibility in STEM, we eventually plan on equipping science tutors to coach lab report writing. The possibilities will align differently in each institution, but note how well-positioned WCS practitioners are to discover, propose, implement, and assess these linkages.

Faculty often identify threshold concepts (Meyer & Land, 2005) that, once understood by novice students, will usher in deep disciplinary understandings. Threshold concepts change everything, they shift paradigms—they help us see anew. I argue that it is past time for LIS, WS, and WCS professionals to embrace our own threshold concept: academic literacies are a single ecology. Of course, like all threshold concepts, literacy as ecology is troublesome; it fundamentally disrupts our comfortable identities and our historical practices. New habits of mind challenge structures, and developing new structures is tricky and painful—and makes our brains hurt. But re-imagining and innovating is exactly what is being required of HEIs. Imagine future structures: LIS degree programs will feature expertise in all the literacies as will composition programs. Faculty, staff, and tutors will be cross equipped in strategies to support an interdependent literacy ecology. The ACRL and WPA will merge, or at least their frameworks will, and reading will take a rightful place in the family. Literacy scholars on tenure lines will forward theory, research, and pedagogy not for discrete literacies but for the ecology, and tenure and promotion will generously reward this

\textsuperscript{10} As we’ve seen earlier in this chapter, neuroscientists are uncovering the highly complex neuroprocessing that challenge the so-called passive acts of cognition.
approach. Yes, we will retain areas of specialization just as in biology or anthropology. But academic literacies would be a single discipline with common scholarship and common pedagogical practices.

I can hear readers arguing: “B..b..but, upending disciplinary structures is simply beyond our control.” Yes, but there are always do-able acts. For instance, let’s re-write our opening session from an ecology point of view.

*Studio Assistant (SA): Hm, I see this last citation is from freeresearchpaper.com.

V: Is that cited correctly?

SA: I’m thinking about the source itself. Could we look at it together?

V: Sure, it’s just a website with a paper on multiple intelligences. I need at least one web source, and this quote is exactly what I need to back up my argument.

SA: Wait, could we talk more about source use? I worry when people cherry-pick convenient facts and throw out inconvenient ones, don’t you? What did you read that complicated your notion of multiple intelligences?

V: Actually, I had trouble finding sources.

SA: Oh! So “freeresearchpaper.com” might not be your first choice?

V: No! I couldn’t find anything else, and I didn’t really have time to read anything dense for this little paper. I have a big one I’m worried about.

SA: So how about if we look at the search strategies you’re using. I’ll bet we can enhance those, which will help for this and for your bigger paper.

V: I didn’t want to ask. I thought I should already know this stuff.

SA: Not at all, research is like detective work. The methods are complicated!

—Hypothetical transcript from an integrated literacies Studio session
In our Studio where integrated literacies is one of our signature pedagogies, conversations like this occur every day, and they are very much in our control. Individually, these conversations may not perceptibly change the institution, but they do change us, and they change students, and we shouldn’t underestimate how these do-able practices accrue. Collectively, this approach begins normalizing for HEIs what students already intuit: literacy is a chaotic, recursive, messy, and entirely interconnected process. Support for it should be too.

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Appendix

Visual Representation of a Literacies Ecology

Western Washington University’s General University Requirements: Literacies Clusters Rosette
(Western Washington University, Committee on Undergraduate Education, 2019)
2021

**Interchapter 3A**

**Modeling Ecology**

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About the Author

Wyatt is a biologist and poet who graduated from Western Washington University in 2019. He is currently taking time off before pursuing graduate school in biology. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Modeling Ecology

- Ecosystems bloom mutually
- Building with the flux, actors in the ecosystems interpret ideas to allow for new synthesis
- I revisit ideas, until what I read matches what I understand
- Each ecosystem is defined separately, but thrives only by symbiotic mutualism
- Trophic interactions between ecosystems support a single ecology
- Ecology has emergent properties only possible when ecosystems interact
- Emergent niche space where the researched and read ideas of others coalesce with your own on the page
- All ecosystems benefit; a mutual sharing of energy across ecological space
- Seeking the ideas of others produces energy flux for other ecosystems
- Everything I know I learned in conversation with those more knowledgeable than me
- Furthering the conversation as the ecology grows and evolves
- Although traditionally separated connections between ecosystems cannot be ignored for ecosystems occupy shared space

Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity
Chapter 4

Placemaking through Learner-based Design

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Abstract

The field of education has begun offering research-based evidence for what makes learning spaces optimal. Most of that research, however, focuses on classrooms, omitting learning spaces associated with academic support programs. Although our home disciplines frequently theorize the relationship between space and learning, we simply lack empirical evidence. To unite evidence with theory in this chapter, I review space literature writ large, starting with theories of space proposed across the disciplines. I explore the relationship between material and metaphorical space, place, thirdspace, and non-place before considering the more menacing aspects of the ways built space in higher education can communicate not-your-place to some students. To promote equity-based learning spaces, I propose adapting invitational learning theory as a basis for learner-based, anti-colonial and anti-racist design. Finally, I counteract practitioners’ tendencies to first consider logistics (“How many square feet do we need?”) and aesthetics (“What’s the best chair?”) by proposing a principled approach to identifying learning goals and equity-based signature pedagogies before designing inclusive spaces that facilitate those pedagogies. The appendices include practical design resources used in designing the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio.

Keywords: Space, place, non-place, thirdspace, inclusion, invitational learning theory, learning environments, space design
I walk up the library stairs, steeling myself to make it through four hours of dense readings and discussion posts. I’d rather be home, I avoid the library building (haven’t visited in months), but here I am. As dread mounts with each step, I notice to my right several dozen people bobbing in an ocean of blue and green furniture, some on couches gazing at textbooks, some scribbling on whiteboards, a group pushing together a series of moon shaped tables. Wait, what happened to the old-timey cubicles with the back-eating chairs? Just what space is this?

—Composite reflections of Studio Accidental Tourists

I admit it: watching design shows is one of my guilty TV pleasures. I’m both shocked and mesmerized by provocative design features that homeowners either love or hate. I know I’m dating myself, but am I the only one who remembers when one Trading Spaces designer glued hay to a wall? What was that about? Yet surprisingly, when it came time to design the donor-funded Hacherl Research & Writing Studio, the architects were like HGTV designers—they were more interested in choosing signature colors and design features than in our program’s function. Instinctively we knew this approach would end badly, maybe because the writing center lived through too many years of location, space, and affordance challenges that worked against learning. Since we wanted not aesthetics but optimal learning to drive design and since we wanted a design process that matched our students-first program ethos, the Studio design team fired them. In search of a democratic and principled design process, we reviewed the literature in our home disciplines, library studies (LIS), writing center studies (WCS),

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1 *Accidental tourist* is our term for visitors who are initially unaware they are in the Studio. The vignettes sprinkled throughout this chapter are composites based on actual visitor experiences as told to Studio Assistants.

2 The Studio design team comprised the Associate Dean of Libraries, the Head of Research, the Director and Assistant Director of the Writing Center, the Libraries’ Facilities Manager, and in later stages, Western’s interior designer. The Dean of Libraries made the final determination to proceed without external architects.
and writing studios (WS), and we also branched out to other disciplines for theories of space and their connection to learning. While we found strategies in each field, we couldn’t help but notice a decided penchant for the HGTV mentality: we saw floor plans, gizmo reviews, color talk, a little theory, and way too much how-we-do-it-here advice. While many discussed the importance of doors, locks, and security, we were questioning whether we needed walls at all (short answer: we don’t!). While some assert that space is pedagogically deterministic, we were looking for both physical and virtual space features that facilitated our desired outcomes and matching pedagogies. But first we placed our own learning environment decisions into the broader context of higher education, because let’s face it, almost more than money, space is a limited campus resource. Although teaching and learning is the main mission of higher education institutions (HEIs), I was surprised by how much non-teaching priorities like institutional ethos, place in the community, and educational niche influence decisions about the built environment. As was the case for the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio, buildings are often naming opportunities for private donors, so designs must reflect architectural triumphs worthy of naming. In addition to potential donors, built spaces reflect an obligation to state legislatures, regional accreditors, and local communities. In short, built space may be more about other stakeholders than it is about students. But campus spaces also support learning, typically in classrooms that encode the institution’s teaching philosophy and expected learning behaviors. In other words, campus spaces can be read rhetorically (Acton, 2017; Kim & Carpenter, 2017) for larger messages

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3 *Built environments* are human-made ones. They can be physical, virtual, or hybrid.
around teaching and learning theory, philosophy, and practices—what communication professor Torin Monahan calls “built pedagogy.” Monahan asserts that,

a well-trained eye can read...spaces for the pedagogies they facilitate. A classroom with neat rows desks embodies pedagogies or "tacit curricula" of discipline and conformity, whereas spaces personifying the flexible properties...can be said to embody pedagogies of freedom and self-discovery. I call such architectural embodiments of educational philosophies built pedagogy. (2002, p. 5).

As Monahan claims, HEI environments most often reflect built pedagogies of “discipline and conformity”4.” In reading the rhetoric of a lecture hall, for example, students intuitively understand that a sage will be imparting knowledge while they listen and take notes. Flexible classrooms may feature moveable desks, but they are typically arranged in neat rows facing the instructor and the backs of other learners. Long socialized into the built campus environment, students internalize a long list of expected behaviors: in K-12: raise your hand, avoid side conversation, ask permission; in college: no gum, no cell phones, no surfing. Virtual learning environments similarly imply a pedagogy built around teachers, not learners. No matter how user friendly, the name says it all: learning management systems are about teachers managing students’ learning. If learning environments are built for the system, so too are off-duty spaces. Health centers, recreation facilities, dining halls, coffee shops, student unions, bookstores all encode normed behaviors. Even in their own dorms, students control little beyond their

4 Thanks to my colleague Jill Reglin for pointing out how this discipline and conformity message is especially true in pandemic teaching, with distancing and plexiglass barriers in place.
wall decor. Because built HEI environments often cater to external stakeholders, enable dated pedagogies, and disinvite agency, students lack a sense of place in the academy\(^5\).

Of course studios, writing centers, and libraries aspire to become spaces students claim as their own, so our Studio’s design team became curious about principles for designing a space that enables our signature pedagogies, prompts our learning outcomes, and invites ownership among users. This inquiry triggered an iterative journey through the literature, starting with our home disciplines but expanding to cross-disciplinary scholarship theorizing space along with an assortment of attendant concepts: place, thirdspace, and non-place. Next, I overview what I call *not-your-place* aspects of spatial messaging that undergird education’s current efforts to decolonize space and pedagogy. As a complication, I also overview why many scholars, particularly indigenous ones, call out the use of *decolonizing* language because it renders metaphorical a concept that should remain literal. Finally, I propose an inclusive process for space design. Rest assured that I also address the concerns of those leading so-called marginal programs who may lack agency over the space they’re assigned. It’s a lot. As always, skip what you don’t need, and use what you will. You’re invited!

**Space, Place, Thirdspace, and Non-place**

As I weave through tables looking for an ideal spot, I notice some high-rise tables overlooking the fountain, some study booths made of soft felt, and some mini rooms outfitted with glass sliders. Such variety! I finally choose a moon-shaped table, which I immediately move to the window and away from a small group formatting their research poster on a big screen. I notice several whiteboards, so I drag one over to create privacy.

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\(^5\) I recently interviewed an alumna and her roommate about the degree to which they identified agency in campus spaces. Overall, they both answered that they felt less than 5% agency. The Libraries and the Studio rated far better, with over 90% agency.
I’ve got my own pop-up office!

—Composite reflections of Studio Accidental Tourists

Since geographers, anthropologists, and urban planners routinely theorize space, I trust their work to define terms in use throughout the rest of this chapter. The term space obviously can’t support a monolithic definition; space can be physical, psychological, metaphorical, virtual, temporal, liminal, personal, public, safe, open, racialized, and more. Realizing that space can’t be reduced to mere materiality, geographers emphasize temporal and psychological elements. Interestingly, three main theorists, Ernst Cassirer (1940s), Henri Lefebvre (1990s) and David Harvey (2000s), propose three elements to space, although each proposes a slightly different three. Building on Cassirer, philosopher and sociologist Lefebvre suggests that space and time are inextricably mixed and that both are defined not by physical features but rather by how both are socially constructed (as cited in Harvey, 2006, p. 279). Anthropologist and geographer Harvey (2006, 2009) extends Lefebvre’s theory by examining how power relationships embed social justice issues in any consideration of space. While it’s beyond my scope to detail their Marxist-influenced philosophies, all three complicate the materiality of space in ways that illuminate symbolic, relational, and political aspects of what practitioners often reduce to square footage and cubicle design. These geographers illuminate the hegemonic intentions of space planners (yes, even library and writing center planners), but they also acknowledge the power of users to bypass intent and use space as they wish.

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6 A 2020 example of the way users can redefine a space occurred during racial unrest in Seattle; protestors redefined a commercial zone adjacent to a police precinct to establish CHAZ, the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone.
These metaphorical abstractions prompted other theorists to consider notions of *place*, which emphasizes the complex history, memories, interactions, and relational aspects humans associate with a space, be it physical or virtual. For instance, your alma mater is material, but it holds a special *place* in your heart perhaps because it helped you discover your *place* in the world. Yet the relationship between space and place is also contested. Sociologist Richard Sennett (2018) challenges a rigid space/place binary, preferring just two domains: *built space* (how institutions construct space) and *lived space* (how people mold space through authentic use). Even materiality is contested: although sociologist Yi-Fu Tuan (2001) argues that since space can’t be inhabited without introducing time and identity—in other words, space is place, others argue that place may be entirely symbolic. For instance, computer scientists Harrison and Dourish (1996) originally proposed that place (experiential) arose out of space (physical), but after an additional decade of experience with virtual place, Dourish (2006) reversed the direction of influence: place defines space.

Obviously, which comes first remains debatable, but it’s irrefutable that space/place is socially defined. Yes, but not so fast; enter another concept: *non-place*. Not all spaces or places are conducive to social relationships, and in fact, some spaces may be specifically designed to prevent them. Anthropologist Marc Augé (1995) coined the term *non-place* to describe material spaces that encourage transience and anonymity. Increasingly the norm, airports, lobbies, waiting rooms, and supermarkets function as non-places because few of us develop any attachment to them. In fact, non-place deliberately disinvises attachment; otherwise, the space can’t function optimally. HEIs, for instance, may function better as non-place because they cannot successfully
meet their missions unless each class of students makes way for the next. HEIs send strong messages that students are more guests than residents in classrooms, dining halls, and even in dorms. One anonymous former writing center assistant got the message: “In grade school, I had a homeroom; in high school, I had a locker; in college, I have nothing but my writing center mailbox.”

Despite a non-place campus context, libraries and writing centers aspire to create place, or possibly *thirdspace*. Emerging from postcolonial space thinking, scholars apply the concept of thirdspace across contexts as diverse as linguistics, urban studies, and composition (Grego & Thompson, 2008; Miley, 2013; Soja, 1996). Thirdspaces are a hybrid, a synthesis, a both/and. Some first space/second space binaries include physical/virtual, professional/domestic, public/private; thirdspaces disrupt these binaries. At the time of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, thirdspaces can be easily understood by tele-educators who are now blurring boundaries between home and work, physical and virtual. Since academic support programs typically embrace both learning and leisure behaviors, scholars frequently draw on thirdspace concepts in writing centers, studios, and libraries.

**Space Theory in Writing Centers**

Two space/place themes dominate writing center studies: as metaphorical place, they are on the margins; as physical space, they are cozy homes. In terms of institutional place, the dominant WCS narrative bemoans marginality, a concept that folds into a

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7 *Thirdspace* theory is most closely associated with urban planner Edward Soja (1996), but note that the New London Group (1996) applies the concept to genre theory, particularly multiliteracies involving multimodal genres.  
8 Another hybrid notion of space includes Foucault’s *heterotopia*, which makes an appearance in writing studio scholarship (see for example Kim & Carpenter, 2017). Although the term brings new complexities to the table, heterotopia also centers the hybrid aspects of thirdspace theory.
larger story of “iconoclasm” (Grutsch McKinney, 2013a, p. 36). Grutsch McKinney suggests WCS literature holds three main reactions to marginal place—denial: we have always been mission central and should reject marginal victimhood (Gardner & Ramsey, 2005; Harris, 2000; Simpson et al., 1994); relevance: we used to be peripheral but are now mission central (Macauley & Mauriello, 2007); or subversive: we can use the borderlands to escape institutional unpleasantness or challenge institutional inequities (Denny, 2008, 2010; Engler, 2013; Geller et al., 2007; Grimm, 1999, 2011; McNamee & Miley, 2017). Grutsch McKinney asserts that all three of these responses oversimplify, but the fact that they are still storied suggests that writing centers’ place within institutions is less imposed from without than constructed from within. Yes, institutions impose their valuing of writing center program placements in the ways they allocate (or withhold) scarce resources like money and space. Faculty and administration may view writing centers as unfortunate remedial necessities, cost centers (see Chapter 6) that syphon contested resources away from departments. Yes, there’s a reason writing centers have so often inhabited windowless, poorly equipped, back-of-beyond hovels rejected by those further up the institutional food chain. No doubt students and faculty alike read the rhetoric of these spaces, internalizing unspoken messaging about these programs’ place as peripheral to institutional mission and to learning. But WCS staff all too often proclaim marginality themselves to the point that some tutors claim them as “anti-classrooms” (Engler, 2013, p. 1). Perhaps marginality offers relief from ethical dilemmas inherent in the institutional mainstream (grading, for instance), exempts us from the same level of institutional scrutiny and program evaluation, and allows professionals to be the underdog hero, equally adored by peer tutors and writers. As
long as students think we wear capes, we’re good, and the stories we tell ourselves and each other (lore) offer enough evidence that we’re using the margins to good effect.

Iconoclasm is also a likely cause of the prominent cozy home space replete with ugly couches, period kitsch, and lava lamps⁹. Yet cozy as a space ethos receives just criticisms as feminized rather than professional (McNamee & Miley, 2017), safe rather than brave (Brugman, 2019), and comfortable rather than needfully dissonant (Camarillo, 2019; García, 2017; Grimm, 1999, 2011). If couches, coffee and tea, and snacks remain required affordances, writing centers will not be read rhetorically as serious places of teaching and learning. Beyond the search for a space to “envy” (Ambrose, 2015) or to achieve a design “ideal” (Hadfield et al., 2003), WCS has done little to articulate theories, philosophies, and learner-based practices of space and design. For instance, the WCenter listserv often buzzes with questions about space and design, particularly early in the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic when many were struggling to invent a virtual space. In non-pandemic times, the threat of being merged into a learning commons prompts threads seeking strategies for planting a spatial flag¹⁰. And when professionals encounter design/redesign opportunities, the threads seldom pose philosophical questions about attending to social justice in built space or even about establishing an equity-based design process. Instead, the field seems content with lore and pragmatics based around program needs: How many square feet per client? Is the director’s office central or peripheral? If you had X dollars, what would you buy?

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⁹ As an extreme, Kevin Davis triumphantly suggests we “get creative” in making “slum into haven” (1995, p. 7). Apparently, I’m not the only director to have become irrationally attached to affordances that don’t serve learning. ¹⁰ See for example “Sad News” (Moussu, 2016).
Although lore-based approaches prevail in WCS, Ann Gardiner (2017) invokes space theory. Referencing Lefebvre’s theories of space as social relationship, Gardiner looks holistically at Franklin University Switzerland’s academic context to identify programmatic relationships involving the writing center, both current and potential. Noting fragmented academic support, she aligns several programs to leverage collectively a higher-profile space than any single program could garner. Once those alliances translated to a new physical space, Gardiner considered the essential functions of each program and revised the evolving design to ensure that sometimes conflicting initiatives received the dedicated space and affordances each function needed. In the process, Gardiner found ways to avoid unintentionally excluding students, saying “we have gone from being a clubhouse for the select few to a democratized space for the Franklin community at large.”

The clubhouse mentality Gardiner (2017) noticed receives attention elsewhere in WCS, especially from Singh-Corcoran and Emika (2012), who note the prevalence of both cozy home and safe harbor themes. In line with relationships-define-space philosophers reviewed early in this chapter, these authors pose two inquiries: (1) How does the writing center space affect social practice? and (2) How does social practice shape the writing center space? Although their answers make the entire article worth reading, I particularly value their method: cross-disciplinary inquiry. Leaving WCS to call on broader scholarship, the authors summarize Augé’s concept of non-place, concluding that,

[f]or many students, the writing center may have qualities of a nonplace, particularly for those students who just pass through as they fulfill their
university writing requirement...students do not develop lasting relationships with others in the center, and they develop no attachment to the space. Echoing Grutsch McKinney’s (2013b) claim that writing centers function as home only to staff and not to learners themselves, Singh-Corcoran and Emika suggest that writing centers are place to tutors but non-place to students, and they go on to suggest further research to identify how being non-place affects program outcomes.

**Space Theory in Writing Studios**

In tandem with WCS, writing studio (WS) scholars critique institutional space/place from the margins, in this case, studios associated with first-year composition programs in English departments. In their seminal volume, *Teaching/Writing in Thirdspaces*, Grego and Thompson theorize metaphorical place: they propose leveraging an “outside but alongside position” (2008, p. 70) to challenge the place of composition in English, the place of thirdspace in traditional learning environments, and the place (or non-place) of students in shaping institutional culture. Recent WS scholarship, especially *The Writing Studio Sampler: Stories about Change* (Sutton & Chandler, 2018), explores exploiting marginal power. In the first chapter, the editors describe the collection as “narratives told by individuals...who used their studio’s outside-alongside position to challenge and transform the institutional structures which framed it” (Chandler & Sutton, 2018, p. 3). Several of the volume’s authors demonstrated leveraging studios bi-directionally; that is, they prompted change in institutional built space and pedagogy, and in doing so, elevated the place of writing and writing instruction in the English department.
Although WCS and WS share much the same metaphorical marginality, physical space themes diverge; WS scholarship more deeply theorizes material space, both physical and virtual, mainly because these theorists are typically grappling with how to operationalize an innovative studio pedagogy within the constraints of traditional classrooms. There are no cozy home references in WS scholarship; instead there’s attention to how to undo the rhetoric of a classroom. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that WS scholars distressingly conflate space and pedagogy, and I called out one edited volume featuring the term pedagogy in the title but space in the content. Perhaps since writing studios are typically inhabiting classrooms, this conflation can be forgiven; these authors are merely noticing the deep connection between built space and built pedagogy (Kim & Carpenter, 2017; Monahan, 2002). That said, I’m puzzled about why so little classroom-oriented education scholarship is referenced in WS scholarship. Instead, WS literature forges a deep connection to multiliteracy genre theory (Balester et al., 2012; Inman, 2010; New London Group, 1996; Selfe, 1986; Sheridan & Inman, 2010) while largely ignoring learning environment scholarship published in EDUCAUSE Review or the Journal of Learning Spaces. Both journals offer quality evidence for how classroom spaces causally affect learning, and they both inform space planning. It’s as if WS scholars can’t make up their minds which is more pedagogically deterministic: the content taught or the space it’s taught in.

**Space Theory in Education Studies**

While both WS and WCS scholars come from space-is-scarce disciplines, education and library scholars operate more from a space-is-secure mindset. This relative security seemingly enables more empirical themes in this scholarship, as
evidenced by publications like *EDUCAUSE Review*. Education researchers have long assumed that space affects pedagogy, but few scholars have offered empirical evidence until recently. In a series of quasi-experimental research projects (Brooks, 2011, 2012; Brooks et al., 2014; Brooks & Solheim, 2014), D. Christopher Brooks investigated the influence of space on learning, concluding that while space is not pedagogically deterministic, classroom design certainly “constrains and/or facilitates the manner in which individuals relate to or experience a space” (Brooks et al., 2014, p. 3). In “Space Matters,” Brooks (2011) suggests a causal relationship between space and learning, whereas his subsequent research “Pedagogy Matters, Too” (Brooks & Solheim, 2014) suggests the same about pedagogy. In “Space and Consequences,” Brooks (2012) investigates the effect of both space and pedagogy on learning. These studies were variations on a theme: one instructor teaches the same introductory biology course, one section featuring traditional lecture methods in a traditional classroom and the other featuring active learning pedagogy in an active learning classroom (ALC). Despite no significant initial differences between participants, students in the ALC earned significantly higher final grades and participated more in discussions, leading Brooks and colleagues to conclude that “space does not determine behavior, but influences how we act and relate within it...” (Brooks et al., 2014, p. 2). Brooks and his collaborators, then, offer empirical evidence that both space and pedagogy affect learning, regardless of the content being learned.

**Space Theory in Libraries**

Like educators with plenteous classrooms, libraries, too, traditionally enjoy a large campus footprint, although with the digital age, some question the need for this
footprint. Historically, academic libraries “have generally been designed first and foremost as places to collect, access, and preserve print collections” (Freeman, 2005, p. 1), not as places of teaching and learning. Collection-oriented buildings are almost deliberately intimidating, often sending messages to the unwashed masses not to touch rare and precious stuff. But as information made the transition from scarce to abundant and from physical to digital, libraries have faced an existential crisis forcing a pivot from preserving materials to serving people. This transition has led to lively discussions about competing needs for collection space and people space. Once purchased, collections are perceived as cost-neutral, but in fact ongoing collections maintenance is not cheap; worse, collections displace people.

Owning a new identity as sites of teaching and learning, libraries have overcome the threat of irrelevance, so much so that faculty see libraries as extensions of the classroom, a kind of laboratory for learning (Bennett, 2005, 2007; Freeman, 2005). In fact, “[n]o other building can so symbolically and physically represent the academic heart of an institution” (Freeman, 2005, p. 9). Given this clarity of mission, libraries have been intentional about theorizing space, place, and thirdspace (Bennett, 2005, 2007; Council on Library and Information Resources, 2005; Elmborg, 2011; Elmborg et al., 2015; Freeman, 2005). Thirdspace is a good-fit metaphor for libraries because they are purposed for serious scholarship, but they are designed with creature comforts that may not be available at home. Flexible furniture, including coffee shops, ample power sources, and a continuum of noisy-to-quiet zones all offer the kind of tailored learning environment inviting users to manipulate built space. Among the physical spaces to choose from on campus, libraries are a destination. In metaphorical ways, too, libraries
enjoy prominence of place in ways that WCS and WS do not. Often considered the intellectual crossroads of HEIs, the inclusion of computer labs, learning commons, and zones for collaborative groups amply demonstrate how libraries have leveraged their metaphorical centrality to augment materiality. Although there will always be students who avoid library buildings, libraries are more likely to be place than non-place, as most students form strong bonds with a particular floor or spot—few carry warm fuzzies about a classroom or academic program11, but many alumni can recall for years after graduation a favorite library window, chair, or nook.

In addition to being a campus destination, libraries enjoy exponentially more real estate than other academic support programs; both factors almost certainly explain why LIS scholarship features richer considerations of principle-based design. In fact, when it comes to theorizing and designing physical space, LIS offers much evidence-based practice that could guide other academic support programs. Library literature contains everything from a one-page guide to design principles (Sens, 2009) to an over 1000-page definitive tome that includes recommendations on everything from hiring an architect to planning acoustics and lighting. The Practical Handbook of Library Architecture: Creating Building Spaces that Work (Schlipf & Moorman, 2018b) comes complete with a chapter called “More Than 200 Snappy Rules for Good and Evil in Library Architecture” (2018a, pp. 9–22) that includes both principled and pragmatic advice:

2. A badly designed and constructed building is a pain forever. Or until it falls down, whichever comes first. Never cut planning time short (p. 9).

11 In the NSSE survey, for example, students place a lack of importance on support services (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2020).
“Design first, program second” is an easy recipe for a seriously bad building (p. 13).

The number of architects who understand libraries is exceeded by several thousand percent by the number of architects who don’t understand libraries but are confident that they do (p. 13).

A bargain building in a bad location is a bad building. A beautiful building in a bad location is also a bad building (p. 19).

While reading these rules may make you laugh out loud (I did), the principles prevail: planning takes time, program design precedes physical design, users should reign, and location trumps space. Libraries also lead the way with data-driven design. For instance, the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) publishes a web resource called “Academic Library Building Design: Resources for Planning, User Studies & Precedents.” Not only does this resource curate a variety of published user studies, it also suggests methods for designing local user surveys. Among ACRL’s offerings are ample resources for universal design, including the principles offered by the North Carolina State, summarized in Appendix A, p. 41. Given this wealth of these contributions to space planning scholarship, LIS space scholarship deserves an audience with all who plan spaces at HEIs.

Not Your Place

So far, I’ve focused on a deliberately depoliticized, white-normed discussion of space, which unfortunately mirrors the tone of WCS, WS, and LIS scholarship itself. But depoliticized spaces do not exist, so it’s past time to introduce a truth only privilege can ignore: all spaces are racialized. Note that I am self-conscious about authoring this
section\textsuperscript{12} because, as I mention in Chapter 1, my \textit{whiteliness}\textsuperscript{13} is far less visible to me than I would like. Given that I’m very much a “first-generation equity practitioner” (Gray as cited in Brown McNair et al., 2020, p. 107), I urge readers to check my claims with those more experienced in the BIPOC experience or in equity practices. But with humility and caution, I invite you to join me in engaging with the limitations of space theory. No matter how the academy sees space, place, thirdspace, or non-place, for many from minoritized identities, HEIs are simply not their place.

Because his own identity has such deep geographical connections to the colonized Lower Rio Grande Valley, writing center scholar Romeo García (2017) talks a lot about place in his critique of WCS anti-racism scholarship. Asserting that the brown identity has been elided from white/black binary discussions of anti-racism, García engages “decolonizing” metaphorical place as he recounts feeling like he has “no place” in the academy or in writing centers. As he says “For me, the writing center is neither my safe space nor my home” (2017, p. 48). García’s narrative introduces yet another kind of place, akin to Augé’s physical non-place but much more sinister. While Augé describes anonymous physical non-place, García references a dangerous metaphorical non-place. For García, features of the academy, including writing centers, send a menacing message: it’s not-a-place-for-you-and-your-kind. Whatever evidence-based space planning principles libraries, writing centers, and studios articulate, principles to avoid not-your-place messages must be thoroughly and carefully engaged. Yet these messages remain deeply imprinted in HEI spaces and pedagogies.

\textsuperscript{12} I invite readers to communicate with the editors about white-normed assumptions that need to be challenged.

\textsuperscript{13} Race scholar Dr. Frances Condon defines \textit{whiteliness} as a racialized epistemology or way of being in the world (as cited in D.-J. Kim & Olson, 2013, p. 1).
In part as a response to gaps in critical pedagogy in educational theory, “decolonizing pedagogy” is a theoretical lens through which to analyze not-your-place messages (McCoy et al., 2016; Robertson, 2016). The decolonizing movement features equity-oriented pedagogies that seek the undoing of a myriad of social injustices associated with colonizing. Historically, colonizing meant land-grabbing by settlers, but over time, it has been conflated with other insidious by-products of colonialism: racism, sexism, militarism, capitalism, and the like. Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that by calling for “decolonizing pedagogy,” scholars have made a metaphor out of something that ought to be literal: decolonizing literally means repatriating land, period. They ask for a return to that meaning. Tuck and Yang naturally embrace undoing all of colonialisms’ by-products, suggesting such pedagogies be called anti-colonial.\(^\text{14}\)

Given that colonizing is only about space, I find it disheartening to see so little literature using an anti-colonial, anti-oppression, or equity lens in critiquing learning spaces. Searching journals like EDUCAUSE Review and the Journal of Learning Spaces disappointingly revealed little or no attention to equity. Since institutions typically design spaces primarily with power stakeholders in mind, I carefully propose that the degree to which the student voice has been excluded from planning makes all HEI built environments somewhat colonial and certainly not anti-colonial. And the degree to which only white stakeholders are consulted makes all HEI spaces white spaces.

Libraries, studios, and writing center scholars do engage anti-oppressive pedagogy, but

\[^{14}\text{Honoring the literal meaning of decolonizing caused me difficulty in referencing scholars who use the term metaphorically; I use quotation marks to indicate when the original literature references metaphorical “decolonizing.” There is no perfect term. Using the term decolonizing erases the indigenous identity from scholarship. Post-colonial must be rejected given that settlers still occupy indigenous lands, and anti-colonial remains problematic given that settlers are not restoring them. Nevertheless, anti-colonial or anti-oppressive are the terms I’ll use.}\]
they too omit space/place from this discussion. Instead, libraries emphasize “decolonizing” knowledge (Rosenblum, 2015), studios emphasize “decolonizing” classroom power structures (Sutton & Chandler, 2018), and writing centers emphasize “decolonizing” language (Greenfield, 2011; Grimm, 2011). Of course, these considerations should move forward, but our home disciplines must more deeply consider our spatial rhetoric to ensure it doesn’t merely replicate same hierarchies and not-your-place messages as our wider contexts. Doing so means practitioners must find a way to ensure planning principles and processes include anti-colonial practices that challenge white space.

**Equity-based Space Planning Using Invitational Education**

If we trust that academic support program planners have every desire to avoid creating not-your-place environments, then we must recognize that HEI spaces should always be owned by and for students. The extent to which colonial by-products like capitalism and power hierarchies have made space about institutional interests is the extent to which students of all identities feel the academy is not their place. Although the theory and practice of invitational education (IE) was not developed with anti-racist intent, I believe the theory provides a promising lens for restoring students to primacy of place in HEIs. Yet, restoring primacy of place is itself problematic. As my colleague Pippa Hemsley writes,

> [I]nvitation alone does not “decolonize” when colonizers invite colonized parties back into space or practices that are rightfully theirs to begin with. [We] are representatives of an institution that has squashed creativity and agency out of students, and now we’re inviting them back...on our own terms. [The invitation]
counters how the academy has done things before but isn’t a “decolonizing” practice (personal communication, August 24, 2020).

With Hemsley’s cautions in mind, I do not suggest that invitational education alone addresses not-your-place equity concerns—or that the theory was invented or intended to be used this way. But if enhanced with a cultural competence overlay, I think IE may hold promise as one do-able anti-colonial practice. IE was proposed by educational theorist William Purkey (Novak & Purkey, 2001; Purkey, 1991; Purkey & Novak, 2008, 2015) and is now promoted by the International Alliance for Invitational Education (IAIE). With the goal of inviting students into their full learning potential, IE offers several heuristics for students to assess how well educational structures and teacherly behaviors invite that potential. Not exclusively a space theory, IE suggests all educational programs comprise three foundations, five elements, five domains, five levels, and four dimensions, which is confusing to explain in text but far easier to comprehend through the IAIE’s sea star diagram. Purkey and Novak (2015) see space as just one of five interrelated domains (people, places, policies, processes, and programs) and urge decision-makers to treat the entire web as a unified whole before, during, and after planning space. In other words, space planning is program planning (Gardiner, 2017; Purkey & Novak, 2015; Schlipf & Moorman, 2018a).

In planning an anti-oppressive educational programs, IE theory alone is not enough. In fact, critical pedagogists (see for example McLaren, 1986) justly complains that IE foregrounds individualism and denies oppressive societal structures. Though Novak and Purkey’s space values seem based on white norms, their heuristic has equity potential in that space is evaluated from the perspective of the student user, not the
faculty or administration. Practitioners can augment the anti-colonial potential of invitational theory by pairing it with principles of a critically aware cultural competence (see for example Brown McNair et al., 2020). The IE heuristic to help program planners create inviting spaces calls for asking student users to assess them. If the consulted students are all white, IE succeeds in disrupting institution-student power dynamics but fails as an anti-racist change practice. However, if the consulted students represent across identities, IE becomes both anti-colonial and anti-racist by promoting what Brown McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piqueux (2020, p. xvi) call engaged inclusivity15. To my knowledge, libraries, writing studios, and writing centers have not systematically assessed the invitingness and engaged inclusivity of their programs as perceived by users from across identities.

In the space design process for the Hacherl Studio, the team succeeded in implementing principles of IE but failed in holistically “walking our equity talk” (Brown McNair et al., 2020). First, our success: our process was anti-colonial. As suggested by IE, our design team assessed using a 2x2 heuristic of invitingness: intentionally/unintentionally inviting; intentionally/unintentionally uninviting (see Appendix C, p. 44). We assembled mixed teams of professional, faculty, and student staff from across Learning Commons’ partners to observe users at each service point across the Libraries. Not only did these observations helped us analyze the inviting/uninviting aspects of each space but they also helped us develop locally relevant objectives for designing the most intentionally inviting new space. For instance, all the teams identified walls and other barriers as intentionally uninviting. Since we wanted to

15 See Chapter 1 for a more thorough discussion of this term.
invite students to use the space with or without staff present during all library hours, these observations helped us decide to forego walls, doors, and locks; once we made a decision based on principle, we later chose logistics to match. We made many other principled decisions that centered local student voices but also matched scholarly recommendations: flexible, adaptable layouts (Gee, 2006; Van Note Chism, 2006), adjustable, ergonomic furniture inclusive to body type (Gee, 2006), zones to support learning functions (Gee, 2006; Sens, 2009; Sheridan & Inman, 2010) and accommodate learner preferences/neurodiversities (Anderson, 2016), barrier-free, natural light sources, easy access to power sources (Gee, 2006), and affordances that support collaboration (Berry & Dieterle, 2016).

And now our failure: our process was not anti-racist. Western Washington University reports that, during the year of our studio planning, students of color comprised 23% of enrolled undergraduates (Office of Institutional Effectiveness n.d.). But the Hacherl Studio space planning team, the contracted architects, the University’s interior design team, and the University’s facilities personnel, in other words, all those with decision-making authority, were all white or white-passing. Other non-dominant groups were represented, but this fact was serendipitous. Despite anti-oppressive intentions, our collective equity practices had not evolved enough to recruit all identities to our design team. Western is exceptionally white, Western Libraries is exceptionally white, and the Studio was—and distressingly still is—exceptionally white. As a result of our failure, we can’t be sure the degree to which our current space is invitational to visitors of color, and we are not remotely comforted by statistics indicating BIPOC students use Studio services at disproportionately higher rates. For all we know,
students of color may use the Studio more because they feel compelled rather than invited. Let our failure be your caution.

**Principles, Processes, Practices for Space Planning**

I don’t pretend to offer a complete set of definitive principles, processes, and practices for space planning. Unlike Schlipf and Moorman, I offer neither 1000 pages (2018b) nor 200 rules (2018a), snappy or otherwise. But in an interdisciplinary-informed effort to counter the pragmatic and pursue principles, I offer this section of planning strategies. I can hear some readers murmuring: “But look at you: you got to make decisions from the beginning. What about us?” Some are in the renovation process but with little agency like my colleague Jill Reglin who says: “[D]irectors hardly know what is going on with renovations until the project is complete; the ”big reveal” happens, and [I am] left thinking, ‘Oh, gee. . . how nice,’ much like I would think if someone else picked out my clothes” (personal communication, December 8, 2020). Others get hand-me-downs, whatever built space and affordances prior tenants left behind. It may seem like the Hacherl team had the ultimate in design agency, but all spaces have limitations, be they physical (like immovable walls) or political (like immovable power structures).

1. **Identify the limits and opportunities of your planning agency; then act as if you have all the agency you need.**

Academic support professionals get so used to inhabiting marginal places in the hierarchy that they begin to act marginal. But agency can’t be granted, only taken. For example, the Hacherl Studio was originally destined for a different floorplate. But the design team was troubled by the lack of access to daylight, one of students’ top

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16 Note that many of these principles reference a white paper developed before beginning the Hacherl Studio design process (Kjesrud & Helms, 2014, see Appendix B, pp. 42-43).
priorities, so we informally sketched alternate plans. But contracts had been signed based on the initial plan; the deal was done. One Monday morning after a sleepless weekend, I decided to act as if change were still possible. I determined to float our alternate proposal up the chain of command until someone said no. It’s a testament to our organization that nobody did. By day’s end, the Dean of Libraries notified Facilities that we’d be requesting work on the same floor but in a different spot. Not every request prevailed, of course, but the point here is pretense: start by assuming you have agency, not by assuming you don’t.

2. **Assemble a broadly representative planning group inclusive of all identities, including race.**

   Whether old or new, no space will be inclusive without deliberately including non-dominant voices. No matter how sophisticated their equity practices, dominant voices cannot channel non-dominant perspectives. Include students, both staff and users, from across identities. Avoid exploiting non-dominant stakeholders by offering adequate compensation for their input. When minoritized stakeholders offer observations, listen deeply and do your own emotion work in processing white bias. I speak from experience when I say it’s difficult to reverse a lack of inclusivity, so just do it from the start. No excuses.

3. **Develop a heuristic; map space planning to program objectives.**

   Design your own heuristic or adapt one or more of these promising options: the Invitational Education heuristics (Purkey & Novak, 2015), the EDUCAUSE Learning Space Rating System: Version 2 (Brown et al., 2017), the Proposed Planning

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17 Pictures are available in Appendix D, pp. 45-48.
Principles: Linking Pedagogy and Space (Fisher, 2005) and the Principles of Universal Design (Connell et al., 1997). Our heuristic results may be found in Appendix C, p. 44.

4. Articulate your space/place philosophy; use it to guide decisions before considering logistical challenges.

Our philosophy included enabling an ad hoc learning community created and chosen by students, in other words, a heart place for learning. Achieving this goal means inviting students to manipulate space and affordances for their own purposes. Since students express a decided preference for collaborating (fully one-third of our visitors work collaboratively with one or more others), we maximized our collaborative zone to enable group learning in ways that were previously unavailable at the writing center or reference desk. Our philosophy also means imposing no boundaries on learning, so our space doesn’t close when the staff leaves. Seemingly insurmountable in the planning stages, dreaded logistical challenges have proved entirely trivial. I’m so glad we weren’t limited conceptually by what seemed impossible to implement logistically.

5. Articulate outcomes first; then choose matching evidence-based, innovative pedagogies.

Much of the literature reviewed earlier in this chapter suggests that if you get the space right, you’ll automatically get the pedagogy right, too. Based on Brooks and colleagues (2012, 2014), I argue that space influences but does not determine pedagogy. Therefore, we recommend backward design—decide learning outcomes, innovate signature pedagogies to achieve those outcomes, and only then build or alter a space that facilitates your innovations. Keep in mind that traditional library and writing center pedagogies are some 40 years old, so space recommendations based on those traditions
will inhibit rather than forward innovative practices. New babies really do need fresh bathwater.

6. **Avoid design based on aesthetic; instead, facilitate representational design charrettes**\(^\text{18}\) to optimize function.

   Our original architectural firm wanted to design something to remember, something they could claim in their marketing, something worthy of the donors. I get it: I was entirely enamored with having a water feature (come on, it would be so cool!). But just because you can doesn’t mean you should, and often the lowest tech stuff is the most popular. The resources students wanted turned out to be more affordable: windows (the compelling reason we re-sited the whole studio at the 11th hour), lots of seating choices, moveable everything, and whiteboards aplenty. One of the best moves we made was hosting a chair party. We put out ten sample chairs, invited everyone passing through to sit in them, and put them to a vote. When we didn’t consult users, we made mistakes; for example, our fancy display screens rarely get used, and our entrance seating boasts a shows-all-the-dirt fabric. Oops. But that brings up the next rule.

7. **Avoid casting in stone so you can revise as you go.**

   Predicting how a space will get used is impossible; it’s akin to building sidewalks before finding out where people naturally walk. For some things, we got the principle right but the implementation wrong. For instance, we chose furniture for the focus zone that signaled total quiet, an expectation we couldn’t fulfill in a highly collaborative space. We also hoped pods could provide accommodation for those who need less stimuli to concentrate in consultations. Neither worked well. When post-

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\(^{18}\) Design charrettes are used regularly in architecture and design. Charrettes involve assembling stakeholders for rapid assessment so designers can revise plans based on immediate feedback.
implementation space problems arise, keep hosting design charrettes to understand the problem and test solutions. Fortunately, we knew to reserve 10-15% of our initial resources, because when these and other problems arose, we were able to alter our initial design to resolve them.

8. **Attend to all material space, including virtual.**

Planning virtual space at the same time as physical space helps ensure all material spaces remain congruent in terms of philosophy and pedagogy. We didn’t learn this rule till much later; worse, we lack total control of our web space. Our lack of holistic planning shows. For instance, a consultant recently asked me how to answer a visitor who asked: “If I can drop off my draft online, why can’t I drop it off in person?” Other visitors have asked if they can get line editing online since they can’t get it in person. These legitimate questions highlight the need to unite all material space under the same outcomes, the same philosophy, and the same pedagogies.

9. **Attend not just to material space but also to metaphorical place.**

As mentioned in [Chapter 6](#), merging the writing center with other units much improved our metaphorical place within the institution. Originally enjoying a more secure metaphorical place, even the Libraries has secured a much higher profile among powerholders by creating the Studio, yet the Studio would never have happened without a consolidation that initially seemed threatening to our institutional place. Not all consolidations or realignments benefit student learning, but with intentional work, they can; ours does. As a result, we not only have more material space, but we also inhabit a larger institutional place. Collaborating across literacies, disciplines, and organizational
cultures will never be easy, but it will always be worthwhile for students. Because that’s who space/place is for.

_Settling into my pop-up office, I slap on my headphones and begin the study marathon when I notice my laptop is just about out of juice. About then, someone sits down at my table, saying, “Welcome to the Studio! What are you working on today?” After a short exchange, she brings me a portable power pack and invites me to make use of anything and anyone I need. Hunh, so this is the Studio, eh? Cool!_

—Composite reflections of Studio Accidental Tourists

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Appendix A

Principles of Universal Design

Universal Design (UD) is defined as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” In the late 1990s a team of UD experts at North Carolina State University developed this set of seven principles still in general use (Center for Universal Design, 1997).

1. Equitable Use - The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2. Flexibility in Use - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3. Simple and Intuitive Use - Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

4. Perceptible Information - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

5. Tolerance for Error - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

6. Low Physical Effort - The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

7. Size and Space for Approach and Use - Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.
Appendix B

Space Planning White Paper

Overarching Goal: To design Western Libraries’ Research & Writing Studio as a context-specific teaching and learning space that facilitates our signature pedagogies and furthers our learning outcomes. Our signature pedagogies include studio-based learning (including peer-based inquiry, scaffolded strategies) and integrated literacies (researching, reading, and writing as a literacy ecosystem). Our learning outcomes include cognitive and affective growth in inquiry, collaboration, and agency.

Principles of Design: To achieve the overall goal, the design and design process should follow these recommendations.

1. Design should exploit “third space” liminality by offering affordances that invite users to transform space into place (Keppell & Riddle, 2012; Kirkwood et al., 2012; Sellers & Souter, 2012; Souter et al., 2011).
   a. The design should offer features associated with formal learning (power sources, blending of technologies, lighting).
   b. In addition, the design should offer stimulating amenities commonly associated with personal learning spaces (creature comforts, playful elements).
   c. Affordances should be intuitive and invite users to supply and use their own furnishings and configure those supplied, creating a sense of place.

2. Design should be adaptive, flexible, and future proof (Souter et al., 2011; Van Note Chism, 2006; Weaver, 2009).
   a. In addition to accommodating current learning activities, the design should anticipate future learning activities and the accoutrements (including technology) to support them.
   b. Space should be easily reconfigured and repurposed to meet the full range of learning activities.
   c. Up to 15% of the total budget should be reserved for adaptations that cannot be anticipated until users actually use the space.

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19 Adapted from the white paper originally submitted to the Dean of Western Libraries, Mark Greenberg, by Kjesrud & Helms, 2014.
3. Design should be safe, healthful, and inclusive (Grummon, 2009; Grutsch McKinney, 2013a; Oliver, 2009).
   a. Maximize inviting and minimize uninviting messages as interpreted by the broadest range of diverse users.
   b. Ensure access to all visitors and to all features of the space and to all learning activities.
   c. Support not just institutionally sponsored learning but also student-initiated learning.

4. Design process should be recursive and participatory, equitably including the broadest range of stakeholders (Grummon, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Reushle, 2012; Weaver, 2009).
   a. Start the design process with a small group of priority stakeholders meeting with designers.
   b. Vet emerging plans by casting an ever-wider net of campus stakeholders; honor equally the voices of institutional stakeholders and the voices of students (both users and staff).
   c. Before finalizing plans, bring all end-users, campus/community stakeholders, and design experts together in a “design charrette,” thereby ensuring the widest-scale ownership of the final space/program.
Appendix C

Invitational Education Heuristic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intentionally Inviting</th>
<th>Intentionally Uninviting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Smiling people</td>
<td>• Closed, locked, “keep out”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eye contact</td>
<td>• Barriers, blocking access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usage is intuitive</td>
<td>• Non-intuitive technology, furniture, practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Windows, natural daylight</td>
<td>• Practices for convenience of staff, not visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfortable furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unintentionally Inviting</th>
<th>Unintentionally Uninviting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Finding friends in the space serendipitously</td>
<td>• Appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff member has taken same class/assignment as Visitor</td>
<td>• Imposing desks/visual barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supplies sitting out for all to use taken on purpose or accident</td>
<td>• Staff inattention: glued to devices, deep in conversation with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussing a Visitor, even in favorable terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unresponsive or reluctant staff (“I’ve got homework, could you help them?”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trip hazards, lack of accommodation, no power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Non-inclusive visuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• White norms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix D

Pictures: The Living Room Zone
Pictures: The Collaborative Zone
Pictures: The Focus Zone
Pictures: The Classroom Zone

Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity
Interchapter 4A
Make Space

Wyatt Heimbichner Goebel, Western Washington University

About the Author
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Make Space

corner or put it all together with agency to make place shaped by your your goals with meaning at seat the table

in your own table in the back

there is room for you here

there is room for here you

collaborate in a space that moves

becoming place

notice the procession of support

waiting to greet you

don't need room to rest,

You catch your breath

Welcome to the Studio

Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity
2021

**Interchapter 4B**

**Welcome to Your Place:**
The Inclusive Power of Greetings

Kellyn Elaine Wolden, *Western Washington University*

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**About the Author**

Kellyn graduated in December 2020 after working at Hacherl Research & Writing Studio for over four years. She is now working in assurance for Moss Adams in their Bellingham office. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio's email: rws@wwu.edu.

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I’ve been wandering campus for twenty minutes carrying a lukewarm lunch looking for a seat. My stomach growls loudly as I walk into yet another building and up the circular stairs. I think I might be in the library, but I’m not sure and don’t care. I just want to eat at this point. Near the top of the stairs, I find a cushy green chair to sit in, set my food down, and sink in gratefully. As I open my box, I’m startled by someone standing in front of me! Uh oh, I think, maybe I’m in the wrong place. My mind races. Are they going to tell me I can’t have food? That I need an appointment? That I’m misusing state property? They are going to yell at me, I just know it. How can I make myself invisible right now? I’ve experienced this doom scenario before on this campus, but this time, a friendly person plunks down next to me. “Oooh, that smells good. By the way, have you been to the Studio before?” They flip through a table tent with different options, reject Hard at Work, and pause at Taking a Break. It’s a promising start but I’m still nervous. Can I eat here? Should I leave? The person sees my apprehension and grins broadly, “Please feel free to hang out and eat! Oh, can I tell you about the Studio real quick?”

—Composite reflection from a typical Accidental Tourist

When I greet anyone in the Studio space, I always try to put myself in their shoes. As an important first impression, greetings nurture connection and rapport while inviting relationship and collaboration. They are my chance to establish my interest in visitors as humans, in their identities, needs, and desires. If greetings lead to consultations, great, but that is not my goal. Instead, I use all aspects of greeting to exemplify invitation, community, and ownership, as if to say, “Welcome to Your Place.”

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1 Verbal greetings aren’t the only way to communicate welcome. For insights on visual ways to foster inclusive welcome, see Nordstrom et al., 2019.
We welcome a lot of visitors, to the tune of 70,000 a year. To tailor my invitations, I have found it helpful to categorize visitor types.

- **New neighbors** intentionally seek Studio consulting, possibly because a professor suggested they do so.
- **Frequent fliers** use the Studio regularly, often without consulting.
- **Accidental tourists** happen into the space, attracted by couches, comfy chairs, and movable tables. The student represented in the above reflection is an example.
- **Hidden gems** don’t plan to work with us, but after an enlightening greeting, they change their minds; many go on to become frequent fliers.

Since we welcome sometimes more than 35 visitors each hour and often introduce the same information, it is all too easy to become robotic. Good greetings, however, demand more than the “May-I-help-you?” tagline that reminds me of a drive through. I want my greetings to be an intentional and authentic invitation to inquiry, collaboration, and agency for visitors across identities. In other words, greetings are not just politeness or marketing; they are pedagogy.

**First Time Becomes a Habit**

The first time I visit any place, I decide whether I will come back. When I get the urge to go on autopilot, I keep in mind that if I am uninviting, even unintentionally, a first-timer may decide not to return. On the other hand, if I make a good first impression, I may convert an accidental tourist into a frequent flier. At my best, I find personal connections that make visitors feel like part of our learning community from the start. New neighbors, for instance, may have erroneous preconceptions based on faculty misconceptions or previous writing center experience. In greetings that embody the Studio’s collaborative atmosphere, I clarify our identity while giving visitors a clear
pathway for using our services. For accidental tourists, I don’t wait for them to approach me. Instead, I greet each person in the space, so everyone feels comfortable visiting regardless of what they’re doing. I am conscious of an inevitable, employee-visitor power dynamic, so my approach works to break those down.

**Humans, Meet Humans: No Strings Attached**

Front desks create a familiar barrier in built spaces, so the Studio strives to be barrier-free. We still need a contact point for intentional drop-ins, so our small kiosk, just large enough for a laptop, provides a clear target in an unfamiliar space. The shift manager stationed there sees all and establishes the open and inviting atmosphere by encouraging visitors to choose their own spot and settle in before a Studio Assistant comes by. This attention provides the first invitation to agency and community. Unlike appointment-based centers, visitors simply drop in\(^2\). When there is a scheduled appointment, there are expectations and preparations involved. In fact, some centers ask hard-to-answer prerequisites about goals, drafts, ideas, etc. We aim to connect with visitors even (and especially) when they don’t know they have questions or aren’t sure how to express them. Reducing our expectations helps us communicate that we have no strings attached even during unavoidably scripted greetings describing our services. In other words, we lower barriers both to space and to services.

**Permission to Eat Lunch**

During greetings, we pass out table tents\(^3\) so that staff can tell at a glance which visitors have not yet been welcomed. In our first-time greetings, we demonstrate how

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\(^2\) In the Studio Partners Program and the Practicum, visitors who want regular coaching on long-term goals can sign up for a consistent partner, either for credit or no credit.

\(^3\) We use restaurant-style table tents with flip pages to indicate visitor status.
visitors can visually signal how much or little interaction they want with staff. For instance, they can choose *Hard at Work*, *Taking a Break*, or *I Have a Question*. For any student’s first entry as an accidental tourist, I try to convey that the Studio is a perfect place to work on nothing by turning their sign to *Taking a Break*. Even when visitors are simply eating lunch, I always ask if I can explain the Studio’s resources for reading, research, and writing. Usually, their response is joy and excitement because they did not realize we existed. I do not want to pester anyone, though, so I prefer to make my impression in a snap before leaving them to eat lunch in peace.

**The Student Expert**

When I greet and hand out table tents, I assess what level of introduction is necessary. For instance, some who are ready to work may not be in the mood to talk. Part of a greeting is leaving\(^4\) when visitors would be best served by learning on their own. We want to solidify an expectation that we will always say hello, but we also want to give visitors whatever they need, even when that is not consulting. While making ourselves known, we try to anticipate future needs by asking what they are working on, what class it is for, and their progress. If nothing else, these quick questions prompt visitors to articulate goals for their time in the space. Other times, I sit and ask visitors to teach me about their areas of expertise. I love how their teaching me convinces students that they are the expert in their own experience. As an absurdly cool bonus: I have learned literature, history, human services, and more from fellow students.

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The Power of a Name

Ideally, we start deeper conversations with our frequent fliers, starting with learning their names. One of my colleagues uses a name notebook to record each visitor’s name and a few tidbits about their conversation to solidify their new connection. Just like business networking, little details give us the ability to start a more personal conversation with those we recognize, and that serves to enhance belonging and encourage visitors to engage with our services when they are ready.

The Curiosity Approach

The first thing I want to know about visitors is how I can contribute to their priorities. An inquiry approach hopefully helps both of us clarify those priorities. For new arrivals, I find myself asking, “What are you working on?” or when I approach someone that has been working for a while, I often ask, “How is it going?” There are lots of curiosity questions. For instance, if someone has been writing on a whiteboard for a long time, I often ask about notes I find interesting. If a frequent flier looks distracted or distressed, I might offer care by asking, “How are you doing?” Even when visitors are working outside our expertise (STEM, for example), I still ask questions about their major, their affective state, whether exams are approaching. If a chemistry visitor is working on reading scientific articles, they might say, “I’m just reading, so I probably don’t need help.” But my curiosity cannot be stopped. Once when I asked how their reading process was going, a chem student replied, “You know, it’s taking a really long time.” When I told them I had oodles of reading strategies, they eagerly asked, “Wait, really? Could you talk with me about them?” My attitude could be described as eternal
curiosity, but it is based on genuine interest, too. Every visitor presents a new opportunity for engagement.

**Developing Greetings Pedagogy**

Since the goal of greeting is partly human (making connections) and partly pedagogy (furthering learning), how do we equip new staff to greet authentically? Invitational theory (Purkey & Novak, 2015) undergirds our greetings, but in practice, new staff learn by observing and by doing. During new interns’ first three weeks, they observe senior staff using a variety of approaches. Before they begin consulting, new staff practice our pedagogies in greetings. Newbies may feel apprehensive about proactively making the first move, especially those of us who have worked in retail where we are used to customers approaching us only when they need something. Through practice, we shift to a more community-building approach. Even for introverts, greetings become fun. Refining our approaches allows us to tailor them across identities and to grow in cultural competence. Our individual personalities and our own identity groups lead to a variety of ways to make a connection.

**Leaving the Studio: Don’t Forget Souvenirs!**

Eventually, visitors leave. In my early days, they nearly always left their table tent for staff to retrieve. Nowadays, most visitors return their table tents to us while they say goodbye. This act signals both ownership and connection. As we prepare to leave this essay, I encourage these reflections on greetings as invitation and as pedagogy.

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5 I think white bias is really important to bring in here. Visitors of color look excited when staff of color greet them because they relate more closely to employees with shared identities (anonymous BIPOC Studio Assistants, personal communication, October 26, 2018). Although addressing white bias lies outside my scope, I want to recognize its relevance to invitation.
• How do I represent our space to visitors? How can I be more invitational?
• Who do I think feels the most welcome? Who else do I want to feel welcome?
• Why do I think some visitors don’t return? Why don’t some ever visit?
• How can I extend invitation to those who feel the space is not-your-place?

With so many ways to engage visitors, there is no one right way. The freedom from scripts allows us to switch gears based on our own and visitors’ preferences, and this furthers personalized interactions that ultimately communicate to visitors of all identities that this is both Our Place and Your Place.
References


Interchapter 4C

From Black Hole to Mission Control: Study Space Exploration

Evangeline Schmitt, Western Washington University

About the Author

Evangeline is a biology major who loves writing. Her favorite kinds of spaces have views of Bellingham Bay. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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My desk is a mess. I have no idea where all those papers amass from, but amass they do. I usually push free a tiny corner to perch my laptop on, and then sit hunched over it, trying not to elbow books onto the ground. It makes for a distracting workplace, and even as I ignore the mess, I know it affects the way I study. On some level, we all recognize that our surroundings affect our cognitive processes. Ken Graetz puts it very eloquently: whenever we are trying to learn, we are “awash in environmental information, only a small fraction of which constitutes the sights and sounds of instruction” (2006, p. 6.1). If this is true, then we really need to talk about how we interact with space when we’re trying to learn, both in and out of classes. In this little interchapter, I’m going to talk about creating individualized study spaces, at home or in a place like a writing studio. Back to my desk. If I know surroundings are important, why don’t I make the effort to organize things? It’s like there’s a kind of mind block going on – it’s hard to be intentional with study spaces. A clever professor, Robert Gifford, named this block phenomenon “environmental numbness” (1976). Gifford did a whole experiment asking students to work in a room with very awkward desk arrangements. The furniture was lightweight and rollable; they could have easily moved it. But they didn’t. Like me with my black hole of a desk, students ended up adapting themselves to annoying surroundings rather than improving them. Why do we do this? Gifford and others partially attribute students’ passivity to our educational system (Bernardi & Kowaltowski, 2016; Gifford, 1976). And it makes sense. Everything’s always set up for us at school, so we don’t get in the habit of setting up spaces for ourselves.

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1 Graetz illustrates “being awash” with a passage from Harry Potter about Hogwarts! So fun!
Not so at the Research & Writing Studio! This is one of the (many) reasons I love working here— it encourages environmental awareness (the term Gifford used for the opposite of environmental numbness). It’s not only that we can leave our clutter behind. The furniture and layout of the studio encourage visitors to take initiative in setting up a space. Visitors can choose from all kinds of furniture— swivel chairs, rolling tables, couches, armchairs, bars, pods, and the list goes on. There’s also an open floor plan and different noise-level areas. Having these obviously different options already available helps visitors choose their surroundings intentionally. As Lori Gee explains, “Providing furniture that people can rearrange and tools they can manipulate gives them the feeling that they have permission to claim ownership” (2006, p. 10.10). I love watching people come in, look around, and set up camp by moving tables together, spreading out on a couch, barricading themselves with whiteboards—we’ve seen it all.

Taking initiative with furniture is a very encouraging way to start a study session. There’s the feeling of having successfully taken agency in the physical aspect of studying, so maybe there’s hope for the intellectual part of it as well. Seeing the spaces students create is also a reminder to studio assistants to act as guests. We may be hosts for the whole Studio, but visitors invite us into their learning space when they have a question. Being a good guest looks like listening more than you talk, asking questions more than instructing, and giving visitors the final say, and encouraging reflection on their preferences.

To summarize, studying and consulting both come more easily in our lovely studio space. So imagine how I felt when, during my second year working at the studio, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the world. The studio went virtual: virtual meetings,
chats, and webcasts. No friendly furniture, no open floor plan, no tangibility whatsoever. Also, guess who was now spending all her time at her messy desk. How could anyone possibly make nice study spaces now?

I found an answer by asking a different question. I was having my regular beginning-of-quarter check-in meeting with studio pro extraordinaire, Pippa Hemsley. She asked me about my classes, etc. and I was telling her how hard it is to focus on virtual lectures when more interesting projects are ready-at-hand to distract me. Pippa suggested a few work-from-home sensory habits that my brain could associate with studying—wearing different clothes, or a hat, listening to certain music, using a candle, or a diffuser. Little things that would make me experience the same space in a new way.

I tried the hat and the candle. The hat was fun but annoying, so I ditched it after a few days; the candle was super helpful and is here to stay. Ideally, yes, I would have totally reconstructed my room and furniture, but that’s hardly realistic, and taking charge of a space doesn’t have to be limited to big projects like that. Little changes can still make a pretty big difference. Even more than the scent and cheerful glow, the act of striking a match to light my candle is a helpful way to send my brain an intentional message: “I’m studying now.” A little tiny bit of agency.

Screens are another studying environment to keep in mind. When someone pointed out to me that my laptop layout was also a study “space,” my mind was totally blown. I’d thought a lot about how to change my actual desktop, but never my computer desktop—that’s how much I had adjusted myself to my environment. What if I organized my desktop into a mind map? Or color-coded my app icons? Or create a wallpaper
shortcut and make a habit of changing it to something focus-y while studying. A few browser searches and all these options (plus 24 million more, of course) could be yours.

I got even more ideas from reading, “All in a day's work, at home: teleworkers’ management of micro role transitions and the work–home boundary” by Fonner and Stache (2012). Despite the unwieldy title, the article is actually affirming. Apparently successful work-from-home professionals create on- and off-duty cues using these little rituals all the time (2012, pp. 243–244). Once I tailored my own space and developed my own rituals, I suddenly realized: these were strategies I could encourage visitors to develop during the period of online school.

But such helpful study habits shouldn’t be reserved for pandemics and teleworkers. Sensory habits like these are super helpful, both in home and public spaces. In the Studio, our furniture and layout send an implicit message about the importance of taking initiative with space. But why leave it there? Underlying cues are important, but studio assistants could be explicitly discussing study spaces, encouraging students to be aware of how they are using or choosing study spaces.

Encouraging reflection on study spaces connects to the treasured studio practice of metacognition: awareness of what you are aware of and how you are aware of it. And as with any kind of metacognition scaffolding, the best strategy is to ask questions, even one as simple as this: “Where have you found good study space this quarter?” In weekly sessions with one visitor, I made this a regular check-in question. That way we both remembered at least once per week that space is worth thinking about. Another prompt could be “How have you set up your computer space for this project?” Then maybe you brainstorm with them a few little changes.
Remember when I said that we all know, on some level, that space is important? My personal space practice goal includes raising space awareness, bringing the unconscious up a level or two so we all develop mindful perceptions about how study spaces affect us. Graetz’s (2006) term was environmental awareness, after all. No matter how intentional space designers are in choosing furniture and affordances, it’s us, the students, that ultimately need to take space agency. So, dear reader, take a look around. What in your space is helping you read? What is distracting? What are a few small changes you could make? Try a few. See where it launches you.

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References


Interchapter 4D

Unconstrained by Space and Time: Creating a Choice-Rich Virtual Studio

Pippa Hemsley, Western Washington University

A branching-choices learning interface designed in Twine

About the Author

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Although the Hacherl Studio’s in-person space has evolved an innovative structure and pedagogy, the same is not yet true of our online space. Our website, along with the majority of existing educational websites, still largely follows the customs of a reception office where people can view a variety of informational pamphlets, book an appointment, or consult with a specialist. In reception offices, no one really talks to each other: users choose to engage with the service, read about it, or leave. These limited choices don’t align with our ambitions to host learning that is community-centric and student-driven. The educational world suffers from a decades-long creative block when it comes to utilizing the potential of the internet for supporting learning. Yes, we create high-effort emails, fancy videos, cute websites, and classroom management system integrations. But rarely does our use of these tools extend beyond the reception-office or talk-to-an-expert models. Imagine an online space where people choose, uncompelled, to engage in play-based learning, solve problems together, and develop important life skills. Education hasn’t done this. Instead, the differently-structured spaces of forums and games have allowed communal learning to flourish, and HEIs are decades behind in learning from their example.

While the physical Studio’s design helps foster new ways of interacting, our virtual spaces continue to look traditional and communicate a traditional built pedagogy¹. There is little difference between our website and the website of any business. As a result, the expectation for a passive, transactional interaction holds for visitors and even for us. We’ve implemented bite-sized strategies in online interactions, yet bound by the same structure, we fall into the same habitual norms. Online

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¹ Built pedagogy is what Monahan calls the “architectural embodiments of educational philosophies” (2002, p. 6).
interactions\textsuperscript{2}, in the form of draft responses and video conference sessions, may not be intended to produce a transactional relationship, yet the reality often stops well short of our desired outcomes around inquiry, collaboration, challenge, and agency. Our in-person Studio makes possible a bustling, drop-in study community and invites students to take agency in personalizing their learning environments. Our virtual Studio does not. Yet in domains outside of education, the online world creatively offers exactly this experience. Why haven’t we?

A virtual studio equivalent to our in-person one should provide asynchronous learning experiences that fully include students who could or would never come in person, and they should also offer synchronous social options that match or surpass the in-person environment. The structure of the online studio itself would prompt reflection and agency. The richness of the online environment would distinguish it from other, normative online spaces and in doing so create room for the unexpected, room for interaction on levels beyond the default ask-a-question-get-an-answer service norm. Since this kind of online studio doesn’t exist yet for us, I decided to start creating it. I’ll share the tools that matched our connection and interactivity goals and demonstrate ways I began using them to design an online studio experience. Notably, both tools arise from the world of games, not from the worlds of education or business. Yet they are so versatile that many have already used them to create bespoke educational experiences.

\textsuperscript{2} Note that during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic from March 2020–no end date, all Hacherl Studio interactions remain virtual. This new reality exposed the gap between in-person and virtual pedagogies in ways very noticeable to both staff and visitors.
Hosting a Peer Learning Community in Discord

What is Discord?

Discord is an online communication platform where individuals can create and join private or public chat servers. After the mass exodus from past standbys like Facebook and Skype, Discord has become a popular communication tool, partly because it combines the option of Zoom-like voice and video calls with forum-like instant message boards, and partly because it fills a different communicative niche than still-active social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. At the time of this writing, Discord is where you’re most likely to find teenagers and young adults hanging out together, but its popularity is slowly growing with the older crowd too.

I recently joined a Discord server called Study Together! which is set up to offer custom study rooms for students around the world. I tried out the 1-to-1 room option and met a study buddy who was a college student in Korea. They kindly introduced me to the server, teaching me how to set a custom study timer so that it would remind me to take a break and update my study goal if I needed to. They also offered to leave their microphone on while we worked, explaining that some people like to hear the sound of typing in the background for focus. We shared our screens to watch each other make progress on our projects. Figure 1 on page 10 shows my screen in Study Together! The right side shows my own work on Google Docs, while the left shows the study room video call containing our user icons and the live images of our shared screens. The notes included with the figure image includes a clickable link to a video demo of Discord.
Discord in Action

Join me on my hypothetical online Hacherl Studio shift where I’m using Discord as the platform. After I log in, I see all the visitors currently studying, what they are working on, and other details they’ve shared in their profiles. I can also see how many are in various study rooms: some rooms are open to all, some have a specific content focus, and some are for project groups. Rooms also cater to different levels of engagement preference: some are text-only, some have audio enabled, and some have video and screenshare enabled; all are equipped with study break timers. Visitors signing in for the first time receive a welcome that orients them to the space and prompts them to choose one or two tags for themselves, such as their current classes or major. They can also display optional information, like current projects, pronouns, clubs & organizations, or a looking-for-study-partner tag.

As I log in, visitors also get to see me. I am listed as Pippa (Studio Assistant) in a color unique to staff. Visitors can click on my profile to see my details, including my pronouns (she/her), major (Education), specialties (research posters, etc.), and fun personal details (Ask me about chocolate mug cakes!). I may choose to broadcast announcements, directly greet individuals, or unobtrusively lurk in the general forum. Today there is an event happening, so I broadcast an announcement. “Hi everyone, Pippa here—just letting you know that we have a de-stress session starting in 15 minutes. Join by text, voice, or video in the #events channel!” Since I have a little time before the event, I post a few messages in the #general channel to highlight resources and ask engagement questions that visitors can respond to with text or an emoji. Some of my posts are study-oriented; some are just-for-fun.
On shift, I facilitate connections, answer questions, provide timely resources, and link to other tools and services. For instance, if multiple people have similar questions, I invite them to an *ad hoc* group, which is easy to facilitate given that we can switch between text, voice, and video without launching another application. Asynchronous and synchronous communication can all happen in the same place, and the format makes it easy to leave the online space running in the background; it just takes a single click to catch up with what’s happening. But visitors don’t need staff to use the virtual Studio, because they can use and control their environments. For instance, they can message staff or pose questions in the general channel for all to see. Visitors can work with an accountability partner, and they can check for others who have taken the same class. They can enable or disable post and announcement notifications in bulk or for each channel. In other words, visitors have full control over how connected they stay to the online Studio community.

**Making Exploratory Learning Possible with *Twine***

*Discord*, however, is not the only resource that facilitates self-directed learning. According to its website, *Twine* was developed as “an open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories.” If you’ve ever read a choose-your-own-adventure book or played *Zork* back in the eighties, you’re familiar with this concept. *Twine* makes it possible to rapidly design and launch a DIY branching-choice adventure. Many non-educators use it to create and publish games, and a few educators have used it to create simulations. But rather than using it to create an actual game, simulation, or adventure, I am using it to create a 100% student-driven studio interaction that is not just informational but also personalized, unpredictable, and quasi-social, yet still
independent of the presence of another human being. Figure 2, page 11, demonstrates using *Twine* to create a self-directed learning interaction. The notes below the figure image includes three links to videos demonstrating the user interface and behind-the-scenes development.

**Making a Virtual Place: A Stepwise Approach**

Although I’ve chosen to demonstrate using *Discord* and *Twine* to enhance virtual learning, academic support programs should tailor tool selection to their own program goals. For those just beginning the transition away from static email-based response to more equivalent virtual placemaking, I recommend first working through the principles presented in Chapter 4 (Kjesrud, 2021a), because they will help practitioners align space with high-level programmatic and pedagogical goals. From there, begin exploring and experimenting to build up a repertoire of tools, experiences, and ideas before finalizing the plan for your online ecosystem.

Virtual placemaking starts with identifying potential tools—the digital equivalent of choosing furniture. The best tools are ones you’ll probably stumble across as you become more connected to people who already use them. By learning about the variety of tools and applications that already exist, you can build a rough mental map of what is theoretically possible to achieve in an online setting. Then, with your mental map for inspiration, you can identify a need and check to see whether someone has already created the perfect tool for it. Appendix A suggests strategies for identifying potential tools that match program goals. Once tools are identified, incremental steps can ease the exciting-but-scary transition to new tools and a new virtual philosophy. As suggested in Chapter 2 (Kjesrud, 2021b), carefully scaffolding each change can help emphasize the
opportunity and minimize the fear. Appendix B suggests strategies for scaffolding change while developing virtual place.

The bones that comprise studio pedagogy are already present in these and similar online resources. Simply by implementing one, you will have partly implemented studio pedagogies implicit within its structure. Well-designed virtual places can’t and shouldn’t completely replace in-person ones, but they do fulfill otherwise unmeetable needs and frequently function better than an in-person setup. If we aren’t learning from the best that interactive online environments have to offer, any advances we successfully make to our in-person support will lead to a greater and greater equity gap for our students who, for any reason, rely on learning online. It doesn’t have to be all or nothing, and it doesn’t have to be difficult. Each tiny structural change creates new possibilities. And by engaging in this experimentative learning, you’ll be even better equipped to support your visitors in doing the same.
References

https://cedar.wwu.edu/learning_enhanced/4

https://cedar.wwu.edu/learning_enhanced/19

Figure 1

*Study Together!* image from *Discord*

Note: Image shows the screen from a 1-to-1 working session in the *Study Together!* server on *Discord*. In sessions like this one, users share their screens to help each other with motivation and accountability. Click the link below to play a demonstration video.

**Hosting Online Learning Communities: A look at the *Study Together!* Discord Server**

This video offers a brief tour of one *Discord* server where students come to keep on track while studying.
Figure 2

**Self-directed Learning Interaction using Twine**

You see a hexagonal room with a spiral staircase running up through the floor. The staircase is surrounded by a column of glowing water inhabited by a very wise-looking mackerel fish.

![Fish Image]

**Note:** Image shows the first page of a self-directed learning interaction designed in *Twine*. As users make choices, they self-assess their current needs and arrive at learning resources and advice specifically tailored to their situation. Click the image to play a demonstration video.

**An Interactive Studio Interface Created Using Twine**
This video shows an interface that allows visitors to have a self-driven conversation about their goals and to learn key strategies without interacting with another person.

**Twine Behind the Scenes**
This video shows the tool used to create the interface.

**Potential for More Personalization**
This video shows an aspirational demo of some features of *Twine* that could make for a more personalized and self-reflective experience if carefully implemented.
Appendix A: Exercises for Identifying Virtual Learning Tools

1. Get connected with those who know.

Ask staff (especially peer staff) what digital tools, apps, or websites they currently use for projects, fun, or studying. Why did they choose that tool over others? Do they ever share their own content, such as images, games, blog posts, or videos? If so, how?

2. Research potential tools.

Think of a tool, service, or object that you use in the physical world. When you start to think “I wish there was a tool for X,” you’re ready to begin researching whether such a thing exists. Use the same research skills you would for any other project, focusing on blogs and forums as your main sources. For instance, let’s say you brainstorm these needs: journaling app, digital concierge, online synthesizer. Search for each by adding the word digital, online, or app. Who knows what you might find! The point of trying these searches is to notice how people transform in person experiences to virtual ones.

3. Experiment with an online community platform you haven’t used before; use it authentically for yourself.

Learn how to quickly discern between healthy and unhealthy online communities on new platforms. While you may come across communities that are off-putting or hate-filled, you will also find some that are extremely uplifting and supportive. Move on until you find a community that is helpful and interesting. You could try platforms such as Discord, Reddit, or Mastodon.

4. Maintain safety and privacy during testing.

As always, be careful about sharing any personal information. The more details you share, such as photos, location or profession, the easier it becomes for anyone on the internet to identify you. I recommend making a new, anonymous email address specifically for exploring with. Be on guard if someone messages you privately without asking your permission first.

5. Look to the “edges”—non-mainstream uses and users

Often the most exciting developments are not immediately obvious: they exist on the social edges. For example, according to surveys, users of Reddit tend to be young and male, which is reflected in the popularity of many of the largest subreddits (discussion communities) like r/gaming. But there are also smaller subreddits devoted to specific identities and life-experiences, such as r/asktransgender and r/eldercare. Each subreddit has its own unique rules, purpose, and culture. Explore the edges to find the richest ideas.
Appendix B: Scaffolding Implementation

1. Talk it Up
   - Test the tool yourself so that you understand its features and benefits
   - Rave about it to everyone you meet
   - Show it off

2. Try a Soft Launch
   - Find or make a tool to fill one teaching/learning need or teachable moment
   - As you gain more experience with the tool in one-shot situations, assess whether to revise, implement it more fully, or abandon it

3. Make it Staff Official
   - Incorporate the tool into your staff trainings and routines
   - Informally assess how the tool affects staff education outcomes

4. Go Public
   - Use the tool to author a learning resource
   - Create an example of how students could use the tool to accomplish a goal
   - Sometimes, you might find it appropriate to incorporate the tool into your regular offerings of services
   - Example: Zoom sessions are now standard interaction options for many Studios
Chapter 5
Using Assessment to Prompt Innovation
Roberta D. Kjesrud, Western Washington University

About the Author
Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Abstract

In response to the accountability mandate in higher education institutions (HEIs), academic support program leaders often prioritize evaluation initiatives that mirror this larger proof-of-value agenda. While such summative evaluation should be part of our professional priorities, this proof-focused attention often supplants an equity-minded assessment agenda: improving learning. Improving requires us to understand more deeply exactly what students do and don’t learn through our programs’ teaching and learning initiatives. In shortchanging these inquiry-focused initiatives to improve our pedagogies and practices, our home disciplines miss identifying connections between practices and learning and overlook gaps between what students need and what they get. In this chapter, I parse evaluation and assessment, review how little our literature correlates pedagogies with learning, and discuss the pedagogical fossilization that can result when practitioners don’t assess to improve. To illuminate the connection between assessment and innovation, I summarize both heartening and challenging findings from the Hacherl Studio’s assessment of three outcomes: inquiry, collaboration, and agency. Finally, I suggest principles for implementing bite-sized assessment projects building toward a comprehensive assessment portfolio that both benchmarks learning and inspires innovation.

Keywords: Improving learning, assessing student learning, pedagogies, learning needs, pedagogical innovation, program effectiveness
As a fresh-faced graduate researcher years ago, I designed a project I secretly hoped would prove that writing center consultations helped students improve their writing more than teachers’ written feedback. I divided student participants from a writing intensive computer science course into two groups; half received at least three written responses from the instructor and half consulted three times with a consistent writing center peer tutor. I collected pre-/post-writing samples which were holistically rated for quality, I collected transcripts of both teacher feedback and writing center dialogues, and for a subset of participants, I did a line study of revisions correlated to feedback. Results? Little of note. Teacher feedback correlated with no improvements in final drafts, whereas writing center dialogues correlated with minor improvements (Buck, 1994). Sadly, my big proof failed the significance test. Apparently, I’m in good company. Proof-of-learning assessments like mine often fail to demonstrate a significant correlation (let alone causation) between an intervention and significant writing improvement. I had discovered what writing center assessment scholar Casey Jones calls a “blind alley” (2001, p. 10).

After a significant period of post-assessment sulking, I decided I needed a different approach. What if I asked different kinds of questions: What kinds of interventions and practices most correlate with increased learning? What gaps in learning do I notice, and what kinds of new interventions might fill those gaps? Note the shift from my original proof-oriented questions to these inquiry-based ones. Instead of starting from a place of trying to prove writing centers work, I started from a new assumption: like all teaching, writing centers most likely sometimes work and sometimes don’t. When they do work, it’s not because there’s peculiar magic about writing centers (or is there?) but because there’s some complex alchemy between the
practitioner, their pedagogical practices, and students’ felt needs. When writing centers don’t work, well now, maybe that’s even more interesting than when they do. What if I could design an assessment project that would help me correlate practices with outcomes, and what if those correlations helped me find new practices to address learning gaps? Hmmmm, intriguing.

It turns out I’m not unique in asking my initial proof-oriented questions. Fueled by demands for accountability by stakeholders like students, parents, and accrediting bodies, HEIs must demonstrate value, which they do by correlating high impact practices with outcomes like retention and other indirect measures of learning. Strongly affected by this accountability climate over the last two decades, academic support programs like libraries and writing centers, have been searching for proof of their effectiveness in two main ways: proof of value and proof of learning. Value proofs report usage statistics, user satisfaction, and return on investment measures using performance indicators like achievement and retention.¹ Learning proofs focus on direct measures of literacy improvement², but this work remains fraught with method and significance challenges. Methodologically, support professionals seldom have direct access to students’ products the way classroom faculty do, so studies of this kind seem logistically impossible. Even with a practical method, findings often disappoint because they reveal weak or insignificant correlations rather than the robust proof we crave (Jones, 2001; Oakleaf & Kyrillidou, 2016). To overcome these barriers, support professionals often focus on indirect measures such as process strategies (Thompson,

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¹ In the library world, some examples include *College & Research Libraries, Volume 81/3*, April 2020, a themed issue devoted to correlating library use with student success. (See also Cox & Jantti, 2012; Gilchrist & Oakleaf, 2012; Oakleaf, 2012; Stone et al., 2011; Stone & Ramsden, 2013.)

² In the writing center world, see a sampling of literature reviews (Jones, 2001; Pleasant et al., 2016; Schendel & Macauley, 2012; Thompson, 2006).
2006), anxiety reduction/motivation (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013), procrastination behaviors (Young & Fritzsche, 2002), and self-efficacy (Schmidt & Alexander, 2012) to name a few. These are all admirable efforts that should continue fulfilling the purposes of assessment: to make effectiveness visible, to enhance research, to increase reflective practice, and to fulfill our professional responsibilities (Thompson, 2006). So far so good.

But there’s a problem with the assess-to-prove paradigm that dominates our fields: there’s simply too little scholarly curiosity invested in improving learning. Proof measures fulfill our obligations for accountability, and I like accountability, I do. But when that’s our sole focus, we end up expending our professional energies defending our programs rather than improving them, which in turn reifies rather than challenges embedded inequities. To distinguish between evaluation and assessment, I offer the following distinctions. Evaluation is institution- or program-oriented and features summative judgments on the effectiveness of said institution or program. In other words, evaluation initiatives are motivated by accountability and proof. Assessment, on the other hand, is learner/learning oriented and features observations about what students across identities do and don’t learn and how successes and gaps inform innovation for improving teaching and learning (Dugan & Hernon, 2002; Frye, n.d.). In other words, assessment initiatives are motivated by curiosity and improvement. In short, assessment is “an iterative process for gathering, interpreting, and applying outcomes data from courses, programs, or entire curricula to improve program

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3 Some claim evaluation as outward-facing and assessment as inward-facing. However, this binary doesn’t hold. Accrediting bodies want to see improvement in learning as do campus stakeholders. Therefore, evaluation and assessment are both inward and outward facing.
effectiveness, particularly as measured by student learning outcomes” (Frye, n.d.). To reiterate: both evaluation and assessment are essential, but this chapter forwards an inquiry-based assessment agenda.

Since scholars in our home disciplines often conflate accountability with assessment, our professionals show a distressing tendency to value proving the status quo over improving it (Dugan & Hernon, 2002). Maybe it makes sense: skeptics often fail to recognize our fields as real disciplines and important sites for learning. Maybe it’s this Velveteen Rabbit Syndrome that keeps us from critically examining our lore-based practices, identifying outcomes’ gaps, and piloting innovation in a continuous improvement cycle. But without assessment, we lack information to explain our own teaching practices and to develop new equity practices. We may intuitively sense the limited effectiveness of practices like bibliographic instruction one-shots (LIS) and non-directive consulting (WCS), but we lack information to help us innovate. I argue that it is time for our programs to identify gaps in our lore-based pedagogies, to innovate practices that address those gaps, and to create recursive, incremental plans to assess-innovate-assess in pursuit of program improvements, equity-based practices, and increased learning. Although it’s not my purpose to linger on accountability in this chapter, I’ll overview accountability trends to show how they overshadow assessment efforts in our home disciplines. As an example of the kind of inquiry-based assessment I’m suggesting, I’ll summarize findings from our Studio’s assessments, and finally, I’ll extract principles from those incremental projects to guide academic support programs in creating do-able, innovation-oriented assessments that lead to engaged inclusivity.

The Proof Agenda in HEIs
Unfortunately for our industry, we live in times of unprecedented public skepticism about the overall value of higher education. Research focusing on that value have reported some gloomy results. For instance in *Academically Adrift*, Arum and Roksa (2011), implemented several measures of learning including the *Collegiate Learning Assessment* and concluded that nearly half of more than 2,300 undergraduates at 24 institutions demonstrated no significant improvements in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing over their first two years of college. While Arum and Roska’s research has been justifiably criticized (Adler-Kassner & O’Neill, 2010; Farkas, 2011; Schendel & Macauley, 2012), their findings published for a general audience spurred parents, prospective students, funders, and accreditors to question whether higher education actually delivers on the value it promises.

Sowing doubt about value comes as a most inopportune time for HEIs because they are increasingly competing for a smaller college age demographic at the same time public funding is shriveling. Both challenges feed an accountability movement that compels HEIs to prove value, and most choose key performance indicators (KPIs) as the outcomes to use in allowing consumers to comparison-shop. For instance, according to the *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* (IPEDS), the national aggregate six-year graduation rate is 62% and retention rate is 81% (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020); locally, my university’s *Key Performance Dashboard* lists aggregated graduation and retention at 67.9% and 82% respectively (Western Washington University Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2019a), indicating to

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4 Note that student outcomes are not the same as learning outcomes. Student outcomes, or key performance indicators, prove that the institution itself is successful in delivering on its promises to students. KPIs imply learning, but they don’t directly measure it.
prospective students and legislators that Western is more effective than average. Both the National Center for Educational Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education offer consumers college comparison tools such as College Navigator and College Scorecard.

But KPIs only reveal an institution’s effectiveness within the industry as a whole (Dugan & Hernon, 2002); they do not reveal what students actually learn (Oakleaf & Kyrillidou, 2016). For that we need direct or indirect assessments of learning, sometimes called student learning outcomes or SLOs. If legislatures drive accountability, accreditors drive assessment because they demand proof of continuous improvement and of learning, generally both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes (Nusche, 2008). But because there are seven regional accrediting bodies each with different benchmarks, the national assessment scene is dizzyingly complex with little consensus on how institutions should demonstrate this learning. Nevertheless, there are trends. At the national level, both for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises provide assessment tools and resources. For-profit companies market standardized measures of academic achievement in problem-solving, critical thinking, reading, writing, essay writing, and mathematics; institutions use these to demonstrate value-added from their general education requirements. For instance, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), is a subscription-type exit survey designed to reveal best practices for student engagement. Both Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) and the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) offer resources for HEIs to design local assessments; these are more often aimed at practitioners assessing the outcomes of curricula, particularly in majors. LEAP, for instance, offers Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics as assessment
models, and NILOA offers support for developing a culture of assessment among faculty, staff, and administrators. If you’ve stuck with me through this alphabet soup, I admire you. (For those who wish to track any of these resources, see Appendix A, pp. 34-25.) For now, know that it’s less important to track the soup, but it’s critical to glean that, for HEIs and their accreditors, evidence of learning matters. A lot.

The Proof Agenda in Academic Support Programs

Influenced by this national context, support programs have developed their own proof-driven agendas. Libraries have arguably done more to identify value, perhaps because IPEDS includes library metrics or perhaps because libraries are high profile enough to catch the attention of national assessment experts like George Kuh and Robert Gonyea (2015). In LIS scholarship, accountability themes prevail, including user satisfaction, bean counting, and KPI learning surrogates. Influenced by an historical service model, much library scholarship features user satisfaction data (Dugan & Hernon, 2002), which is also a strong focus in WCS (Schendel & Macauley, 2012). We all love to report ubiquitously high satisfaction rates on our annual reports. But we all love our numbers, too, so bean-counting, that is, tracking inputs and outputs as measures of program efficiency (Dugan & Hernon, 2002) is another strong accountability theme in LIS and WCS. But as prominent WCS assessment scholar Neal Lerner recommends, we should “move away from positioning writing center directors as little more than the ticket tearers at the writing center turnstiles” (2001, p. 1). Inputs include resources offered (volumes in collections, hours open, consulting hours offered) and outputs include resources used (volumes circulated, gate counts, consulting hours filled). National data on library inputs/outputs are tracked regularly in IPEDS and through ACRL, while national data on writing center inputs/outputs are partially...
tracked through the *National Census of Writing* (Gladstein & Fralix, 2017) and the *Writing Centers Research Project* (Purdue Writing Lab, n.d.).

While these accountability measures support program leaders in proving a return on investment (ROI) to funders, leaders have more recently turned to proving value using the same KPI learning surrogates valued in our industry. Megan Oakleaf, a leading LIS assessment scholar who works closely with the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), has published much prominent work encouraging correlating library use with achievement, retention, and graduation rates (Gilchrist & Oakleaf, 2012; Oakleaf, 2010, 2012; Oakleaf & Kyrillidou, 2016). Some assessment volumes offer summative proof of value using grades and retention (Bowles-Terry, 2012; Cox & Jantti, 2012; Grillo & Leist, 2013; Soria et al., 2013; Stone & Ramsden, 2013; Wurtz, 2015; Yook, 2013), but only a few focus on student learning (Sobel & Sugimoto, 2012) or offer a mixed approach including both (Gilchrist & Oakleaf, 2012). Even the mixed approach disproportionately emphasizes evaluation: the motivation is to prove that by interacting with libraries, students are more likely to achieve and succeed. The most recent two-volume publication by ACRL amply demonstrates this emphasis: *Academic Libraries and the Academy: Strategies and Approaches to Demonstrate Your Value, Impact, and Return on Investment* (Nadir & Scheurer, 2018). As further evidence, ACRL’s website catalogs over ten resources on assessment, nearly all focused on proving.

Although assessment to improve is not prominent in our literature, some LIS scholars warn that providing satisfaction, usage, ROI, and even KPI outcomes doesn’t exempt libraries from assessing student learning as required by accreditors (Dugan &

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5 Note that LIS glosses this scholarship as *assessment*; sadly, the LIS field rarely distinguishes assessment from evaluation. By the definitions in this chapter, the bulk of this work is *evaluation*—proof of value.
Hernon, 2002; Hernon & Dugan, 2001). Seeing the trend in libraries to be satisfied with KPIs, Oakleaf along with Kyrillidou (2016) echo Dugan and Hernon’s concern. But despite growing recognition libraries’ white supremacy pedagogies (see for example Hathcock, 2015), even these perturbed scholars fail to mention the role of assessment in improving teaching and learning. One notable exception in LIS scholarship concerns user assessments of learning spaces; in fact, the ACRL regularly updates a bibliography of user studies (Kidwell, 2019). While built campus environments predominately cater to what works for the institution (see Chapter 4), libraries uniquely seek student input and act on it to improve learning spaces.

Like libraries, WCS also emphasizes a proof agenda. Neal Lerner, in “Writing Center Assessment: Searching for ‘Proof’ of Our Effectiveness,” pans two notable correlational studies (including his own) as unfortunate but inadvertent models of “how to lie with statistics” (2003, p. 61), but he still recommends measures for proving, including collecting pre-/post-consultation drafts looking for evidence of writing improvement (2003, p. 70). In the only assessment-themed volume in WCS, Schendel and Macauley (2012) present a thorough review of LIS-parallel assessment literature featuring measures like satisfaction, counts, inputs/outputs, ROI, and institutional KPIs. In addition to proving program effectiveness, WCS scholarship also attempts to prove learning through direct measures of writing improvement and indirect measures of non-cognitive gains like self-efficacy, lower anxiety, and reduced procrastination. Schendel and Macauley mention the relative dearth of assessments that examine particular practices or that pursue improvement as a goal. In a briefer literature review organized by what motivates assessment, Miriam Gofine (2012) notes the same dearth. She identifies five prevalent assessment motives: 1) demonstrate ROI; 2) link to broader
institutional efforts; 3) fulfill internal program needs; 4) prove correlation to student success; and 5) improve writing center teaching—but, sadly, Gofine found just one article with an improvement emphasis (2012, pp. 40–41). All professionals seem to want to do these days is prove, prove, prove.

Of course, the distinction between evaluating to prove and assessing to improve can be a murky one; sometimes (hopefully often) proving leads to improving. In a notable blended effort, ACRL partnered with NILOA to author an occasional paper detailing results from a collaborative assessment project called *Assessment in Action* (Malenfant & Brown, 2017). At each participating HEI, librarians headed campus teams comprising constituents from across roles, including faculty, student affairs, administrators⁶. Although teams found encouraging evidence of the library’s relationship to student learning, the *Assessment in Action* project led to an unanticipated improvement: each participating HEI built a sustainable, cross-silo culture of assessment (Malenfant & Brown, 2017, pp. 16–18). Similarly, in the *Academic Library Impact: Improving Practice and Essential Areas to Research*, researchers pursued a proof-of-value agenda but ended up issuing an urgent call for LIS scholars to put improvement on the profession’s research agenda (Connaway et al., 2017). If and only if participating scholars cultivate an inquiry stance, proving can lead to improving.

**The Improvement Agenda in Teaching and Learning**

As noted, assessing learning in academic support programs creates evidentiary challenges. We have no grades, no access to students’ products, and little ability to measure change over time. Further, many scholars note professionals in our home

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⁶ Tragically, they omitted students, an inherent equity problem.
disciplines lack expertise in designing and implementing projects that measure student learning (Gofine, 2012; Lerner, 2001, 2003; Oakleaf, 2010; Schendel & Macauley, 2012; Sobel & Sugimoto, 2012). The answer is not to abandon accountability but rather to add curiosity about how students across identities experience our practices. Far too little assessment energy focuses on students, on what they learn, on what practices suit them best and why. Even fewer assessment efforts feature students as co-inquirers, not mere subjects. Along with NILOA and several of the initiatives outlined in Appendix A, the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) promotes assessment and research motivated solely by curiosity about promising pedagogies and improving teaching and learning; furthermore, it invites students as co-inquirers. Imagine what the opportunities for improving our pedagogies if we stay curious and include students across identities in inquiry-based assessments.

If curiosity alone isn’t enough to drive inquiry-based assessment, HEI accrediting bodies demand coordinated assessment efforts for the improvement of learning. In response to accreditation standards, Western Washington University requires that each academic department/unit file a recursive assessment plan: assess learning one year and implement improvements the next. While this kind of recursive assess-improve cycle is scarce in academic support unit scholarship, departments subject to more scrutiny from both HEI and professional association accreditors offer more models. For instance, the Planning Accreditation Board, the accrediting body for planning programs,

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7 As the Assessment in Action project (Malenfant & Brown, 2017) demonstrates, even fewer assessment efforts include students as co-inquirers rather than as mere subjects.

8 Research has a role in both assessment and evaluation, but it is not essential to either. One can evaluate and assess without research. Assessment “strives to know...what is” and then uses that information to change the status quo; in contrast, research is designed to test hypotheses (Keeling, et al, 2008, p. 28, as cited in Oakleaf, 2010). Assessment focuses on observations of change; research is concerned with the degree of correlation or causation among variables (Keeling, et al., 2008, p. 35, as cited in Oakleaf, 2010).
not only suggests specific learning outcomes, it also suggests specific pedagogical practices to achieve those outcomes. One mandated pedagogy is especially relevant to our theme: 84% of all planning programs in the U.S. require their students to earn studio credits featuring studio-based learning pedagogies (Long, 2012; Németh & Long, 2012). This disciplinary accreditation board’s recommendations led to the faculty adopting SBL and further prompted departmental plans for assessing and improving cognitive and non-cognitive learning outcomes (Németh & Long, 2012; Nusche, 2008). Similarly, the Association for the Study of Medical Education (Swanwick, 2010) supports medical programs in all aspects of assessment right down to pedagogical methods; for instance, they study what students learn from simulations, problem-based learning, work-based learning, small group collaborations, and coaching/mentoring. In fact, many disciplines assess pedagogical practices and how they affect student expertise. Nursing education assesses group learning (Ladouceur et al., 2004) as does medicine (Pal et al., 2012). Design, architecture, computer science, planning, and composition assess studio-based learning pedagogies (Crowther, 2013; Németh & Long, 2012; Schön, 1985; Silva et al., 2017). While far from exhaustive, these initiatives serve as models for LIS, WS, and WCS scholars—we too can develop practical plans to assess pedagogical practices and improve learning.

**Assessing Innovation in the Research & Writing Studio**

When the Hacherl Studio was created in 2015, we found ourselves with an unusual assessment/evaluation opportunity, that is, to compare findings from separate units with joint efforts. Prior to merging, both the Writing Center and Research Consultation separately pursued different evaluation and assessment efforts, but both featured more bean-counting than anything else. In terms of improving, the Writing
Center had begun identifying student learning from pilot initiatives, but it’s fair to say that neither program implemented robust assessments of learning. Although that gap means we lack a baseline to compare innovative pedagogies against traditional ones, we merged because we believed conceptually that the envisioned Studio aligned more tightly with high impact practices that optimize learning (Kuh et al., 2015). Of course, the conceptual had to be made concrete. Together with other program leaders in Western Libraries’ Learning Commons, the Head of Research Consultation and the Writing Center Director began negotiating shared learning aspirations aligned with our larger umbrella—the University and the Libraries’ Teaching & Learning Division. Collectively, we rallied around growing inquiry, collaboration, and agency. Now six years post merger, our assessment projects are still a work in progress, but they show emerging evidence that our new pedagogies are accomplishing the hoped-for learning. More importantly this assessment work also offers exciting insights on ways we can keep improving our practices.

**Inquiry**

Pre-Studio, the Writing Center specifically articulated growing inquiry as an aspiration for visitors. To that end, we offered classroom-based writing workshops for developing and refining inquiry questions. The Studio continues to offer workshops with that same emphasis, but the curriculum now follows our integrated literacies signature pedagogy, meaning facilitators seamlessly address research, reading, and writing. As a practitioner, I reflectively noticed benefits to this integrated approach. In writing-only workshops, I was frequently perturbed when so many students resisted committing to a

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9 Western Libraries’ Teaching and Learning Division (and the Studio) added an outcome, evaluate/challenge inequity, that is still too new to assess.
topic interest for fear of finding too many or too few sources. Their wait-and-see approach meant that our inquiry question refining strategies fell flat. In the integrated literacies workshops, students have an opportunity to test their inquiry questions using research and reading strategies on the spot, and I noticed this inclusion enabled students to make more progress in refining their inquiry questions before workshops concluded. Facilitator reflection in our community of practice affirmed my suspicions and confirmed a continuing integrated literacies approach to teaching inquiry.

It was time to test these suspicions formally after several terms of collaborating with Dr. Brian Bowe in incorporating the integrated workshop series into his capstone journalism course. We both observed that final thesis statements simply weren’t as sophisticated as we hoped. To scaffold those more effectively, we decided to pilot and assess some pedagogical innovations. One term we piloted a method for assessing these practices, and the following two terms we conducted IRB-approved outcomes research examining the growth of inquiry after implementing two interventions. In addition to one standard workshop practice, work time for students to use a collaborative draft - question - revise strategy on their inquiry questions, we added two elements: use the same strategy in developing/refining a working thesis and add medium-stakes accountability. Specifically, our research required recursivity by prompting a total of six iterations of both inquiry questions and working thesis statements at the beginning and end of three 90-minute workshops. And we added medium-stakes accountability by asking students to turn in their iterations for points. After two terms, all iterations, including the final thesis statements, were blinded and holistically rated against the workshop criteria for inquiry/thesis: focus, specificity, and complexity. Data showed
that the last question/thesis iteration scored 21% higher than earlier ones. Of course, these results are merely suggestive and require follow-up, but it appears that both iteration and accountability helped students deepen and focus inquiry (Bowe et al., 2020, p. 6).

These findings also suggest pedagogical improvements for the Studio and the Journalism Department. In the Studio, both in our workshops and our individual coaching, we can increase the stickiness of writing strategies and deep thinking if we add medium-stakes accountability. Of course, we can’t assign points or award grades, but practitioners can easily say, “When I get back, I’d like to see a new version of this question.” We can also request more frequent iterations of inquiry questions by saying “How about drafting five crummy thesis statements to see what emerges?” For the Journalism Department, Dr. Bowe noted that the affective and cognitive load of writing in the entirely unfamiliar, formal literature review genre seemed to stifle true inquiry. To eliminate these distractors, Dr. Bowe led the department to adopt significant curricular and assignment improvements that have now been implemented across every section of the department’s capstone course.

Collaboration

While collaborative learning theory undergirds instruction in both libraries and writing centers, neither of our separate units pursued learning goals that valued learning in community. The boundaryless Studio space made visible the collaborative learning we were missing the opportunity (and practices) to support. For instance, in

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10 Other notable findings include the tendency to backslide; that is, students’ questions/thesis statements often got worse before they got better (see Bowe et al., 2020 for details).

11 For more findings on the value of medium-stakes accountability and frequent iterations, on moving away from traditional literature review assignments, and on scaling expectations for an undergraduate theory/writing course, see Bowe et al. (2020).
2019 the Studio hosted nearly 9000 groups of primarily three types: friend groups (different classes, different assignments), classmate groups (same assignment, individual products), and project groups (same assignment, joint product). Students often work long hours in the Studio space, sometimes with support from tutors but also with support from each other. This learning community ethos allows us to intentionally coach students in collaboration strategies; however, we quickly learned our staff were poorly equipped for this coaching, and traditional pedagogies in our home disciplines offered little innovative guidance. We simply lacked practices altogether.

Since our first collaboration-focused assessment project couldn’t connect practices to outcomes, a team of undergraduate Studio Assistants focused entirely on identifying gaps. Thalmann et al. (2016) held focus sessions with project groups and with tutors to illuminate unmet group needs and to unpack tutors’ reluctance to engage groups. In terms of student needs, Thalmann et al.’s data exposed three main needs around the collaborative process: coordinating group logistics, negotiating relational conflict, and connecting multiple voices seamlessly. Informants complained that tutors offered few strategies for these needs, noting that the strategies they did offer were tailored to individual rather than collective writing. Tutor informants confessed to avoiding group coaching as much as possible because they sensed one-to-one strategies were inadequate, so to equip tutors with additional practices, leaders developed collaboration strategies and professional development materials. This needs assessment project helped us to identify gaps and improvements to address them, including developing a curriculum for staff development and authoring a series of online learning
objects\textsuperscript{12} for students undertaking group work. Now that faculty increasingly embed Studio visits for their group assignments, we can design a new assessment to connect this curriculum to learning.

**Agency**

Although agency\textsuperscript{13} was an explicit outcome for our former writing center, many traditional pedagogies didn’t scaffold it adequately. For instance, traditional writing center practice treated writing as a stand-alone literacy; we failed to recognize how developing agency around research and reading impacted writers and their writing. Also, our program featured two standard tutor practices—making suggestions and giving reader responses—but we seldom scaffolded transferable strategies that visitors could use both immediately and in future work. While agency is tricky to measure, by studying an IRB-approved corpus of transcripts contrasting traditional consultations with SBL micro-consultations, we have preliminary evidence suggesting that studio-based learning (SBL) pedagogies do prompt growth in agency.

Consider the following transcript excerpt. In SBL fashion, the Studio Assistant (SA) previously spent 15 minutes with the visitor, modeling a process strategy (I do) and practicing it together (We do). This excerpt picks up as the SA re-engages the visitor (V) after leaving them for 15 minutes to work on their own (You do).

SA: *So how did that Sticky Note Strategy work for you?*

V: *Good. Actually, I figured something out about my paper and found a good transition. The paragraph that she [instructor] cut out is actually a good*
transition into paragraph 4 about Z, and I think it defines more of X, so it’s kind of a more natural fit, which I hadn’t seen before.

SA: Great! Did you find any other patterns?

V: Paragraph 2 and 3 transition into each other fairly well, and I think that’s probably because I wrote them at the same time. 4 and 5 are about Z, so what I’m realizing is that my paper is just divided into topics X and Z right now.

SA: So you feel like X and Z are the most important parts of your paper right now?

V: Yeah, and I think I should probably add more. So I found this study about Y, which talks about something that leads up to Z. So I was thinking I’d drop that in there, and then say “However” because this leads to Z.

—Glossed transcript from a return visit micro-consultation

Admittedly cherry-picked, this dialogue is simply bursting with the visitor’s new conceptual understandings prompted by putting into practice the scaffolded strategy during work time. By no means unique among micro-consulting transcripts, our research team comprising undergraduates and professionals saw few parallels in our corpus of traditional consultation transcripts. In the studio-based corpus, we identified two main types of consultations—those focused on scaffolding cognitive growth (these feature more dialogue) and those focused on scaffolding processual growth (these feature more work time). These data led us to appreciate that SBL provides more scaffolding for learning how than traditional dialogic pedagogies, and yet the sample transcript intriguingly reveals that work time scaffolds far more growth more in cognition than we expected. (See Chapter 2 for more on matching scaffolds to outcomes.) Clearly, we still have much to learn from our larger data sets, but early analysis has already revealed the powerful ways micro-consulting sets visitors up to resolve many of their own dilemmas during work time. Remaining dilemmas simply
provide a starting point for the next micro-consult. In general, our corpus reveals impressive evidence that, as we equip visitors with new strategies, they begin to exercise often-masterful control of their revising strategies and rhetorical decision-making.

But this assessment corpus also revealed areas for us to improve. For instance, although metacognition plays a key role in developing agency (Ambrose et al., 2010) and our staff development theoretically equipped Studio Assistants to scaffold *going meta*, we noted that our staff prompted far fewer metacognitive moves than we were expecting. In fact, transcripts revealed visitors initiated going meta almost twice as often as our staff did. While we were very happy to see visitors exhibiting these habits of mind (agency!), we also want staff to scaffold going meta when visitors aren’t making those moves. We significantly revised our staff education curriculum, so in our next round of assessing the agency outcome, we can evaluate our new practices and augment them further if needed.

**Principles for Developing Assessment Plans**

While the preceding projects are mere examples of the ways the Hacerl Studio has sought to understand student learning and close the loop to improve it, the best assessments are always locally tailored. Nevertheless, these local projects can be mined for principles that demonstrate learning, uncover gaps in learning, and suggest improved practices.

1. **Articulate your program’s goals for student learning.**

   For our Studio, articulating shared learning goals proved a key to our merger success. If your program hasn’t already done so, articulate learning outcomes your

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14 *Going meta* is our term for strategies that prompt visitors in metacognitive reflective practices.
program forwards. If already have such goals, review them to confirm their alignment with your intuitional umbrella, including your HEI’s central mission (Schendel & Macauley, 2012) and with your latest institutional accreditation report. In addition, consult students from across identities to see what outcomes they desire from your program. Ensure all staff can articulate program outcomes, because if they can’t, they won’t be working toward them intentionally.

2. **Evaluate to prove strategically; assess to improve liberally.**

   Of course, the Studio still participates in IPEDS and other program evaluation because we want to understand our programs’ return on investment and understand our contributions to student success. But we remain genuinely curious about our pedagogies and practices. For each proof-based evaluation, we recommend pursuing at least one inquiry-based assessment to improve. Inquiry-based assessments allow us to answer, for ourselves, for our campuses, and for accreditors, nuanced questions about the connections between practices and outcomes and about how academic success programs enrich student learning beyond the classroom.

3. **Incrementally build a cumulative assessment portfolio** around outcomes.

   a. Identify gaps, problems, wishes, not as program critiques but as practitioner curiosities.

   b. Brainstorm a list of inquiry questions tied first to desired outcomes and then to noted gaps.

   c. Choose one do-able question; then choose a do-able method to match.

   d. Create an assessment cycle: gap-innovate-assess-innovate. Always close the loop; that is, end with action (Walvoord, 2010, p. 4). Trying new practices creates a lot of energy around assessment.

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15 For more on bite-sized approaches, see especially Walvoord (2010).
4. **Collaborate without and within.**

Align with external stakeholders to facilitate collaborative assessment projects (Lerner, 2003; Schendel & Macauley, 2012). The inquiry assessment project emerged in collaboration with the Journalism department and resulted in long-term partnerships and deep engagement with forwarding outcomes. All assessment projects summarized in this chapter included program staff from all roles in analyzing data and brainstorming improvements. Undergraduate tutors took a prominent role in the intellectual work of assessment. When tutors are equitably rewarded, involvement is a professional development opportunity that directly impacts their learning (Hughes et al., 2010). Staff involved with assessment became zestfully engaged in forwarding our outcomes and in innovating new practices, and several wrote interchapters for this volume.

5. **Don’t overthink assessment.**

Assessment may or may not include research, but it always includes noticing. For instance, the Studio’s inquiry assessment project began with Brian Bowe and me simply reflectively spitballing how to fix the gaps we noticed. Practitioners reflecting together can provide much valuable assessment data and lead to exciting innovations. A question as simple as “How could we improve X?” will generate collective engagement in improving. Each term, Hacherl Studio practitioners meet individually with a mentor to self-assess practice strengths (based on transcript evidence) and set specific goals. Leaders, including student coordinators, review these self-assessments to gain a composite view of strengths and goals for our community of practice. Just this do-able self-assessment approach leads to generating and swapping many strategic practices.
6. Communicate findings broadly.

Yes, our stakeholders are interested in evaluations to prove. But, surprisingly, most stakeholders are also interested in the learning we demonstrate and in the improvements we’re trying. Nobody, not accreditors, administrators, teachers, researchers, or students, has learning entirely figured out—but we’d all like to know more. Academic support program leaders may unfairly assume stakeholders care more about the bottom line than they do about learning, yet recall our Journalism Department’s transformational response to the Studio’s inquiry project. In general, we find our campus community mostly celebrates when we share what is working and usually partners in improving when we share what isn’t.

7. Exploit our edge.

In foregrounding inquiry-based assessments, I’m reminded yet again of our potent edge: with our direct window on student learning, who better to connect pedagogy to learning? While evaluation plays an essential part of any academic program’s accountability mandate, I worry that we’re exhausting our scholarly energies on defensive evaluations seeking elusive affirmations of yesteryear’s lore-bound practices. Doing so squanders our potential as key drivers of pedagogical innovation. As primarily one-to-one, non-graded teaching environments, we are non-threatening enough to connect with students’ authentic experiences, and with little administrative and curricular overhead, we are nimble enough to lead innovation. More so than campuses and departments, we can rapidly pilot new pedagogies, and we can ask constituents of all identities for continuous feedback on what and how they are learning, both in our programs and across the curriculum. Academic support programs inhabit a powerful place from which to observe learners and learning processes, try new
approaches, pilot equity-based practices, and inform constituencies about which approaches yield the most learning for students across identities. What could possibly add more value?

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Appendix A

Evaluation and Assessment Resources for HEIs

Standardized Tests\textsuperscript{16}:

**CLA+:** Verified internationally by the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](https://www.oecd.org) (2013), the [College Learning Assessment](https://www.collegelearning.org) is meant to aggregate outcomes across institutions. The test measures critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication skills\textsuperscript{17}.

**HE1ghten Outcomes Assessment Suite**: Validated by the Educational Testing Service, this suite measures Civic Competency & Engagement, Critical Thinking, Intercultural Competency & Diversity, Quantitative Literacy, and Written Communication.

National Support for Assessment:

**NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement)**: Also focused on building a national aggregate, NSSE is a user survey designed to elicit student perceptions about learning and engagement. NSSE tracks trends in high impact practices and investigates the relationship between engagement and persistence. Many institutions that participate in NSSE use it as a model for local surveys. For instance, Western Washington University employs the Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS) to assess (and improve) all aspects of learning and campus life\textsuperscript{18}.

**LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise)**: In an initiative that began in 2005, the [Association of American Colleges & Universities](https://www.aacu.org) (AACU) offered a set of national learning outcomes that still prevails. To meet the LEAP challenge, AACU offers a number of assessment publications, including VALUE

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\textsuperscript{16} Standardized tests are norm-referenced and are meant to be highly objective.

\textsuperscript{17} *Academically Adrift* (2011) authors, Arum and Roksa, used the CLA administered to incoming freshmen and to rising juniors, allowing a growth comparison pre-/post-GERs. All the usual standardized assessment validity and reliability critiques have been leveled at CLA (Adler-Kassner & O’Neill, 2010; Farkas, 2011; Schendel & Macauley, 2012).

\textsuperscript{18} “The purpose of the WELS is fourfold: 1) To assess student needs based upon their self-reported characteristics, perceptions, and concerns; 2) To provide data that can be used to assess academic and co-curricular programs; 3) To provide baseline entry data that can be used as statistical controls in analyses that offset the inability to conduct randomized studies; and 4) To maintain an ongoing record of student knowledge acquisition, ability levels, and other general education outcomes to address concerns of accountability and accreditation. Unlike national studies, the WELS survey instrument can be tailored to fit Western’s needs, including, if needed, a replication of national survey questions to make direct comparisons with other institutions” (Western Washington University Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2019b).
rubrics that institutions can use in conducting local assessments of the LEAP learning outcomes (McConnell et al., 2019; Rhodes, 2010).

**NILOA (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment):** Founded by George Kuh in 2008, NILOA encourages institutions in fostering a culture of intellectually engaged inquiry and helps institutions design authentic assessments. NILOA offers models, a corpus of vetted assignments, support for the politics of assessment, and strategies for engaging faculty and staff across silos. Recently, NILOA released guidance on nuancing assessment to make it equitable for underserved students: “Equitable assessment should work to ensure that learning outcomes, and how we assess those outcomes, are done in ways which do not privilege certain students over others” (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2020, p. 14).
### Western Libraries’ Teaching and Learning Division Outcomes

- **Evaluate and challenge** traditional and oppressive norms and practices through the engagement of academic literacies
- Use and **value inquiry** for gaining and sharing knowledge
- **Collaborate** as respectful, productive, and ethical members of a diverse and inclusive intellectual
- Demonstrate a sense of **agency** for managing one’s own learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hacherl Studio Outcomes Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATE &amp; CHALLENGE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INQUIRY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understand inquiry and knowledge making as social</td>
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<td>- Work effectively together in a supportive learning process</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Manage the collaborative process in individual and group projects</td>
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<td>- Design space and affordances inviting to groups and individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Co-consult to maximize staff expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Honor the expertise of students by connecting them with others engaged in learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hosted 9000 collaborative groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Project groups report three main obstacles to effective work: logistics, relationships, connections</td>
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<td>- Staff facilitate classmate groups by connecting students who are working alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hosted 9000 collaborative groups</td>
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**Appendix C**

**Hacherl Studio Assessment Project Exemplar**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Improving Practices for Inquiry and Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Western Washington University’s assessment cycle assesses programs one year and implements improvements the next. This year’s focus is improving. Based on findings from two assessment projects on Inquiry and Agency, identify and implement improvements to workshop and consulting practices.</td>
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</table>
| **Main Goals**   | 1. Complete the Inquiry and Agency projects (data analysis underway).  
2. Identify practices associated with gain and gaps associated with no gain.  
3. Identify a body of secondary research/theory to inform improvements.  
4. Report and discuss findings with practitioners; develop new staff education materials with new practices for coaching visitors. |
| **Success Indicators** | • Staff articulate evidence-based impacts of Studio sessions and workshops on inquiry and agency.  
• Implement new staff education units, one on improving practices for agency and one on improving practices for inquiry.  
• Collect and analyze session transcripts after new units implemented. |
| **Lead**         | Director of Writing, Studio |
| **Roles**        | [Note: both teams comprised professionals and students] |
| **Stakeholders** | • All Studio staff  
• All Studio and workshop users  
• Faculty who teach student users  
• Western Libraries, TLD, Learning Commons, University, and Donors |
| **Limitations**  | • May not finish assessment data analysis in time to identify improvements.  
• Permanent staff lack capacity, creating a long delay between data collection and analysis; thus, improvements may be dated.  
• Limited resources for Student Research Coordinator limits capacity. |
| **Resources**    | (Links to research/theory on inquiry and agency omitted) |
| **Duration**     | Plan improvements Summer 20xx; Implement improvements Fall 20xx |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>Progress Notes</th>
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Interchapter 5A

Holding Space in Consultations: Choosing your own Adventure

Ally Duvall, Western Washington University

About the Author

A 2020 graduate, Ally is continuing down her path to become a clinical psychologist. When not skillfully procrastinating literature reviews, she enjoys anything artsy, swimming, and exploring ways to best hold space for those around her. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

RECOMMENDED CITATION, APA 7TH ED

We all have heard (or said) the famous “I am a crappy writer” speech. Even as I am writing this, I feel like I’m not up to the task. Whether we hear this doubt from a visitor or feel it within ourselves, we all recognize how negative self-talk impacts us. I can’t begin to count the students who have come into the Studio and immediately discounted their ideas and abilities. These students automatically label themselves as bad writers even though they can’t nail down what a “good writer” has that they don’t. We compare ourselves to some unattainable standard even though good writing exists within everyone.

Taking time to unpack why someone feels like a bad writer can make a huge difference in how they treat themselves, their writing, and their abilities. When we focus exclusively on the writing someone shares with us, we often forget to attend to the humanity we all share. Yes, we are writers, researchers, and readers. But we are also human, and when we are consulting, we are being human together with our visitors. Writing is inherently vulnerable, so when someone feels like they are crappy, they are predisposed to avoid sharing their thoughts with others. This crappy writer cycle costs so much and results in only more frustration and self-doubt. Who needs more self-doubt? Not me!

Those of us who work in studios or writing centers must hold space for this vicious cycle and show our visitors they aren’t alone in combating their negative self-talk. Holding space means being present with someone without judgment and accepting their lived experiences as truth. By holding space for those around us, we can increase our awareness levels, practice empathy and compassion, and simply be there for
someone other than ourselves. I personally visualize holding space as “embracing with two hands instead of pointing with one finger” (Kim, 2018). Holding space also confronts how we view productivity and efficiency by removing our agenda from a consultation. We might think the visitor could take their paper in a different direction but focusing on that change would be centering our voice. By not pushing our agenda, we prioritize the voice of the other person and challenge our common urge to fix things. Applying this concept felt counter to my instincts at first, but now it’s second nature. As you continue reading more about how to hold space, I challenge you to move past any discomfort and appreciate holding space for the way it connects us with others; these connections create opportunities for growth, deeper understanding, and unconditional compassion—both for writers and consultants.

**Embracing Individuality**

I first encountered holding space in a facilitator training for a non-profit, [Our Treehouse](#), that holds grief groups for families, teens, and young adults. This concept stuck out to me because I was so used to trying to help or fix people when they were dealing with a problem. Holding space challenges our human instinct to be “Bob the Builder” and helps us situate a person as the expert in their own experience. After this training at Our Treehouse, I came back to the Studio and immediately saw how we practice holding space. We all know that there is no single writing process, just as there is no single way to grieve someone who has died. Holding space doesn’t rank the different ways people write (or ways people grieve) and acknowledges the uniqueness of each person’s lived experience.
At Our Treehouse, we hold space by trusting that each person has the power and ability within themselves to heal and continue their lifelong grief journey. In the Studio, we do this by trusting that each person has the power and ability within themselves to write and continue their journey of lifelong learning. In micro-consultations, we demonstrate that we believe in the visitor’s ability to succeed; by scaffolding tailored strategies to serve as a foundation for success, they develop confidence in their process and product. By leaving them to work the strategy and checking back in when they (mostly) succeed, we are physically giving them space to practice independent learning. Holding space supports visitors by meeting them where they are and putting them in the driver's seat of the consultation.

Corey’s Crappy Writing Adventure: Three Paths for Holding Space

The transcript activity (Corey’s Crappy Writing Adventure) below demonstrates three paths for holding space: Holding Space for the Assignment, Holding Space for the Process, and Holding Space for Affect. Each path demonstrates holding space in a different way depending on what the visitor is focused on, whether that’s making the product, examining their process, or taking a step back to explore their mindset. Each path leads to a unique outcome, and Corey benefits from any of them.
**Holding Space for the Assignment**

While some may see holding space for “I am a crappy writer” as most beneficial in the long run, not every visitor is ready for that conversation while actively worrying about their assignment. Remember this isn’t about our priorities; holding space means withholding judgment and creating room for what the visitor needs in the moment. Visitors may be preoccupied with finishing because the deadline is approaching, or they are “so over” the assignment. For these visitors, the Assignment Path honors their felt need and helps them produce a much-needed product. In the Assignment adventure, the consultant holds space by positioning Corey as the expert, by asking open-ended questions to prompt strengths, and by tailoring a best-fit, get-it-done strategy. Note how this path not only benefits Corey, it also provides the consultant new to holding space an opportunity to try new practices without completely departing from the familiar.

**Holding Space for the Process**

While this path helps with the present assignment, the Process Path also acknowledges the bigger picture and influences how future assignments go for Corey. The Process Path creates a place to explore the way visitors write and how that impacts their writing, present and future. The consultant holds process space by intentionally asking Corey about what they’ve done so far, strategies they usually use, places they often get stuck—even about the amount of time they work without breaks. The consultant can validate Corey’s frustration but also take time to notice strengths and goals. The Process Path invests in Corey’s future by recognizing that productivity is more than just finishing this single product.
Holding Space for the Affect

The Affect Path unpacks Corey’s “crappy writer” mindset and provides a strategy to challenge that mindset. The consultant creates space for Corey to sit with their feelings of having crappy ideas and may gently probe the origin of those feelings. The Affect Path allows space for letting Corey know they aren’t alone in feeling like a crappy writer and may even prompt Corey to consider the possibility that possibly, just possibly, not all their ideas are lousy. To provide a break from feelings of failure, I often recommend taking a physical break because they’re often over-focused on their work. By suggesting a break, this path holds space for Corey’s mental health without judging what they need.

Benefits of Holding Space

Challenging Productivity

Time, efficiency, and productivity motivate all three paths, yet we can be productive without being efficient and efficient without being productive; in short, time determines neither efficiency nor productivity. We mayskip over attending to visitors as people because we want to focus on their assignments and not waste their time. This attitude limits what we can accomplish in a consultation and works against life-long learning. As we can see in the Affect Path, taking time to explore Corey’s crappy writer mindset will likely increase both productivity and efficiency. Whether holding space for an assignment, process, affect, or something else, consultants can challenge productivity’s time-based definition and re-focus our efforts to what is most beneficial in that moment. By keeping the principles of holding space in your consulting toolkit,
can be ready to meet visitors where they are in their writing adventures.

**Being Human Together**

I love how holding space connects us. Not every space prioritizes being human together; in a world where every person has a unique story, we can all stand to learn more from each other. Holding space lays the foundations for lasting relationships, with the people we work with, the visitors we consult, or with people just passing through. Holding space adds layers of acceptance, unconditional love, and interest that we could all have more of in our lives. If we all hold space for each other, imagine the impact. The person who was afraid to apply for a job because they thought their written application wouldn’t be good enough applies anyway. The kid who avoids research papers at all costs tries a new way to organize their claims and realizes their ideas are better than they thought. And who knows, the next Maya Angelou could decide to send off their book proposal because someone acknowledged and held space for their crappy writer thoughts and helped them find confidence in their abilities. We have all heard and sometimes said “I am a crappy writer”; what if we didn’t run from these words? How can you hold space for someone’s voice, mindset, and journey?
References


Chapter 6

Value Added: Mergers to Increase Learning

Roberta D. Kjesrud, *Western Washington University*
Sarah McDaniel, *California State University, Fresno*

About the Authors

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio.

Sarah has worked in academic libraries since 1995 and was Director of Teaching & Learning in Western Libraries from 2016-2019. She is currently Director of Learning and User Services in the Henry Madden Library at California State University - Fresno. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Abstract

If Chapter 3, “Academic Literacies as Ecology” provides a bottom-up pedagogical rationale for merging literacies, this chapter focuses on an institutional, top-down rationale for merging academic support programs. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are facing increasing costs at a time when both revenues and the traditional college-age demographic are dramatically shrinking. Meanwhile, the hopefully transient SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is serving to spotlight unsustainability baked into the higher education industry and to fuel stakeholders’ increasing demands for value. For HEIs to succeed, administrators must find efficiencies just to keep the lights on. Increasingly, administrators propose consolidations among academic support programs, because although mandated by accrediting bodies, these programs are often perceived as resource drains tangential to the core mission. Support program leaders typically resist consolidation trends, however, creating politically risky conflict between institutional and program interests. In this chapter, we explain the very real existential pressures on HEIs, illuminate the ways inevitable mergers create transformational opportunities to increase learning, and suggest principles for negotiating cultural differences when programs pro-actively seek collectivization.

Keywords: Higher education economy, learning commons, increasing learning, conflict leadership, change leadership, program effectiveness
It’s a typical day across the whole second floor of Western Libraries, home to our Learning Commons. As I arrive for my shift, the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio is in full swing with about 40 visitors spread out across the living room, focus area, collaborative area, and our classroom. Several visitors summon Studio Assistants when they get stuck; they get a little advice, learn a new strategy, and keep working. I spot a project group I consulted with weekly last term; when I stop to answer a couple of questions, I note they are successfully using one of our strategies for group process. After assuring me they are making good progress and asking me to check back later, I move on to greet new arrivals, including two visitors arriving independently to study for the same linguistics exam. I introduce them and leave them happily collaborating. Another visitor overheard me explaining what we do in the Studio; although he is what we call an accidental tourist (unaware he was in the Studio), he immediately asks for résumé advice. Later I greet two highly anxious accounting majors who have developed a daily habit of working in the Studio “in case they get stuck.” At no time in my history have I seen students this engaged in forming their own learning community and in taking agency over their learning. Nor have I seen outcomes so robust or impact so broad. After literally growing up in the Writing Center, I thought I would be distraught about leaving my 30-year identity behind. But no such thing. My only regret is that it took so long.

—Reflections of former writing center director Roberta Kjesrud

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1 Western Libraries’ Learning Commons is a consortium of co-located support services currently including the Center for Community Learning, Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment, Digital Media Center, and Student Technology Center. Three additional Learning Commons’ partners are also organizationally part of Western Libraries: Hacherl Research & Writing Studio, Teaching & Learning Academy, and the Tutoring Center. Find more information and pictures here: https://library.wwu.edu/learning_commons.
Founded by the English Department in 1978, Western’s Writing Center became largely itinerant beginning in 1990 when the program embraced writing across the curriculum. Although we consistently reported to the Provost or Vice-Provost for the next 20 years, we were relocated spatially some thirteen times. In 2010, motivated by administrative efficiencies and a desire to create a learning commons, University administration proposed moving the Writing Center back to the Libraries, this time both spatially and organizationally. Initially, both University and Library administration thought that assigning us two tables in 300 square feet would be adequate. After all, the Libraries offered research help from an outsized service desk—how different could writing help be? Once the Libraries understood the Center needed more than just a service point, they settled us into a spacious but windowless main floor bunker. With visions of collaboration, Research Consultation relocated nearby, but impenetrable concrete walls thwarted our attempts. Finally, in spring 2015, two founding Learning Commons’ partners—Research Consultation and the Writing Center—merged in a new space called the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio.

In 2016, I (Sarah2) came on the scene as Western Libraries’ Director of Teaching and Learning & the Learning Commons. No stranger to the trials of integration, I began my career as the Instructional Services Coordinator at the University of Southern California’s Leavey Library, joining a corps of talented leaders charged with a visionary endeavor: to integrate research and computing organizations. Integration was hard work at every level of the organization; achievements were marred by conflicts around leadership, spaces, and budgets. Long after my departure, the merger was reversed, and

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2 As of this writing, Sarah McDaniel is the Director of Learning and User Services at California State University, Fresno.
the two organizations separated. Why? Perhaps it was difficult to deliver on the merger's anticipated value, perhaps cost savings provided inadequate motivation, or perhaps culture ate strategy for breakfast. This failure still speaks: even the best-matched couples face inevitable challenges as there are few rule books for bridging entrenched institutional silos. Yet in the face of a shrinking student demographic and exponentially increasing economic pressures, mergers and consolidations are becoming more the rule than the exception across higher education, and unit leaders and practitioners must choose how to respond. Perceiving mergers as threats rather than opportunities, many program leaders defend against them, but Western Washington University (WWU) library and writing center professionals took a proactive approach: we voluntarily merged to increase student learning.

This warts-included chapter recounts how collective will around increased learning helped two different units overcome both cultural and structural challenges of merging, and we offer a planning heuristic for program leaders who are voluntarily or involuntarily planning mergers. But first, we begin by overviewing the increasingly difficult fiscal and relevancy challenges facing the higher education industry, most predating the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, but both exacerbated by it. To survive and thrive, higher education institutions (HEIs) must cut costs and deliver more learning. We argue that academic support program leaders would do well to understand this mandate, to embrace efficiency and effectiveness as equally strong rationales for streamlining institutional structure, and to leverage disruption and collectivism as opportunities for innovation in improving learning. Finally, we present principles for surviving—no, thriving—during times of structural and pedagogical change.
The Value Mandate in HEIs

Scholarship around academic support services seldom acknowledges the political landscape framing why higher education sponsors these services in the first place. For over two decades, higher education has been significantly disrupted by economic, demographic, and societal pressures. Decreasing state support, changing student demographics, and emerging competition from online and two-year colleges have increased pressure to eliminate low priority functions, erase historical silos, and reduce barriers to innovation (Blumenstyk, 2014, p. 109). Institutions are in a bind: accreditors mandate and stakeholders demand support service amenities to compete for students, but costs are unsustainable. As a result, institutions increasingly subsidize costly upper-division courses and boutique programs with proceeds from large undergraduate courses and professional master’s degrees. This reliance on “internal cross-subsidies” (2014, p. 87), says Blumenstyk, has left institutions economically vulnerable to unbundling, where students forego loyalty to a single institution and complete degree requirements at less costly competitors.

Even prior to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic of 2019-202?, higher education faced daunting fiscal challenges. Chronicle of Higher Education staff writer Lee Gardner asserts that, “After years of declining enrollments and ebbing tuition revenues, colleges face levels of financial unpredictability not seen since the Great Recession” (2020), a claim corroborated by the Chronicle’s pre-pandemic, sound-the-alarm reports such as The Recession-Proof College: How to Weather the Coming Economic Storm (Kafka, 2020) and The Looming Enrollment Crisis: How Colleges are Responding to New

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3 The pandemic is predicted to last at least through 2021, but there is no reliable end date in sight.
Demographics and New Student Needs (Kelderman et al., 2019). With inflationary costs and a dawning economic reckoning, HEIs can no longer assume stakeholders perceive value in higher education. Proof of value matters. But as mounting economic pressures increasingly involve legislatures and educational policymakers, administrators, faculty, staff, and students may no longer be the loudest voices in determining how to measure it (Kuh et al., 2015). So as public perception of higher education’s value has plummeted and as students rightly want to know what jobs their education will qualify them for, government agencies advance competing systems to measure quality and learning (Blumenstyk, 2014, p. 112).

But even the best demonstrations of learning don’t pay the bills. Given that HEIs are under increasing pressure to protect the core mission and cut so-called dead wood, academic support services must increasingly prove centrality to that core. Fortunately, the literacies we support are core. The Association of American Colleges and Universities’ (AACU) Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative explicitly champions universal outcomes such as written and oral communication, information literacy, inquiry, and analysis—all of which co-implicate libraries and writing centers in campus-level initiatives to improve learning. HEIs market these campus amenities to students, parents, and accreditors as basic supports for success, but when shove comes to push over core funding, administrators often characterize academic support services as cost centers that constitute a tax on departments’ profitability⁴. Competition for campus resources even threatens departments; an

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⁴ For examples of ways libraries have considered the impacts of new fiscal realities in higher education, see the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Environmental Scan 2017 (2017) and UW-Madison’s Budget Allocation Model (Budget Model Review Committee, 2014).
increasing number of institutions no longer automatically allocate incremental budget
does to departments, but instead hold them accountable to new algorithms for
profitability; as a result, strapped departments are unlikely to support generous
allocations to central services like libraries and writing centers when a constellation of
individual academic support programs are perceived as nickel-and-dime budget drains.

**Pandemic Pressures**

If real economic and demographic pressures afflicted HEIs before 2019, the
SARS-CoV-2 pandemic exponentially increased them. Conditions change rapidly, but at
the time of this writing, the U.S. is in economic chaos: unemployment is tentatively
improving after reaching nearly 15% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.), but new
bankruptcies are still announced daily, and while the U.S. stock market has rebounded
from catastrophic lows (S&P Dow Jones Indices, A Division of S&P Global, n.d.), state
revenues remain in freefall. Just one institution alone, The Johns Hopkins University,
projects a $375,000,000 shortfall for the 2020-21 fiscal year (June, 2020). For schools
public and private, cash is flowing in the wrong direction as institutions reimburse
hundreds of millions in room and board and as their endowments are subject to double
digits market risk (Gardner, 2020). Although we hope the pandemic quickly becomes a
historical footnote, Purdue University President Mitchel Daniels suggests that “[f]or
most of higher ed, [the pandemic] is an inflection point...a time that will probably lead
to ‘ongoing, permanent changes in the way we do things’” (as cited in Gardner, 2020).

Change has already begun. During the first months of the pandemic, most
schools moved to online-only instruction in the expectation of resuming business as
usual in fall 2020. As hundreds of schools reneged on opening face-to-face, many that
did reopen moved back online when infections surged. In a synopsis of ten ways SARS-
CoV-2 has already affected higher education, *Chronicle* staff writer Allison Vaillancourt (2020) lists the following: 230+ breach-of-contract lawsuits filed, 40% (or more) increase in student food insecurity, millions of new dollars spent on infection control, a 5% drop in FAFSA applications, abundant layoffs and furloughs of adjunct and housing/student affairs staff, and massive declines in small business revenue to states. These developments are all moving targets but suffice to say that “[h]igher education will be one of the last industries to resume business as usual” (Kelchen, 2020). As long as infection control practices are required, high-touch, close-contact academic support services may be among the last of the last to resume face-to-face teaching and learning.

Of course, pandemics come and go; so too do economic downturns. But there is little doubt that the pandemic is forcing HEIs to address pre-existing unsustainable costs. In his *Chronicle of Higher Education* commentary titled “How to Address the Elephant in the Room: Academic Costs,” business professor Paul N. Friga (2020) analyzes cost trends in both public and private institutions of higher learning. His data suggest that, after the Great Recession (2008–09), most industries reduced cost per output, except higher education where spending per capita increased as much as 40%. While HEIs were busy kicking the unsustainability can, the pandemic reckoning arrived. Yet despite no shortage of bad news, some see opportunity. Simmons University president Helen Drinan boldly suggests: “Over the next year, we very well may see 40 years’ worth of long-needed changes to our academic model. ... We should use this opportunity to reinvent how we do things, and that includes a hard look at the academic side of the house” (as cited in Friga, 2020). *Chronicle* staff writer Goldie Blumenstyk (2020) also takes a bright-side approach by pointing out innovations that may be long
overdue, including expansion opportunities afforded by ending over-reliance on built space\(^5\) and on equity opportunities afforded by expanded access. It seems the entire higher education system is poised to pursue new models for delivering a quality, equitable, affordable education, a dream that unites all constituents.

Given the far-from-rosy HEI political economy, academic support professionals should expect efficiency imperatives to prompt more consolidations. But merger proposals from beleaguered administrators have historically been met with strong practitioner resistance. Marshalling impact data and program evaluations, support units hope that central administrators will see enough value in stand-alone programs to retain autonomy. For instance, both libraries and writing centers have heeded calls to demonstrate value and increase impact, but to date, they have mostly done so independently\(^6\). Staff in writing centers and libraries rightly see our units as key campus participants in enhancing cross-disciplinary engagement and supporting high-impact practices (Kuh, 2005). But accelerating competition for resources (including between like-purposed units) suggests that academic support units had best learn to navigate the risks and rewards of merger initiatives like learning commons\(^7\), because there are compelling rationales for doing so: money and learning.

**Merging for Value: Efficiency**

Practitioners typically care more about learning than the distasteful bottom line, but we believe practitioners should also care about helping our HEIs meet existential

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\(^5\) See Chapter 4, “Placemaking through Learner-based Design” for discussions of built space.

\(^6\) See Chapter 3, “Academic Literacies as Ecology” for more on how the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) and the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) pursued highly aligned frameworks in isolation.

\(^7\) For more on how libraries, writing centers, and learning commons administrators can understand the larger budget pressures in higher education, see Barr and McClellan (2018).
challenges. Obviously, if our institutions fail, so will we. Although HEI administrators view a learning commons as consolidations that enhance learning while creating resource efficiencies, few administrators fully appreciate the cultural chaos mergers precipitate for program personnel who are left to resolve clashing pedagogies, staffing models, and leadership values. To practitioners, the pain of merging is real, while the value of saving the institutional bottom line (especially for under-resourced programs) is all too abstract. Practitioners may see efficiency as a threat to effectiveness, and many perceive administrators that propose mergers as motivated less by enhancing learning and more by penny-pinching. Yet we argue that administrators are more motivated by effectiveness than practitioners are by efficiency. (Fortunately, efficiency and effectiveness are not mutually exclusive.) For the rest of this chapter, we invite practitioners to suspend skepticism while we consider the value of merging structures to save resources, be they time, space, or cash. Using an example from the former writing center, I (Roberta) recount how collectivizing resulted in needed efficiencies for central administration, but unexpectedly resulted in more, not fewer, resources for supporting students.

When our Writing Center reported initially to the Provost and later to a Vice-Provost, I often felt nobody was home. Given the busy administrative demands of their positions, I remember the year I did not see my boss at all. While I enjoyed the autonomy, lack of attention from the top was far from ideal for the program and therefore for learning. I had such limited access to conversations around resources that I

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8 WCS professionals have a long history of suspecting administrators that administrators are entirely capricious in their decision-making. For an early discussion of that history, see “War, Peace, and Writing Center Administration” (Simpson et al., 1994).
often learned of budget cuts long after they were a done deal, and it was during this time that our program was moved every six months. We just didn’t have a seat at the table in allocating resources, either money or space. This itinerant phase nearly killed the Center, partly because constituents couldn’t keep up with our location and partly because the sites chosen for us were leftovers in buildings nobody could find. Traffic dwindled, and with the statistical collapse of the program, I couldn’t make a case for more resources. No amount of publicity could offset this level of administrative inattention. While it was tempting to blame them, administrators were rightly attending to resourcing courses and majors, and graduation and accreditation requirements. Not only do administrators have limited resources to allocate, they have very limited time to understand the nuances of academic support programs. From the upper-level point of view, small programs drain more time than money, so off-loading my program fiscally and my position administratively reduced costly overhead. With a casual phone call, I learned that both the Writing Center and my reporting line would merge into the Libraries. What could go wrong?

It was a hard landing. Central administration worked with the Libraries to resource us with a small, student fee-based allocation, 300 square feet (shared with two other programs), and three tables and a couch. Four unidyllic years later, we moved into 1400 square feet of our very own, but it was in an ugly bunker nobody could find. There were staff-related integration challenges as well, but even so, I would increasingly begin to wonder why I had ever valued short reporting lines in the first place. Now a decade

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9 During SARS-CoV-2, most writing centers are reporting steep declines in usage on professional listservs.
10 Though I can’t trace its provenance, I have internalized lore suggesting writing center directors should keep reporting lines short for best access to resources. I regret it taking me so long to realize that strategy worked very poorly at my institution. See Interchapter 6A, “Pandemacademia” for more on the costs of autonomy.
under the Libraries & Learning Commons umbrella, and with several layers between me and the Provost, we flourish with a larger staff, a bigger budget, and more space in a premium location. Best yet, we started reporting to a Dean who made time to understand the value we brought to student learning, to communicate that value up the administrative chain, and to investigate the potential of moving from casual cooperation to true integration.

**Merging for Value: Learning**

Saving resources in times like these should be incentive enough, but as it happens, the benefits to student learning are an even greater reward for risking our discrete identities. Full-on collaboration entails overcoming competing priorities, addressing cultural differences, and remaking organizational structures—challenges both fraught and inconvenient. Yet it is precisely this kind of dissonance that prompts transformations with the greatest potential to create more value. Threats, it turns out, create opportunities. But if practitioners stay stuck in resistance, those opportunities seldom emerge. For instance, in 1990, South Carolina’s Department of Education, driven by political, sociological, and economic exigencies, eliminated tertiary funding for any instruction deemed developmental (read remedial). This change created an immediate disruption to standard practice for the University of South Carolina’s English Department, especially for writing studies (WS) practitioners (Grego & Thompson, 2008, p. 2). Grego and Thompson realized the combination of state and locally mandated cuts most threatened students traditionally marginalized from college success, but they didn’t spend any time resisting the inevitable. Instead, they innovated, introducing writing studio pedagogy (WSP) as an equity-based method of instruction.
that better met composition’s socially progressive goals in supporting underserved students (2008, p. 5). Although creating writing studios did not involve unit mergers, the approach demonstrates the way economic and political crises can prompt innovation of precisely the sort it takes to survive and thrive in the current HEI landscape.

Collective efforts provide a disruptive impetus that can’t be duplicated from the comfort of our business-as-usual individual programs. Like it did for the University of South Carolina, our disruption sent us back to the pedagogical drawing board for a great reset, leading to innovations that created unanticipated opportunity. When Dean Greenberg called me into his office to ask what we could do with a million dollars, it wasn’t because he had a spare million rattling around in his slush fund\(^\text{11}\). But deans are tasked with raising private monies, and donors seldom rally around business as usual efforts. By collectivizing, our new signature pedagogies captured the enthusiasm of donors precisely because of this transformational vision. Of course, not every merger or innovation will attract donors, but even without them, collectives leverage value for the good of all programs. Collaboration is written into the DNA of writing centers and libraries, but we still mostly go at it alone. Yes, mergers may mean more aggravation, less autonomy, more scrutiny, added conflict—even sacrifice. But the status of peer-based research and writing support for students on our campus has never been more secure.

**Managing Change Pain**

If we’ve been at all persuasive with the foregoing *why*, know that we’re now switching to the *how*, because our professional literatures suggest woefully few

\(^{11}\) Note: Dr. Mark Greenberg does not have a slush fund!
strategies for merging units that have long histories as separate entities. We’re not going to lie: change brings pain, and the extent and nature of that pain will be context-driven. In this chapter, however, we’re approaching merger changes from the systems level so that leaders can anticipate conflict and tailor context-specific methods for negotiating change. In the next sections, then, we identify patterns of challenge, including cultural, pedagogical, and structural differences, give an example of a still-resolving thorny issue from our merger, and then extract the change-leadership principles we have identified so far. Even after five years, we don’t always know how to navigate these challenges, but we’re learning—and we invite you to learn with us.

As promised, in this section we’ll look at a particularly troublesome challenge likely to emerge in any integration initiative: a clash of staffing models. Writing centers, even those staffed by graduate students or faculty, generally value a peer ethos, a value loosely shared by our Learning Commons partners. But while our Libraries’ staff appreciated student help for checking out or shelving books, the teaching and learning work of information literacy was traditionally provided by faculty librarians. Our Studio integrates not only literacies but also staff of all types: undergraduates (interns, seniors, and student coordinators), graduates, paraprofessionals, professionals, and faculty. Some have a stronger affinity for research, others for writing. Since these affinities largely align with position types—undergrads with writing, faculty with research—divides between student and faculty staff can run deep. The flattened hierarchies of student authority, cornerstones of peer learning, made it difficult for faculty to respond

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12 See Appendix A, pp. 28-29, for a heuristic to use in predicting cultural, pedagogical, and structural tensions that may surface in program mergers.
easily to student-led initiatives. For some faculty, participating alongside student colleagues in student-led professional development sessions or taking on-shift direction from undergraduate managers took the novelty of working alongside students too far. Not all faculty intrinsically value authority-sharing behaviors, and very few institutions value authority-sharing in extrinsic rewards, namely tenure and promotion.

Anticipating this culture clash, we scaffolded integration incrementally. We first co-located to develop staff familiarity and to build a community of practice across roles. Next, we transitioned from traditional writing center practice to SBL pedagogies, with students at the forefront in pioneering new practices. Last, we developed a timetable for integrating literacies, ensuring that all staff, despite their primary literacy affiliation, felt equipped to coach across literacies. We also garnered conceptual faculty support by developing a heuristic that would help student staff triage the level of expertise student visitors needed in their presenting concerns. Staff all agreed that peer tutors would take primary responsibility for most research-reading-writing concerns, and that professionals and faculty would be called in to co-consult when visitors’ needs were highly specialized (for our triage heuristic, see Appendix B, p. 30). This plan encouraged faculty to retain ownership of subject-area expertise, and it also placed them in a highly respected mentoring role with peer assistants.

Despite these best-laid plans, student staff became increasingly caught in oppressive power dynamics that undermined our ethic of inclusion. What’s more, although the problem was painfully obvious to the change team, the larger community of practice was slower to recognize the inequitable dynamic. As change leaders, we remained curious, asking questions to understand what values and identities were at stake. For instance, we used Jeffrey Buller’s work to analyze organizational culture and
illuminate the systemic underpinnings of this staffing conflict. We noted that writing centers tend to be highly decentralized (2015, pp. 14–16); that is, decision-making authority is shared between student and professional staff, so decisions are made collectively with substantial input from all staff. Libraries, on the other hand, mirror more closely the university’s hierarchical “distributive culture,” which authorizes decision-making by role status (Buller, 2015, pp. 16–18). Given faculty authority and loyalty to academic freedom, faculty work more collegially than collaboratively; a community of practice led by students sat uncomfortably and perhaps threatened a core faculty value. Rather than becoming reactive, we kept adapting the negotiation strategies\(^\text{13}\) that already brought us so far, and we stayed curious enough to discover and implement new ones. No matter how well-managed, change takes time.

**Principles for Change Leadership**

Although working through the planning heuristic allowed us to anticipate most merger pain points, we are still learning how to resolve tensions as they arise. Even well-planned change is threatening, and no amount of careful staging eliminates all the fears that naturally accompany uncertainties and perceived risk. Some personnel will fear change more than others, but unsettling times call for deft and empathic leadership. Though our list of change leadership strategies is far from exhaustive, these principles have helped us most in amicably charting a collective path.

- **Develop shared vision and urgency around student learning.**

  With upwards of 50 affiliated personnel in the Studio and more than 150 in the

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\(^{13}\) For a consideration of the conflict negotiation strategies that emerged from the earliest days of Western’s writing-researching integration initiative, see Kjesrud and Wislocki (2011).
Teaching & Learning Division housing the Studio, our partners brought to our confederation disparate curricula, pedagogical traditions, professional values, incentive structures, institutional histories, and disciplinary traditions. Yet after engaging in a backward design process that began with goals for learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), our Division and Learning Commons enjoys near-universal, ongoing agreement about co-created outcomes establishing what students should learn and about what our roles are in that learning. All levels of Studio personnel worked to create these umbrella outcomes, and we’ve easily made them relevant to the integrated literacies our Studio supports. Perhaps not every staff member can recite these outcomes at any given moment, but they function as a uniting touchstone. As change leaders, we see constant reminders that successful integration begins and sustains through these shared outcomes.

- **Help stakeholders understand change processes and develop behaviors necessary for innovation.**

As much as relying on shared goals, transformative innovation equally relies on articulating a philosophy that helps stakeholders trust change as a healthy and exciting process. Professor John Kotter argues that change processes can fail when stakeholders don’t understand the need for change or feel that the need implies personal criticism. It’s human nature for inertia to prevail, so “the pain of doing nothing [needs to become] greater than the pain of doing something” (as cited in Buller, 2015, p. 7). Understanding change models helps early adopters relish new opportunities and helps resisters understand their reactions as normal in the change arc. Change leaders can help

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14 A complete list of outcomes and the practices that support them may be found in Chapter 5, “Using Assessment to Prompt Innovation.”

15 See Buller (2015) for three change models, all of which predict resistance.
stakeholders understand the values of a “learning organization” (Senge, 1994), where members embrace inherent tensions as creative energy fueling transformation. In outlining ways small acts can lead to undoing systems of oppression, business change leader Debra Meyerson (2001) acknowledges the reality that people grow slowly. Transformation only becomes possible when change leaders patiently and recursively choose doable acts that carry a high probability of success, affirm experimentation, let stakeholders see the benefits, and then leverage new realizations to develop slightly more challenging doable acts. We actively apply this incremental principle to our staffing model tensions by piloting each fall new ways of engaging faculty. And we’re happy to report that many early tensions are resolving.

- **Scaffold interdependence based on stakeholder strengths.**

  When challenges arose during partnership-building, it was tempting to create elaborate workarounds or avoidant escape hatches. Sometimes we wanted to call the whole thing off. Instead, we resisted our fight-flight-freeze urges by doubling down on our commitment. Closing escape avenues during high conflict feels risky—often it *is* risky. But we wanted to build this level of interdependence: when one fails, we all do; when one succeeds, we all do. Creating and reinforcing symbiosis means recognizing and trusting our new partners’ strengths while staying humble enough about our own to keep learning, even when we feel like we are relinquishing sacred truth. Fixating on strengths within our new community of practice created both safety and safeguards. Times of deep conflict test our commitment to staying strength-focused, but because we’re truly committed to innovation, we return to the qualities of a learning organization: valuing dissent and staying curious during conflict (Senge, 1994). At the
height of our staffing models conflict, it was tempting to blame: all would be well if only we had X or Y circumstance, or if only we could get rid of people like X and have more people like Y. If we catch ourselves finding fault, we just stop. Our progress all along has relied on a foundation of collective strengths, and the only way through conflict is to keep building on them.

- **Plan and enact joint curricula.**

  After establishing shared learning outcomes, we decided what needed to be taught, coached, or imparted to achieve the desired learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 19). Teachers from both writing and library backgrounds let go of familiar curricula and collectively designed a sequence of three integrated research and writing workshops, *Getting Started, Finding & Using Sources*, and *Revising & Editing*. Negotiating both what to teach and how to teach it yielded a stronger curriculum and improved classroom practice. The greatest impact came from leveraging the pedagogical skills of writing professionals to get the entire staff centered on scaffolding process strategies, a move that created pedagogical congruence between the workshops and the Studio. This congruence registers for students because they see the connection between what they are learning in the workshops and what they are learning in Studio consultations.

- **Reward experimentation.**

  Given that we were charting new territory with little evidence-based precedent, we created safety around risk-taking by rewarding trying something, regardless of success, that resulted in our own learning as practitioners. Both writing center and library professionals understand that trying—and failing up—is an integral and instructive part of the research and writing process. Writers try words, researchers try
search terms, teachers try activities: some work; some don’t. Rewarding staff for a recursive try-assess-revise process provides the generative engine for innovation. Early in the change process, we speculated that our youthful student staff would automatically be more comfortable with risk. But after informal research surveying peer tutors and professionals about their comfort with experimentation, we found that students cling to tradition as often as professionals. What is different in leading students through change, however, is relative ease in creating and modifying reward structures. Given that tenure and promotion rewards solo efforts more than collective ones and teaching successes more than failures, we are still working through ways to extrinsically reward faculty collaboration and risk-taking.

- **Design formative assessments to inform practices**\(^{16}\).

  Our separate units brought to the merger a confusing array of established program evaluation routines and directives, few of them useful in gauging and improving learning. Shared outcomes prompted us to design new formal and informal assessments to gain insights on our innovations. Taking a break from accountability-driven evaluative practices opened space for curiosity and intellectual engagement around understanding how our literacies work together and which practices most further student growth, affirming the adage that “the rubber meets the road with assessment” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 19). We enjoy a lively culture of assessment driven by our outcomes and by the curiosities of our main practitioners: undergraduates. Since undergraduate research aligns with the university’s mission,

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\(^{16}\) See Chapter 5, “Using Assessment to Prompt Innovation” for more on how formative assessments forward practices.
assessment projects are well-supported by administration, are well-received at professional conferences, and have driven several program improvements as they deepen our understanding of the Studio as a site that both supports classroom learning and offers distinct outcomes of its own.

- **Establish a community of practice eager to implement evidence-based improvements.**

  Teaching and consulting together across roles forged an inclusive community of practice. For example, facilitating workshops collaboratively allowed librarians, writing professionals, and peer tutors opportunities to observe one another and engage in informal assessment and reflection as facilitation teams. In fact, teaching together has given us new understandings of the ways we connect to other academic literacies represented across our Division and our Learning Commons. When the Studio and the Student Technology Center developed and facilitated workshops on designing research posters, we not only experienced each other’s pedagogies, but we also developed a deeper appreciation for the intersections between writing and technological literacies. In the fall of 2019, we also began collaborating with other units around teaching study and time management skills, and we began exploring the deep connections between listening and speaking and the other academic literacies supported in the Studio. In short, teaching together begets more teaching together, and doing so across the Libraries and the Learning Commons has yielded an inclusive community of practice committed to crossing boundaries, reflection, entrepreneurialism, and risk-taking, all to benefit student learning.

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17 For more on connecting literacies, see Chapter 3, “Academic Literacies as Ecology.”
Status Quo Risk and Change Reward

It’s time to challenge the culture of fear surrounding structural collaboration with other academic support programs. While we do not minimize the professional trauma that may result from badly implemented alliances, we think that programmatic isolation or superficial collaboration represents an unacknowledged and potentially greater risk. Humans, even highly educated ones, are vulnerable to biases that distort fears. For instance, in their Nobel Prize winning “Prospect Theory” outlining how humans assess risk, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) outline a lengthy list of cognitive distortions that plague human thinking. Defying research, humans statistically fear flying more than freeway driving and public speaking more than rock climbing, even though the second activity carries far greater risk (Levitt & Dubner, 2005). Academics like to think we’re immune to irrationality, but we are as likely as anyone to exaggerate small-scale risks and minimize large-scale ones. Well-positioned to appreciate large-scale risk and rightly engaged in heading them off, HEI administrators propose mergers not because they don’t value our programs but precisely because they do. But consumed by the demands of day-to-day survival, academic support professionals under-appreciate the degree to which our industry is on fire.

Given this larger context, co-curricular teaching and learning programs must be willing to maximize both student learning and resource efficiency. Co-sponsored events and co-locations may be an admirable start, but in a climate demanding more value than any single program can deliver, stand-alone programs are in jeopardy. As Lori Salem’s research reveals, writing centers arose not in response to local visionaries with a good idea but rather in response to the higher educational context (2014, p. 15). If the
new political wave in higher education makes academic support consolidations as inevitable as we think, not even the most passionate and charismatic leader can stop the wave. Although negotiating stakeholder differences in pedagogy, culture, and administration is challenging, truly integrating support services has the potential to deliver learning outcomes of enduring value while being a great equalizer in promoting engaged inclusivity. Pursuing these outcomes may be challenging, but it’s the right thing to do—and doing right is not risky at all.

Acknowledgements
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### Appendix A

**Heuristic for Anticipating and Resolving Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>Research Consultation</th>
<th>Writing Center</th>
<th>Merged in Studio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face Methods</td>
<td>Reference interview; drop-in based with few appointments</td>
<td>Non-directive questioning; appointment-based with some drop-in</td>
<td>Primarily drop-in; offer limited appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Methods</td>
<td>Chat; Library Guides (LibGuides)</td>
<td>Asynchronous screencasts/written; handout resources</td>
<td>Adopt all; add interactive online learning objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Finding users resources for current project</td>
<td>Offering reader response to prompt revision</td>
<td>Scaffolding strategies; prompt metacognition for transfer of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Professional; service ethic</td>
<td>Student-oriented, peer feedback ethic</td>
<td>Unite in thirddspace working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Expertise, direction oriented</td>
<td>Peer guide oriented</td>
<td>Value all expertise from both peers and professionals; egalitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Research only</td>
<td>Writing only</td>
<td>Integrate research and writing; add reading, listening, speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Main floor library</td>
<td>Itinerant, moved every 2 years on average</td>
<td>Main floor library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Service desk; no walls/doors, nearly always open</td>
<td>Walls &amp; doors, locked when closed; consulting tables; often served as tutor lounge</td>
<td>No walls/doors; open for use when not staffed; zones of function: living room, collaborative space, focused space, classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Reportage &amp; Oversight</td>
<td>Budget &amp; Accountability</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bureaucratic — Dean of Libraries, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Autonomous — Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education</td>
<td>Bureaucratic — Director of Teaching &amp; Learning/Learning Commons, Dean of Libraries, VP for Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal head, rotating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Director/AD, permanent; student leader positions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professional staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Onboarding</td>
<td>Ad hoc with faculty mentor</td>
<td>Course, 5 credits, for first-year tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing education</td>
<td>Ad hoc, different for each staff role</td>
<td>5 hours per quarter for all tutors/leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff meetings</td>
<td>Bi-monthly for pros</td>
<td>Quarterly orientation for all staff (paid)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B

### Staff Expertise Triage Heuristic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Staff Role</th>
<th>Referral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Entry</td>
<td>• Answer directional questions</td>
<td>All library staff</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide referrals across Learning Commons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coach students in finding sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Search Library FAQ for information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Basic</td>
<td>• Answer questions about RWS services</td>
<td>All Studio staff</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide feedback and strategies for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Analyzing assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Brainstorm topics, inquiry questions, keywords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Finding &amp; evaluating sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Reading and analyzing sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Organizing ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Constructing a thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Looking up citation styles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Proofreading for patterns of error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Advanced</td>
<td>• Provide feedback and strategies for:</td>
<td>2nd-year+ Studio Assistants &amp; Pros</td>
<td>Bring in Senior SA or Pro for co-consult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Using databases to find sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Evaluating sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Synthesizing sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Improving elements of cohesion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Addressing metacognition and affect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assist with specialized needs: learning diversities, multilinguals, groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Specialized</td>
<td>• Provide feedback and strategies for:</td>
<td>Student Leads &amp; Pros</td>
<td>Call Pro for co-consult or referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Finding highly specialized sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Meeting discipline-specific conventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assist with complex learning/language difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assist graduate students and faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborate across the curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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18 In addition to staff role, we use a badging system to denote specialized expertise that we defer to in triage.
Interchapter 6A

_Pandemacademia:_ Sustaining Programs in Times of Crisis

Roberta D. Kjesrud, *Western Washington University*

Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

About the Author

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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I write this interchapter under my state’s stay-at-home orders, where I’ve been quarantined for close to three months\(^1\) during the SARS-CoV2 pandemic. My home office is comfy and my commute a breeze; nobody minds what I wear to work, and I don’t miss meetings. What I do miss is students, both colleagues and clients. Yet it seems fewer students may become the new normal in higher education institutions (HEIs): Gen Z is smaller than preceding generations, more schools are competing for them, and the pandemic’s economic fallout, what I’m calling pandemacademia, may put tertiary education financially out of reach. Of course, reduced enrollments create economic fallout for institutions as well; fewer tuition dollars and recession belt-tightening stands to curtail both state and private support for some time to come. Although academic support programs outwardly attract students in a competitive HEI marketplace, tutoring centers, learning centers, writing centers are often seen internally as frills that drain resources from departments. Pandemacademia creates an above average risk that administrators will see boutique services as important window dressing but ultimately as drains on central resources\(^2\). From a management perspective, the solution is to consolidate; in doing so, institutions gain fiscal efficiencies and students gain one-stop shops.

Few campus stakeholders will object to such consolidations. For those who believe that learning begins and ends in the classroom, support services are most desirable in times of abundant resources. Representing an unusual group who likely achieved success without needing support, faculty are likely to perceive support

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\(^1\) At the time of publication, classes (and my work) have now been online for most of a year.
\(^2\) See Chapter 6, “Value Added,” for a more detailed explanation of demographic and economic realities affecting HEIs.
programs as luxuries that shouldn’t be necessary, because Johnny or Suzie should have mastered [insert name of literacy here] in high school. Finally, faculty often don’t trust peer-based learning because they fear their students will get mixed messages about how to research and write. Although most faculty welcome our programs when they need to outsource educational goals (everything remedial), in the scramble for shrinking resources, many secretly harbor suspicions that support programs syphon departmental funding, provide services that shouldn’t be necessary, and offer inferior expertise. Students are also unlikely to oppose consolidation efforts. Most value both the convenience and clarity of the one-stop shop. When they are research-writing, they don’t have to know where to locate three different services for research, reading, and writing, they simply show up in the Learning Commons. For administrators, faculty, students, and parents, consolidating can only be good.

Despite professional stand-alone ideals, consolidating can also be good for support programs. Of course, one-stop McTutoring\(^3\) may offer clarity to students and demonstrate good stewardship to the public, but consolidations harder to love when your job is on the line. Just today I learned of two long-term, high profile writing centers crippled by forced mergers that replaced credentialed directors with generic managers lacking writing expertise. While it’s likely these particular moves are wrong-headed, writing center professionals typically respond to any consolidation efforts with petitions, angry letters, hurled insults—and a deep commitment to shore up our defenses against the invading hordes. Unfortunately, these professional conversations

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\(^3\) *McTutoring* is the unflattering term I once used for the conglomerate approach to academic support services.
often cast administrators as ignorant at best and cruel at worst, despite compelling evidence HEI administrators take to heart both student and public good.

No matter what motives them, consolidations present incredible possibilities for innovation and student learning. For years our writing center lacked stability; it was highly itinerant, woefully under-resourced, and benignly neglected. For example, in the same two-year period during which the program was moved six times, we had as little as $3500 to support tutor salaries; furthermore, I had an audience with my vice-provost boss just once a year. The writing center was a stand-alone program led by a writing professional (the disciplinary ideal), but we lacked perceived relevance to students or the University mission. A defensive win for autonomy and short reporting lines, perhaps, but a near total loss for teaching and learning. The University had fulfilled its obligation to support student success. Have writing center? Check!

Defensive moves seldom succeed in the face of institutional inevitabilities, and when those are driven by non-negotiables like economics and demographics, inevitabilities are even more, well, inevitable. Yet so much of the professional rhetoric focuses on prevention, that is, how to avoid unsavory alliances that threaten autonomy. But autonomy is overrated, especially from the perspective of increasing learning for students. The same energy writing center scholars spend defending against encroachment would be far better spent pro-actively seeking alignments that benefit student learning. Of course, merging organizational structures can be difficult to navigate, but a high ethical standard of duty to students demands that we find ways to partner despite structural challenges.
In the case of Western Washington University’s former Writing Center, moving to Western Libraries was spatially desirable and organizationally expedient. For the first four years after becoming a founding partner in the Learning Commons, we continued pursuing optimal autonomy until it became obvious there were no wins for anyone in this approach. We moved three times within the library, all to less-than-ideal spaces, and we enjoyed little advocacy and support. For instance, when minimum wage more than doubled, the allocation we came into the Libraries with was no longer adequate. In a merged mindset, this resource problem garnered the no small clout of Libraries’ advocacy. It quickly became apparent that collaborating more broadly would solidify our resources and facilitate more learning, so we didn’t wait for the institution to mandate a merger. Instead, we initiated merging research and writing support based on optimal alignments for students.

Has merging been roses? It has not. Although our values increasingly align, we still run across distinct differences in writing center and library cultures. Library faculty now have a Studio role, but the traditional authority they carry has sometimes been an awkward fit with the flattened hierarchy writing centers value. Faculty librarians answer solely to their department chair, so the Studio leadership team relies mostly on good will when it comes to creating congruence between student and faculty practices. And finally, while the writing credentialed folks associated with Studio leadership have done much to learn research as a new discipline, library faculty have slower to acquire writing and writing pedagogies. This halting integration will become more noticeable when I, the only Libraries’ staff member with writing credentials, retire in 2021. Some ten years
after I joined the Libraries organizationally, there is still limited traction for hiring Libraries’ faculty who are credentialed in writing rather than information literacy.

Remaining tensions notwithstanding, from my perspective now ten years on, I believe it’s high time for professionals in our home disciplines to do better adulting. Conflict is normal and survivable, so let’s invest less scholarly and emotional labor in strategies for resistance and more of both in strategies for pro-actively envisioning new structures and negotiating new alliances. I leave you with a summary (Figure 1, page 7) of what continuing autonomy would have cost stakeholders in contrast with the benefits they now enjoy from our merger. For us, the trials of merging seem but a pesky gnat compared to the unparalleled rewards. Perhaps at most HEIs, the same is truer than our discipline leads us to expect.

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**Figure 1**

**Comparing the cost of writing center autonomy with the benefits of merging**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of Autonomy</th>
<th>Benefits of Merging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Located in a bunker, a windowless space with a narrow door that students were afraid to enter</td>
<td>• Located in huge space equipped with all the latest in flexible affordances (thanks to the Hacherl family, faithful donors to Western Libraries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stuck in traditional writing center pedagogies with 30-50-minute appointments and no opportunities for groups</td>
<td>• Enjoy a wide open, highly prominent location that is a destination for most students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack advocacy to backfill a 50% increase in student salaries, meaning our program would be 50% smaller</td>
<td>• Garner attention as a key player in meeting the University’s strategic goals around engaged inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer half the number of tutoring positions and a quarter of the consultations</td>
<td>• Offer credit-bearing courses in academic literacies attended by the most vulnerable populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Require tutors to take 5 credit hours of a course that is a thinly veiled, unpaid job requirement (legal, but neither ethical nor equitable in our model)</td>
<td>• Reach 31% more students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Miss the invitation to pitch an innovative new venture to the Libraries’ faithful and enthusiastic donors.</td>
<td>• Offer 40 fully paid student internships for student staff, including paid professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Align research, reading, and writing, helping students understand these as one messy scholarly process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interchapter 6B

Just the FAQs: What Enquirers want to Know

Roberta D. Kjesrud, Western Washington University

About the Author

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio. The editors welcome communication about this piece through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Micro-Consulting Session Length

Your typical micro-consultation is around 13 minutes, but if a writing assistant wants to talk with a student for longer, can they? Is there a way for students who need more time/more help to get it?

I would flip the question: Exactly what outcomes will students gain in a longer session that serial micro-consultations wouldn’t accomplish as well or better? I can’t personally articulate good answers beyond tradition or a sense of wanting to feel needed. In high demand when Studio Assistants are each rotating between 3-5 visitors, micro-consulting happens naturally because our only other alternative is to turn people away. Because of the all-for-one-one-for-all ethos of learning in community, both staff and visitors prefer this equitable approach. In low demand, staff are asked to reflect on whether one long session is really best. Transcript evidence from longer sessions reveals much less procedural scaffolding, including few process strategies and little practice time (see Interchapter 2A, The Art of Leaving). I really can’t say this strongly enough: we think people need us, and they do—but not for long. Sometimes they think they need us, but we need to show them that they don’t. Given that agency is one of our main outcomes, longer sessions usually undermine that outcome.

Senior staff micro-consultations are generally very close to the 13-minute mean, but data show new staff consult for longer. Novice staff call on previous experience coaching friends in long sessions, and they have gotten used to being there to be there to witness the “Aha!” But more significantly, new staff initially lack micro-consulting strategies, so their sessions are longer until they’ve had enough practice assessing need without reading papers, setting incremental priorities, and choosing strategies that match visitors’ strengths. Few have intentionally scaffolded before either, so there’s a
learning curve to implementing I do – We do – You do. As new staff gain experience with SBL and as they begin to experiment with how quickly they can transition a learner to self-regulated learning, they gain pleasure from seeing visitors learn to trust themselves. Also, staff see advantages to both visitors and staff in having some time to step back and reflect on whether the scaffolding process is meeting the learning goals. Such mid-course adjustments simply don’t happen often in traditional appointments. I don’t have the data in front of me, but after practicing for about ten weeks, new staff revert to mean session length. Longer sessions still happen occasionally, even for senior staff. My last one-hour session was about three years ago, so that shows you how rare they are. The visitor was a veteran returning to school after time away, and he was recovering from a career-ending injury. He had three children, zero confidence, and a boatload of financial worry. I made the intentional decision to hold space and listen to his story because I decided that conceptual understanding and process strategies took a back seat to affective goals.

The second part of the question—what about students who need longer sessions—implies that high needs students (like the veteran) need extended help. I argue that it’s far better to stagger this help over time. If students need to get from A to G in their learning, there is simply no way they will succeed if we try scaffolding that much growth in one step. High needs visitors may need more consultations, but they need shorter increments to ensure we scaffold success. For example, we have several frequent flyers on the spectrum. It’s very common for them to spend hours in the Studio back and forth between consulting and working on their own. In total, they may receive more than an hour of consulting, but cramming that into a pre-packaged appointment length simply
makes no sense. Visitors understand immediately that hour-long sessions are counterproductive. Often visitors will wave me away saying, “Okay I’ve had enough now, I need to work on this.” When I say I’ll step away and check on them in 10 minutes, at least 85% of visitors show visible relief. It’s this reaction that taught me our old methods were simply overwhelming. Of course, some visitors from more vulnerable identities or who have a long project (like a graduate thesis) benefit from an ongoing relationship with a Studio Assistant well versed in the context. For them we offer both a credit- or non-credit practicum partnership where students meet weekly with the same assistant; even so, those sessions feature SBL and integrated literacies pedagogies.

**Virtual Studio**

**How do your online services work?**

We typically offer several virtual options, including chat, asynchronous response to drafts submitted online, virtual consulting, and online learning modules.

- **Chat**

  Many of our visitors come through chat, which runs through Libanswers, a library-oriented product by Springshare. Staffed during most library hours, a chat window automatically pops up when visitors consult the Library or Studio website. Information desk staffers answer chats and transfer them appropriately across the Libraries, including to the Studio. All studio staff remain logged in to chat during shifts. When chats are quick questions, we answer and end the chat. When chats come from visitors in process, we leave the chat open so they can check back with us as needed while they work. When chat questions are highly complex, the system allows us to convert them into tickets so we can queue and refer them. Finally, when the chat
medium isn’t adequate to the visitor’s learning needs, we invite them to join us on Zoom instead. The Libanswers system also serves as a platform Ask Us, a searchable FAQ. Adding chat would improve any writing center, but though chat platforms are common to libraries, they are uncommon among other support services. I speculate that chat is not common in writing centers because of traditions around appointments, long sessions, and a preference for face-to-face learning.

- **Asynchronous Response**

Visitors can submit writing online through our website for response within 48 hours. Although visitors can choose from written or screencast response, transcript evidence indicates that, in direct contradiction to our in-person pedagogies, written responses seldom feature scaffolding. In other words, written responses mainly target knowing about (see Chapter 2 for more on knowing about, how, and to become). On the other hand, screencasts prompt growth in all three types of knowledge; Studio Assistants follow the I do-You do sequence for demonstrating strategies, for adding visual cues to strategy scaffolds, and for prompting meta reflection. Screencasting, then, is an equity practice because it approximates outcomes parity with in-person learning. Unfortunately, new staff strongly prefer written response, partly because it’s what they are used to and partly because they are self-conscious about recording their own voice. To counter the encultured preference for written response, we review evidence in our staff development. Visitors also show a knee jerk preference for written response (again, encultured), but in a small assessment of visitors who received both, they preferred screencasts two to one over written, saying it is easier to follow and it feels more relational.
• **Synchronous Consulting**

Although partially available prior to the pandemic, we have expanded synchronous consulting. In a [Zoom room](#) shared with the Tutoring Center, visitors drop in for consulting. The session host then assigns visitors and staff to a breakout room for video consulting. Although Zoom can approximate the physical Studio in terms of a learning community with serial micro-consulting, our current practice is very much a regression to the previous one-at-a-time, leave-when-it’s-over service point mentality. As Pippa Hemsley points out in [Interchapter 4D](#) on virtual studios, using alternate existing platforms such as Discord’s *Study Together!* would more closely align the virtual and physical Studio. Failing to plan both physical and virtual program elements together from the beginning likely accounts for our current virtual growing pains (see [Chapter 4](#)).

• **Online Learning Objects**

The Studio’s website offers an increasing number of three-minute, on demand [self-paced learning objects](#). These resources also have an equity intention, as not all students can attend in person, perhaps because they attend a distance program or work during our hours. Or some may be reluctant for whatever reason to ask for help. In addition to these video or slide-based resources, the Libraries offers a more substantial [interactive series of tutorials on integrated literacies](#) with instruction on refining an inquiry question, finding, evaluating, reading, and using sources, and drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and documenting. These tutorials are being enhanced as we speak. And finally, the Studio is completing asynchronous virtual versions of our
integrated literacies classroom workshops, which some faculty link in the classroom management system for a flipped classroom experience.

**Staff Education**

Do you have a credit-bearing course that student peer assistants must take before working in your writing studio? What training do you require for professional tutors and librarians who work in the writing studio?

We used to have a credit-bearing course, but we don’t anymore. Professional development is required for everyone, but now it is all for pay. We identified ethical issues with requiring staff to pay tuition for a course that is required for the job. It all came to a head when an exposé in our school newspaper claimed that Studio Assistants had to pay to work in the Studio. Our tuition is bundled, so we didn’t realize anyone paid additional tuition, but we learned that one of our staff members paid a significant upcharge. This news story was the beginning of a string of student labor issues for Western. While we were not in violation of federal labor laws, we just felt exploitive about paying professionals but not the students who already earn less. I wrote a strong case requesting additional funding, which was readily approved. The amount of required staff development is most intense for those in their first two quarters of practice. After their first year, staff generally spend 3-5 paid hours per quarter in staff development.

Given the complexity of our program, we long ago gave up the idea that all staff (including professionals) can be experts in everything. We developed a heuristic with four levels of expertise (see Chapter 4, p. 44). New staff shadow until they demonstrate Level 2 expertise, which is generally acquired in the first three weeks after significant up-front onboarding: 21 paid hours (4 hours a week in class, 3 hours a week shadowing). After everyone can handle Level 2, we use a badging system to indicate additional
expertise. Staff in all roles choose a badge to work on each quarter. At the beginning of each term, staff meet with a more experienced practitioner in a goal-setting conference. Staff bring a session transcript and a self-assessment that identifies several strengths and one gap in their practice; most choose to work on a badge that fills the gap. Although some badges have multiple levels (bronze, silver, and gold), in general, it takes 3 hours to earn a badge.

Let me provide a badge example. We support Zotero as a research management tool. In 3 hours, I can earn a Zotero badge by working through the online learning modules. Then I add my name to a list of Zotero badge holders. When I’m on shift with a colleague who doesn’t have a Zotero badge, they may call me to co-consult if a visitor asks a question beyond their expertise. We just started the badging system in 2019, and so far, we like it; however, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has stalled our work on adding new badges. A sampling of our staff education online learning objects and sample videos are linked in the Appendix.

**Physical Space**

*What is the approximate square footage of your Studio? Is the area devoted to “just writing” or is there tutoring for other subject areas too?*

I wish I knew square footage. If campus weren’t closed for the pandemic, I’d pace it out. Our previous space was 1400 square feet (student population 15,000). Though I’m not spatially intelligent, I’m to guess and say we have 3-4 times that now.

We focus on integrated literacies (research, reading, writing, listening, speaking), but we support all learning where possible. Because they habituate to our learning community no matter what they are learning, the same visitor may be researching and writing for a while before they start doing equations or vice versa. As Kellyn Wolden
points out in Interchapter 4B, all learning is authorized in the Studio, as is eating lunch. Many visitors are engaged in reading, which cuts across all disciplines. Few visit us intentionally for reading help, but when we engage students, they often tell us how much they struggle with reading in terms of volume, comprehension, and retention. I remember having a 3-minute strategy consultation with someone struggling with reading an accounting case. She later told me those three minutes changed her life (well, her reading life). Teachers regularly employ 3-minute teaching moments; why don’t writing centers?

The Tutoring Center is also part of Western Libraries now, but though we wish they were more proximate, they are across a skybridge in another library building. However, many STEM students study in our space. In the future, we hope to equip their tutors to potentially support 100- and 200-level STEM writing (primarily lab reports). They have a lot of street cred in the sciences, and we never have had much, despite all kinds of outreach.

Program Planning and Implementation

How much time did you spend at the planning stage before you rolled out your writing studio program? How did you prepare staff for the transition?

In terms of space planning, it took about 18 months to plan Phase 1 of the space because it was a fairly significant remodel related to a large donation. Planning involved architects (initially) and later facilities, maintenance, the campus interior designer. Internally, the planning involved a large team of stakeholders to promote buy-in across donors, the university, the libraries, and the staff. We planned Phase 2 of the space during our first year of operation after Phase 1. We mostly addressed problems that we
either anticipated or that emerged as a pain point. It was very useful to incrementally stage spatial changes, so we didn’t get locked into anything that didn’t work in practice.

The program planning (pedagogy) group was much smaller (Head of Research, Director and Assistant of Writing Center, and Learning Commons Director). Our vision for the pedagogy is what most excited the donors, so change was a given. Program planning (outcomes, pedagogy) happened simultaneously with space planning, although we implemented new pedagogies before making spatial change. Here’s a timeline of pedagogical change (we are on the quarter system).

- **Summer 2014**: Researched signature pedagogies
- **Fall 2014**: Floated micro-consulting plans for staff feedback
- **Winter 2015**: Piloted an evening studio
- **Spring 2015**: Moved Research Consultation and the Writing Center into an unimproved corner of our current space
- **Summer 2015**: Construction, Phase 1
- **Fall 2015**: Merged program structures, fully implemented both signature pedagogies, grand opening as the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio

One key to moving so quickly is that we agreed to conceptual changes without being distracted by logistics. Never let a *how* get in the way of a good *what* and *why*! We often tell writers to trust the process, so we took our own advice and just trusted the logistics to work themselves out. Mostly, we predicted more impediments than we encountered. Of course, not everyone is completely comfortable jumping in with both feet without a clear landing. Early on we surveyed staff about how risk tolerant they were. I predicted professionals would be less tolerant, but in fact many undergraduates were highly risk averse. Since we knew from studying the change bell curve there is always push back, we worked incrementally. For instance, we piloted micro-consulting and integrated literacies in the evenings from 6-9 p.m. We advertised studio hours in a
comfy library study area staffed with writing assistants and librarians. The informal evening study culture provided the perfect low-stakes atmosphere for trying innovative strategies. We staffed evenings primarily with the Trail Blazers our survey identified; we gave them carte blanche to fail up and relied on their expertise to help leaders understand what worked/what didn’t. After piloting the evening studio, Research Consultation and the Writing Center moved together into a corner of where we are now. That quarter helped reveal the practice challenges of merged literacies and for creating a community of practice where professionals worked as peers with undergraduates.

When we opened as the Studio in fall 2015, we fully implemented both signature pedagogies, including integrated literacies (previously, librarians mostly answered research questions, and writing assistants mostly answered writing questions). To invest in this pedagogy, we developed nine cross-training literacy labs where small groups of mixed pros/students could learn strategies to support research, reading, and writing. Envisioning and implementing all program elements (outcomes and pedagogies, not space) took us about twelve months. We joke now that we dated, lived together, and got married all within a year.

I think it helped everyone that we explicitly acknowledged the change bell curve (early adopters, adopters, later adopters) and affirmed the value of each (later adopters often kept us early adopters from doing dumb stuff). Trail Blazers who piloted the evening studio helped us develop a community of practice ethos that stays playful, welcoming failure as opportunity, celebrating trying something new regardless of outcome, and sponsoring lots of reflection. Although we prepared staff with studio-based learning theory and cross-training in multiple literacies, leaders didn’t pretend to
have all the answers; we relied on the community to discover them as we went along. Mainly, we all just committed to doing what we thought was the right thing for increasing learning. The fact that visitors affirmed the change so enthusiastically spurred us all in taking more risks. A couple of years in, even the strongest skeptics among staff, faculty, or visitors had no desire to go back. One thing I learned: if you wait to feel ready, inertia always prevails. You have to be moving to create change.
Appendix

Staff Education Resources

Note that all resources carry a Creative Commons attribution share-alike license; feel free to modify and reuse with credit.

**Micro-consulting Demo Videos** – Micro-consulting videos made for onboarding purposes. These videos demonstrate a complete SBL interaction, including greeting, assessment, scaffolding, leaving, and checking back in.

**Studio-based Learning** – A core staff development unit on SBL pedagogy

**Going Meta** – A core staff development unit on prompting metacognitive reflection

**Invitational Learning** – An elective staff development unit on invitational learning theory
Learning Enhanced: Studio Practices for Engaged Inclusivity

Editors: Roberta D. Kjesrud, Pippa Hemsley, Sofia Jensen, and Emma Winningham
Western Washington University, Western Libraries & Learning Commons

About the Editors

Roberta was a peer tutor, a staff supervisor, and a director at Western Washington University’s Writing Center between 1988-2015. In 2015, she became the Director of Writing for Western Libraries’ Hacherl Research & Writing Studio; she retires in 2021.

Pippa was originally an undergraduate Writing Center tutor; she returned as the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio’s Assistant Director from 2016 to 2020.

Sofia was a Studio Assistant in the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio from 2018 to 2020, and she was the Undergraduate Research Coordinator from 2019-2020. Sofia is now in her hometown of Albuquerque working towards her teacher licensure in PreK through 3rd grade.

Emma was originally an undergraduate Writing Center tutor; she returned first to Western Libraries’ Learning Commons, and she is currently the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio’s Interim Assistant Director.

The editors welcome communication about this work through the Studio’s email: rws@wwu.edu.

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

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