Gatekeeping by Design: The Use of an Exit Exam as a "Boss Text" in a Basic Writing Course

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates a Basic Writing program shared between a University of California campus and a local community college in which the curriculum, assessment practices, and larger programmatic structures were heavily influenced by an exit exam modeled after the UC system's Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE). Drawing from scholarship on assessment ecologies and critical systems thinking, I analyze data from an institutional ethnography, including interviews with faculty and administrators and institutional documents. My analysis centers on how institutional and administrative thinking about students and *faculty established the AWPE as the dominant force within the program, creating friction between stakeholders as perspectives on the program's purpose diverged. This research has implications for the challenges presented by regressive institutional cultures of writing for WPAs and researchers working toward reform in Basic Writing programs across higher education.*

KEYWORDS: Basic Writing; basic writers; community college faculty; critical systems thinking; ecological models; exit exams; institutional ethnography; writing programs

For the last several decades, thousands of students admitted into the University of California system each year have taken the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) as one of their first actions as an admitted student. The AWPE is one of several ways students have satisfied the system's Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), historically known as "Subject A." In her book about Subject A's history, Jane Stanley notes that the requirement has existed since the University of California's establishment in 1869 and argues that "the. . . ability to label a group of students 'remedial' is a powerful rhetorical tool" (6) that has long served the UC's desire to distinguish itself as one of the preeminent public colleges in the US. In 1919, Subject A was shifted from an admissions requirement to a prerequisite for enrollment in

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courses requiring "substantial writing" (UCOP, "The Requirement"), with failure to meet the requirement within one year of admission resulting in potential disenrollment (University of California Academic Senate). For students who matriculate to a UC campus without having fulfilled the ELWR, satisfying the requirement typically involves passing a developmental writing course. This article examines a case study of one such course, Workload 99 (WLD 99), at the campus of UC Sierra.[1] In 1993, due to ongoing budget crises in the UC system, instruction for WLD 99 courses was outsourced to a local community college. Where previously students could pass a Subject A course in the English Department with a C or higher to fulfill the requirement, concerns from institutional stakeholders at UC Sierra over whether moving instruction to a community college would lower standards led to the creation of an additional condition: that WLD 99 students not just pass the course, but also pass an independently-graded, AWPE-style final exit exam for the course.

UC Sierra is not unique in this; archives of Basic Writing scholarship suggest that exit assessments are relatively common (e.g., Hake; Meeker; Molloy, "Diving In"; Sullivan). In recent years, scholarship in Writing Studies has called attention to the negative impact of supposedly colorblind (Davila) standards-based writing assessments that wield the hammer of Standardized Edited American English (SEAE) against students of color and students from marginalized language backgrounds (e.g., Baker-Bell et al.; Inoue and Poe). A dearth of recent research on the role that timed writing and exit exams currently play in curriculum and practices within writing classrooms and programs suggests that, at least in terms of Writing Studies literature, much of the field has moved on from timed writing. However, the distributed nature of college writing instruction across the US makes it difficult for Writing Studies researchers to account for the diversity of structures, programs, and institutions in which writing is taught and assessed, as well as the range of disciplinary backgrounds and familiarity with Writing Studies literature of those in charge of designing and leading such instruction. To what extent, then, does this perception of moving on within the literature of the field reflect the reality on the ground? In what ways might timed, high-stakes writing exams still drive curriculum and instruction in writing programs and classrooms in institutions across the country? If our goal is for scholarship on equitable and just writing assessment to shape curriculum and instructional practices, more research on the current landscape of assessment in classrooms, writing programs, and institutions is needed.

In this study, I investigate the role of the AWPE in WLD 99 courses. This article draws from the concept of "boss texts" in institutional ethnography (Griffith and Smith; LaFrance *Institutional Ethnography*) as well as scholarship on critical systems thinking (Flood; Melzer; Midgley) and assessment ecologies (Reiff et al.; Inoue; Molloy, "Human Beings") to examine how the AWPE shaped and standardized curriculum in WLD 99 courses, restricting teacher agency and ultimately limiting student success. Through interviews with ten faculty and two administrators, as well as analysis of historical documents, I explore the institutional, programmatic, and pedagogical structures that established the AWPE as the dominant force in WLD 99. I examine how institutional and administrative thinking about both students *and* faculty shaped programmatic investment in the AWPE and created friction between stakeholders as their perceptions of the purpose of the course diverged. I highlight the importance of drawing from the experiences and perspectives of faculty, who are in a unique position to demonstrate how larger programmatic and institutional constructs impact their everyday work of teaching. This case study further illuminates the relationship between harmful assessment ecologies and the institutional devaluing of faculty and students throughout higher education and demonstrates the danger of considering programmatic microstructures like curriculum and pedagogical practices in isolation from institutional macrostructures that shape them. In order for reform of harmful assessment ecologies in developmental writing programs to succeed, WPAs must look beyond change on the programmatic level and work to interrogate, address, and dismantle the regressive institutional ideologies and structures underpinning such ecologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sean Molloy traced the advent of a high-stakes exit exam for Basic Writing at City College, CUNY, starting in the 1970s, critiquing the role writing program administrator Mina Shaughnessy played in its establishment, from her initial rejection to her eventual embrace of such assessments as supposed valid measures of student's proficiency in writing ("Diving In"). In the ensuing decades, exit exams spread throughout the CUNY system (Chadwick; McBeth) and on to colleges and universities across the country (Meeker; Hake), often featuring in traditionally "remedial" courses which offered zero credit but were still required for the students placed into them. Molloy et al. demonstrate how conscious and unconscious racism informed the regressive institutional structures shaping what they call "legacy Basic

Writing programs," including the common implementation of draconian timed assessments for placement and course-exit, the bureaucratic hurdles that limit reform efforts in these programs, and the enduring impact that being labeled "basic" can have on students.

Attention from researchers on exit exams and the roles that they play in curriculum and classroom practices has largely waned in recent years; a phenomenon that some have attributed in part to researchers in the field moving on to models like portfolio assessment (Yancey; Molloy, "Human Beings"). Mentions of exit exams are more common in articles focusing on two-year colleges (e.g., Anderst et al.; Avni and Finn; Doran; Patthey-Chavez et al.). A TYCA survey of two-year college writing programs found that while most of the institutions surveyed did not use an exit assessment, many respondents suggested they were interested in developing one (Sullivan). What remains unclear is how common exit exams are in Basic Writing programs today and what influence they might have on the curriculum and assessment practices of the programs in which they exist. By addressing this gap in the research on exit exams within Basic Writing programs, researchers can better understand the challenges WPAs may face when developing and integrating more equitable assessment models.

Considerable history of scholarship in a variety of fields exists exploring the notion that an assessment may influence instruction. J. Charles Alderson and Dianne Wall defined the concept of washback as the notion that "testing influences teaching" (115) and note that scholarship at the time posited that washback may cause instructors and students to take actions they might not otherwise if not for the presence of a test. Washback has been explored extensively in research on language testing (Cheng et al.), ESL and EFL courses (Hamp-Lyons), and test preparation courses taught internationally (Green; Sun). It has also been the subject of considerable research in K-12 education scholarship (Au, "High Stakes Testing"; Au, "New Taylorism"; Dappen et al.), particularly in the wake of policies like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top (Crawford; Hursh; Menken; Mertler). Writing Studies scholars have discussed the potential impacts of increased K-12 accountability testing (Bernstein), standardized testing and exit exams (Otte), and the Common Core State Standards (Addison) on curriculum and instructional practices in college writing classrooms.

Ecological models have gained prominence in Writing Studies literature in recent decades as scholars have considered the ways that institutional and programmatic structures designed to uphold White supremacy enforce White language practices like Standardized Edited American English (SEAE)

in writing curriculum and pedagogical practices. Linking to concepts like consequential validity, or the potential social consequences of an assessment (AERA, APA, and NCME), ecological models consider how assessment practices based in SEAE disproportionately impact students along race, language, and class lines. Mary Jo Reiff et al. note that approaching writing programs through an ecological lens illuminates the ways that "discourses, rhetors, texts, utterances, and material (and immaterial) objects form. . . networks of dynamic interaction" (6). Molloy connects ecological assessment to sociocultural validity in his analysis of how CUNY's SEEK program in the 1960s became a model for socially just and fair Basic Writing programs ("Human Beings"). Asao Inoue theorizes antiracist writing assessment ecologies that might account for interrelations between environments, individuals, and objects "without denying or eliding linguistic, cultural, or racial diversity, and the politics inherent in all uneven social formations" (77).

Related to ecological models is critical systems thinking (CST). In his article applying systems thinking theories to writing program administration and reform, Dan Melzer described systems thinking as a methodological process that considers the relationship between a system and "suprasystems" that shape and influence it. CST moves beyond traditional systems thinking by considering the social and historical conditions, particularly in regards to race, class, and gender, that give rise to inequities embedded in systems (Flood; Melzer; Midgley). CST makes explicit the ideologies of individuals within a system as well as those reinscribed by the system itself. In a Writing Studies context, such thinking recognizes that all writing programs, especially those invested in remedial constructs like WLD 99, "operate from ideologies," which "become normalized and go unchallenged as the system grows more and more rigid" (Melzer 92). CST emphasizes that individuals operate in ways that are bolstered by the structures and embedded ideologies of the systems in which they work, so that understanding corruption in programs like WLD 99 involves looking beyond the actions of individuals to larger structures reinforcing systemic oppression. By examining WLD 99 using CST and ecological models, I uncover the ways that institutional structures, infused with deficit ideologies toward faculty and students, shaped harmful curriculum and assessment practices in the program.

METHODS

Methodological Framework

To examine the WLD 99 program through the lenses of ecological models and critical systems thinking, I used the methodological framework of institutional ethnography (IE). IE is a feminist, social justice-oriented methodology that aims to improve equity in workplaces by examining how institutional structures, practices, and norms both shape and are shaped the everyday experiences, perceptions, and positionalities of the individuals within those institutions (Smith, *Sociology for People*; LaFrance and Nicolas). In IE research, texts and documents within an organization are seen as "crystallized social relations" (Campbell and Gregor 79). IE researchers analyze textual hierarchies within institutions to understand how "boss texts" (Griffith and Smith) at the top of the hierarchy regulate other subordinate texts, which then dictate the everyday actions and procedures of individual workers. Michelle LaFrance emphasizes the ways in which boss texts like program learning outcomes reify the ideas, values, languages, rhetorical frameworks, and ideal practices that mediate and shape the work of writing programs (*Institutional Ethnography*).

Institutional ethnography is a relatively new methodology in Writing Studies research. A 2012 article from Michelle LaFrance and Melissa Nicolas outlined IE as a framework for studying writing programs, including how individuals' differing standpoints might impact how they experience practices and activities. LaFrance extended this in a 2016 study of divergence in how information literacy was negotiated and enacted by WPAs, writing faculty, and library faculty ("Information Literacy"). Michelle Miley expanded IE into writing center research ("Looking Up"; "Mapping Boundedness") and the methodology featured in two panels in the 2021 CCCC convention program (Cox et al.; Workman et al.). While IE frameworks have not yet been widely used to study Basic Writing programs, I found the focus on the relationships between boss texts, course practices, institutional structures, notions of writing and writers, and individuals' positionalities helped expose larger systems and institutional perspectives that were foundational to the assessment ecology within WLD 99 and that might otherwise have been intangible.

Institutional and Programmatic Context

UC Sierra is a Research I institution located in Northern California with a little over 40,000 total enrollment (UC Sierra Data, "At a Glance"). The institution serves a diverse student population, with over 75% of degree-seeking undergraduate students identifying as a race or ethnicity other than White (UC Sierra Data, "Common Data"). About 29% identify as an under-represented minority, 40% identify as first-generation, and about 14% are international students (UC Sierra Data, "At a Glance"). From 1993 to 2021, the WLD 99 program operated through a partnership between UC Sierra and Grasslands Community College (GCC). The program was administered jointly by Anita, UC Sierra's director of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (née Subject A) since 1983, and Joseph, the dean of GCC's satellite campus. Hiring and staffing of faculty was overseen by GCC, while curriculum and administration of the final AWPE was controlled by UC Sierra. There were three versions of WLD courses: WLD 99O for students in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), WLD 99L for students needing additional English language support, and WLD 99A for all other students.

The UC system's Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) is one of several ways students can complete the system-wide Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), known as Subject A until 1986. The AWPE is a timed, single-response, holistically-scored essay exam in which students are given a passage of writing to read and respond to within two hours. Passages are largely pulled from Western-centric popular non-fiction and newspaper editorials like *The New Yorker*. The exam is scored on a six-point rubric (UCOP, "Examination Process") by two readers, whose scores are then combined into a composite score. A composite score of eight or above passes while a six or below fails. The rubric can be roughly divided into two main concerns: 1) the clarity of students' ideas and incorporation of evidence from the passage, and 2) the students' language control in terms of SEAE. Since it was originally designed in 1986, the AWPE has remained essentially unchanged in its prompt, administration, and scoring, as evidenced by a sample examination from 1987 (UCOP, "Sample Examinations").

Historically, the final for Subject A courses across the UC system was the Subject A exam, including in UC Sierra's "English A" prior to the course being outsourced and renamed WLD 99 in 1993. For continuity and to ensure that instructional standards in WLD 99 would meet those previously established in English A, UC Sierra administrators charged Anita with replicating English A's original curricular ecology in WLD 99, including the content,

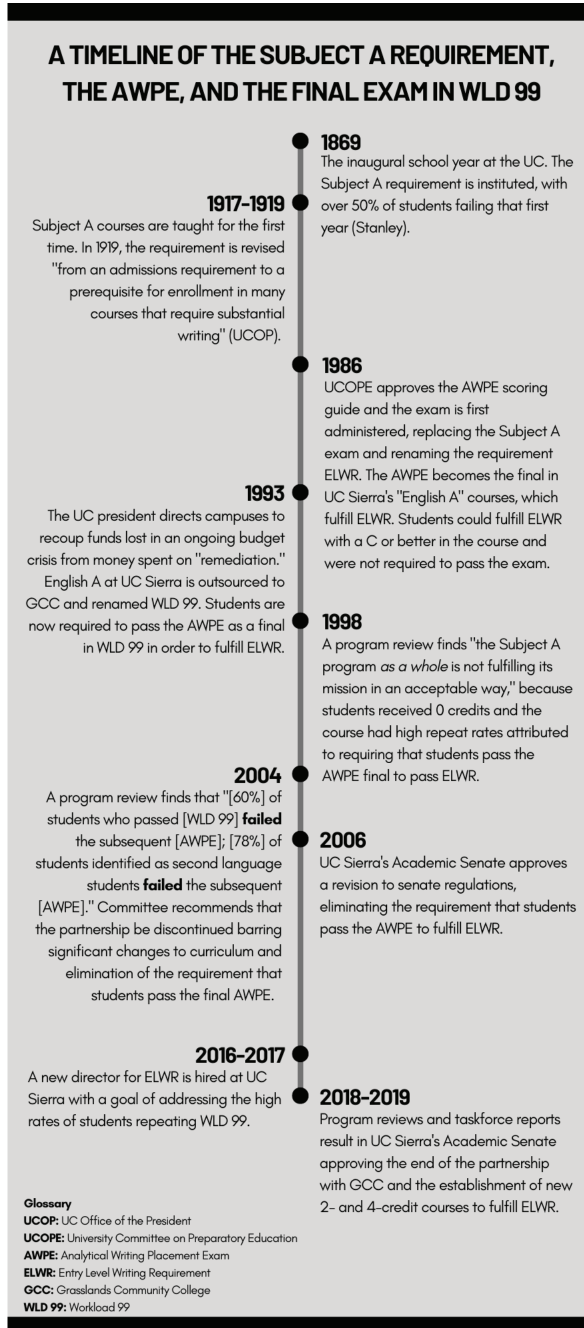

Figure 1. A timeline of the Subject A requirement, the AWPE, and the final exam in WLD 99

textbooks, assignments, assessment practices, rubrics, and final exam based on the AWPE. Under Anita's direction, from 1993 until 2017, the final exit exam in WLD 99 courses was required to be a previously-proctored AWPE prompt and was scored using the same rubric through a group grading process where faculty did not assess their own students' exams. Until 2006, passing the AWPE final exam alone determined ELWR satisfaction for students in WLD 99. Students who thrived in WLD 99 but failed the final AWPE exam failed the course. Figure 1 displays a brief timeline of the UC system's Subject A requirement (now called ELWR) and AWPE, as well as the final exam in WLD 99 at UC Sierra.

Data Collection

Participants

Ten faculty members and two administrators were interviewed for this IRB-approved study in the spring of 2019. Recruitment occurred through email invitations sent out to faculty who had taught a WLD 99 course within the last two years as well as two former program administrators. Participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire prior to their interview to establish background information related to their academic and professional history and their teaching experience in WLD 99 and in writing courses more generally. Instruction for WLD 99 courses was historically carried out by adjunct instructors from GCC; in Fall 2017 93.75% of WLD 99 faculty were part-time adjuncts contracted on a quarterly basis. At the time of the interviews, seven of the ten faculty worked exclusively as part-time adjuncts at Grasslands Community College. Of the other three faculty, two were full-time lecturers in the writing program at UC Sierra and the third was a full-time instructor in UC Sierra's intensive English program. Administrator participants included Anita, the director of Subject A, ELWR, and WLD 99 from 1983 until she retired in 2016 and Joseph, the dean of GCC's satellite campus from 2006 until his retirement in 2018. Participants had a wide range of experience teaching writing and in working for the WLD program, and most had taught all three versions of WLD courses.

Research Questions

The current analysis was part of a larger study investigating participants' perceptions and experiences within the WLD 99 program and with

ongoing institutional, programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical changes. Research questions for the current analysis included:

- What institutional, programmatic, and pedagogical structures shaped WLD 99 curricula?
- How did participants perceive of the goals and purposes of WLD 99 courses?
- What role did disciplinary, professional, and/or institutional identity play in the structure of the WLD 99 program and how participants enacted its curricula?
- What tensions or alignments existed between WLD 99 faculty, administrators, and institutions?

Interviews

In alignment with institutional ethnography's resistance to promoting "reified or static understandings of the people, events, or sites studied" (LaFrance, *Institutional Ethnography* 5), data for this study comprised semi-structured qualitative interviews with twelve participants to best allow for individuals to share their own stories about their experiences within WLD 99. All interviews were completed between February and June of 2019 using an interview protocol designed to elicit answers related to three main areas linked to the research questions (see table 1). Interview protocols for both faculty and administrators can be found in Appendices A and B.

Table 1. Areas of inquiry in the interview protocols

Institutional and community concerns in WLD 99	**Goals, purposes, and perceptions of WLD 99**	**Ongoing programmatic changes within WLD 99**
Participants' experiences with workplace labor conditions and their sense of community within the WLD 99 program.	Participants' sense of the goals and purposes of WLD 99 and their perceptions of WLD 99 students.	Participants' perceptions of ongoing changes to curriculum and assessment practices in WLD 99.

Document and Artifact Collection

Institutional and programmatic documents and artifacts were collected to provide additional contextual information for individuals, events, and concepts identified in the interviews. These documents were compiled from archives digitized during a 2018 program review. Archival materials included the AWPE rubric and related information and materials located on the UC Office of the President's website, as well as WLD 99 programmatic documents related to curriculum and assessment, such as program-specific rubrics, grading guidelines, curriculum outlines, and course policies. Other documents analyzed included official documentation such as mission statements, academic senate minutes related to policies and policy changes, two external program reviews completed in 1998 and 2004 respectively, an internal program review completed in 2018, and other miscellaneous correspondences such as memos, emails, and letters between various stakeholders.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved listening to the audio recordings and reading through the transcribed interviews in MAXQDA while composing analytic memos that focused on documenting initial observations, preliminary open codes, and frequently used words and phrases. During open coding, I chose several methods outlined in Johnny Saldaña's *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. These methods included but were not limited to descriptive coding, concept coding, emotion coding, and values coding. Open codes were then refined through a process of rereading each analytic memo and transcript; confirming, collapsing, or separating each open code into larger categories; writing out definitions with criteria for inclusion or exclusion; and selecting examples that exemplified the code (see Appendix C). The process of refining the open codes also allowed me to select for further analysis relevant institutional and programmatic documents and artifacts; these documents and artifacts were then analyzed using the codes developed from the open coding of the interviews.

FINDINGS

Analysis reveals that the AWPE influenced almost all aspects of WLD 99 curriculum and administration—in many ways, the AWPE *was* the WLD 99 program. Interviews with faculty indicate that the dominance of the AWPE caused conflict between faculty and administrators. Faculty felt

the curriculum was restrictive and that they were pressured by administrators and peers to fail students, particularly students from non-dominant language backgrounds. As a result, faculty participant Sarah perceived the programmatic culture as "people. . . taking a lot of pride in failing a bunch of students." While most faculty viewed the course as developmental and felt that the emphasis on the final exam negated the progress their students made throughout the term, the institutional priority at UC Sierra of ensuring adequate writing proficiency placed the AWPE at the center of an ecology built around SEAE as defined and afforded by the exam itself—therefore, the exam and its related curriculum and practices functioned as both a method of programmatic control and a way to ameliorate perceived deficits in WLD 99 students and faculty.

Effects of Institutional and Administrative Perspectives on Faculty and Students

After the decision to outsource Subject A courses had been made, a primary concern of UC Sierra administrators was ensuring that the Subject A standards, and therefore the standards of the UC itself, would be maintained in WLD 99 courses. As a member of the committee that had designed the original AWPE in 1986, Anita believed the exam represented the UC system's standards for college writing, noting that "The whole basis for the course came from the university's perspective about what students needed to be able to do at the university, and what measures would help determine if they had those skills." The AWPE also allowed UC Sierra to have the ultimate control over what happened in WLD 99 classrooms given that, as Anita explains, they "could not supervise [GCC] instructors because they did not work for the UC. . . ." In this way, the AWPE boss text became a tool to maintain UC Sierra's control in WLD 99, and in the eyes of the institution, uphold UC system standards for both students *and* faculty.

Faculty participants recognized the institutional fixation on the AWPE. Sharon, a veteran WLD 99 teacher, describes director Anita as "very static, and unchanging" in regards to the AWPE in WLD 99, remarking that Anita "was always wanting to protect the integrity of that exam. . . that's just a mantra she talked about." Joseph, dean at GCC's satellite campus, notes that Anita "was really focused on the AWPE. And as a university representative I trusted her to that." For her own part, Anita appeared conflicted about the role the AWPE had assumed in WLD 99 even as she enforced that role as director, noting that "it's not what the AWPE was ever designed for. It's

really a placement tool, it's just to give campuses additional information, should a particular student have taken it. . . it was never intended to be the whole shebang."

Joseph's sense that the importance placed on the AWPE by Anita was a proxy for UC Sierra's institutional interest was accurate. Similar to Anita's contention about the exam noted above, a 1993 report from the UC Sierra Committee on Preparatory Education recognized the substantial change to graduation requirements requiring the exam represented, noting that "previously the Subject A exam was diagnostic, indicating the level of writing course that the entering freshman student needed." Yet, requiring the exam was seen as the best way to ensure that students would be held to the same rigor in WLD 99 as they presumably had been in English A when it was taught by UC Sierra lecturers. A 2004 program review completed by UC Sierra's academic senate contends that the policy requiring that students pass the exam to satisfy the ELWR was "instituted in order to keep control over the Subject A standard firmly within the university, which alone sets the bar for passing the requirement." Similarly, minutes from a 2006 academic senate meeting state that "Using the AWPE exam in this way and having it graded by both [GCC] and [UC Sierra] faculty was apparently done to attempt to ensure that outsourcing the course would not lead to a reduction in the quality of instruction."

The decision to require the exam meant that fewer students completed the ELWR through WLD 99 on their first try. The 2004 program review contends that "Whereas [90%] of all students passed English A after one quarter of instruction, now substantial numbers of students are required to retake [Workload 99], some three times." In the 2003-2004 academic year, 60% of students who passed the WLD 99 course had failed the subsequent AWPE, with 78% of students designated ESL failing the exam. Joseph expressed skepticism about the validity of the AWPE as an assessment in WLD 99 given that "the pass rate on AWPE tended to be lower, sometimes 20% lower than the pass rate on the course as a whole which indicated that students were doing well on the other stuff." Both program reviews completed in 1998 and 2004 recommended discontinuing the use of the AWPE final exam as a requirement for fulfilling ELWR through WLD 99. Finally, in 2006 UC Sierra's academic senate policy was revised; students could fulfill the requirement by *either* passing a local sitting of the AWPE or by passing a WLD 99 course with a grade of C or better.

The AWPE final exam requirement was borne from UC Sierra administrators' fundamental distrust in both the quality of the two-year college

faculty as well as in the ability of a writing course to determine writing proficiency as accurately as a timed writing exam. Even after the 2006 policy change, UC Sierra administrators continued to express skepticism that passing WLD 99 alone was an appropriate way to satisfy the ELWR. A 2006 letter from UC Sierra's representative on the UC Council of Writing Programs predicted that the policy change would "erode writing proficiency standards" and recommended either the reestablishment of the AWPE as an exit exam or requiring that the final exam represent at least 30% of students' total grade and be assessed by a "normed committee" rather than the course instructor. Despite being tasked with its instruction, WLD 99 faculty were not seen as capable of ensuring that students had adequately met the ELWR standard.

Effects of the AWPE on Professional and Teaching Culture in WLD 99

This negative perception of WLD 99 faculty, in combination with the privileging of the AWPE by Anita and other UC Sierra administrators, created an intentional interlocking relationship between the AWPE final exam and all aspects of WLD 99's professional and teaching culture. The 2006 letter from UC Sierra's representative on the UC Council of Writing Programs recommended that consistency be ensured by standardizing how the exam was integrated, as well as other aspects of curriculum and assessment. This standardization included dictating the type and number of essays assigned (at least eight during a ten-week quarter, with at least two being in-class timed essays), assessment practices (all based on the six-point AWPE rubric), textbooks (specifically designed for and required in WLD 99 courses), and more.

Unsurprisingly, faculty participants largely describe the curriculum as restrictive. Faculty participant Sarah, who had taught WLD 99 for a year at the time of this study, describes feeling "somewhat smothered and very, very much micromanaged in the sense that you only have this one type of assignment. Here's how you're going to go about it. Here's how you're going to grade, here's how much your final is going to be worth. You must have two midterms." Words like "strict," "restrictive," "rigid," or "micromanaged" were used by participants to describe the curriculum, with many expressing that there was little autonomy to make even minor changes, such as choosing a different textbook. While some faculty felt there was a little flexibility with the proportion of assignments that had to be timed, in-class exams, most felt compelled to assign more to prepare students for the AWPE final. Sharon reported stressing about how to fit the required eight essays into a

ten-week long course and lamented that this structure prevented her from spending much time on writing process strategies. Jessica, who also taught in UC Sierra's intensive English program, described doing what she could to innovate within the prescribed curriculum. Eventually, she quietly developed her own AWPE-style prompts because she felt those available from the state-wide exam were "dated," "out of touch," and culturally inaccessible. Because the AWPE was the dominant genre students engaged with, the AWPE rubric played a key role as a boss text guiding how both in-class and out-of-class essays were assessed. The official six-point AWPE rubric (UCOP, "Examination Process") was required for final exam assessment and many faculty reported using it for all essays.

In addition to its restrictive nature, the WLD 99 curriculum had also remained essentially unchanged since long before the 1993 outsourcing. Faculty participant Lynn, who had taught English A at UC Sierra in the 1980s, was surprised to see how little the course changed when she returned to teach WLD 99 several decades later: "I was astonished to come back and see the same textbooks. . . same process and the same final exam. And I thought 'Oh my gosh.' I've taught in so many different programs and schools and never have I seen a program where there's just no evolution or change." Many instructors had also been teaching in the program for a decade or longer and had likely become acclimatized to its restrictive curriculum over time, acting as enforcers of standardization in faculty meetings and final exam scoring sessions. In reality, given the administrative investment in the AWPE as the standard for ELWR fulfillment, there was little reason for the curriculum to evolve.

The use of the AWPE as both the foundation for the course and the final exam resulted in what several participants describe as a culture of failure within the program—one in which, as program reviews from 1998, 2004, and 2018 note, students routinely failed and repeated the course two or three times. While washback from the AWPE itself was likely an important factor in the development of this culture, negative attitudes toward WLD 99 students were fortified within the assessment ecology of WLD 99 through documents and email communications from administrators, which were then reinforced by peers in meetings and the group grading structure for the final. It is important to note that the deficit mindsets embedded within the WLD 99 program towards developmental writing students, the majority of whom are first-generation students, students of color, and students from non-dominant language backgrounds, mirrored similar perspectives held throughout the UC system (Stanley), as well as institutions, writing pro-

grams, WPAs, and faculty across the US (e.g., Hull et al.; Rose, "Re-Mediate", "Rethinking"; Shor).

Evidence of these deficit perspectives can be found in WLD 99 documents developed to guide assessment of students' writing. An undated document titled "On Grading [WLD 99]: Guidelines and Suggestions," developed by Anita and the GCC administrators, explains how faculty should approach grading students' work:

> Students take [WLD 99] because they were unable to demonstrate adequate/passing basic writing skills on at least one of several different tests, including the AWPE; it thus makes sense that your students are likely to start out with grades in the D range. . . . Given the above, **it's uncommon to see a B essay in the first few weeks of the quarter**—and even more unusual to see an A essay. This means, of course, that **course grades in the A range are exceedingly rare**. Students who write well enough to earn these grades would likely have satisfied the ELWR by one of the other means possible and would not be held for [WLD 99]. [emphasis original]

As this document indicates, it was expected that students would perform poorly early on and that they would continue to underperform in comparison to their non-WLD 99 peers, who were assumed to be more proficient and adequately prepared. The rhetorically forceful formatting, including bolding some phrases and underlining others, reveals the emphasis placed on aligning grading with program expectations. Jessica remembers that when she first started teaching WLD 99, "The first email I got was like, 'No one should have higher than a C average on your first essay'. . . like the message was just 'they are not college ready'. . . there was sort of an underlying pressure to not pass students, especially non-native speakers." Given that the predominant image of a WLD 99 student in this grading document is one of under-preparation and underperformance, it is unsurprising that WLD 99 was described colloquially as "a three-quarter course" as it was assumed that students would likely need to repeat the course multiple times to pass ELWR.

While the purported purpose of this document was to standardize how faculty approached grading, the emphasis on low grades early in the term may have also primed faculty to be hyper critical. Jessica comments that during the group grading sessions for the final exam "it felt like everybody was grading down." Exams were scored by two different scorers and instructors were not allowed to grade their own students' exams. Faculty

were then obligated to accept their peers' scores and (after the 2006 policy change) highly encouraged to ensure that if a student failed the final exam, they would also fail and repeat the course. Joseph, dean of GCC's satellite campus, observed that the group grading process "had an interesting dynamic to it. In some ways it could make people be more conservative." Several faculty also reported finding their peers to be harsher graders than they felt was either warranted or fair. Emily, a lecturer in UC Sierra's writing program who also taught WLD 99, felt that she was more lenient than her peers: "I felt like they were flunking a lot of my students who really didn't need Workload again. . . . I had a couple of students who were getting like B pluses and A minuses, up until they took the final exam. . . . And then they failed the final exam, so I was required to somehow fail them in the course."

Several faculty felt that their peers were particularly strict when assessing students from non-dominant language backgrounds—unsurprising given the AWPE rubric's emphasis on SEAE. Henry, who had taught EFL courses abroad, felt that the program had "engendered a culture of fear, especially in our ESL students, many of whom told me that. . . coming to [UC Sierra], they entered a culture of, really, terror. Some of them used the word terror, right?" Krystal, whose background was in TESOL, commented "the biggest number of ESL students I ever had pass that exam at any point was eight, I have a class of eighteen." Krystal maintained that timed writing was especially unfair for English learners and felt this explained the high rates of failure for these students on the final exam. Henry described what he called "bureaucratic xenophobia" in WLD 99, which manifested in faculty and administrators lacking patience for students still acquiring academic English.

Several faculty identified program-wide emails as a source of pressure. Sharon noted that through email, administrators would provide faculty with decontextualized data about pass rates while scolding them for passing students who had failed the final: "[Joseph, dean of GCCs satellite campus] would. . . release the data. . . there was that disparity, and he was always complaining. 'Only 35% passed the final, but yet 75% are passing the class.'" Emily reported feeling personally targeted by these emails: "I would look at what they were doing in Workload and I would say, I can't flunk these students. It makes no sense to flunk them, so I'd pass them, and then I'd get these emails." Sarah believed the "assumption" conveyed through emails and other communications was that most students would fail, commenting that "a lot of times I felt that was the instruction." Jessica concurred: "That was sort of the message. . . students shouldn't pass on their first try basically." Neither Joseph nor Anita mentioned these emails in their interviews, signal-

ing a significant divergence in experiences between the two groups. When I asked Joseph whether there was concern at UC Sierra about mismatch in pass rates on the exam and in the course, he replied "From [UC Sierra] in general I didn't get that."

Not all faculty reported experiencing programmatic pressure to fail students, nor were they all frustrated with policies related to the final exam. Renata, a long-time lecturer in UC Sierra's writing program and WLD 99 instructor, attributed the group grading process to ensuring objective grading: "my students are getting graded on the merits or whatever is on that piece of paper, and not just whether I feel sorry for them." Renata and other faculty also viewed timed-writing as an important skill for students to practice—Eric notes that "If we're trying to be equitable to every student. . . that would be a beneficial skill to them, to be under pressure. . . ." Joan, who had joined the WLD 99 program after retiring from a different program at UC Sierra, associated the group grading sessions with community building for WLD 99 faculty: "We kind of got to know how we were looking at things. . . it was good pedagogically, and it was good to create community, and it happened three times a year." Similarly, Renata felt that "it was really nice being able to be with each other for that all day grade at the end of every term to build that community. . . ." and Eric noted that "I think that really binds you together and to do that consistently and to be able to have the face-time with people and sit shoulder-to-shoulder with them and not just for a meeting." Interestingly, these perspectives still demonstrate the ways in which the AWPE final exam was the center of WLD 99 culture, even shaping how faculty experienced workplace community with peers.

Impact of the AWPE on Participants' Conceptions of Purpose of WLD 99

The AWPE as a boss text controlling WLD 99 curriculum and instruction caused friction rooted in conflicting conceptions of the purposes of WLD 99 courses between the institution, program administrators, and faculty. When I asked Anita to describe WLD 99 courses, she responded: "Even though it was traditionally considered a remedial course, it was not truly remedial, it was a course that taught university level materials with the idea of preparing them well." But for an institution invested in preserving its elite status, the idea that some students admitted to UC Sierra might need additional preparation for college writing meant that the focus of such courses must, like most remedial courses, be on guaranteeing students' proficiency,

rather than a space for learning and development. For UC Sierra, the AWPE final exit exam became a necessary gatekeeper, ensuring students deemed underprepared could not continue unless they could prove that they had first obtained the basic skills taught in WLD 99. In keeping with the original goal of the Subject A requirement (Stanley), the final exam allowed UC Sierra to maintain the elite status and standards of the UC system; in this way, given that the ELWR was an enrollment and not an admissions requirement, the AWPE in WLD 99 became a tool for weeding out those who, in the institution's perspective, may have been admitted in error.

Conversely, when I asked faculty participants about their perception of the purpose of WLD 99, most described the course as an opportunity for students to practice and develop conventions of college reading and writing. Renata described the course as practice with reading and using feedback to revise writing. Sharon's goal for students was to develop their knowledge of writing process strategies. Lynn wanted to provide students with "really broad experiences in reading lots of different texts. That's probably the biggest contribution I can make is becoming a good academic reader." For Jessica, her "personal purpose for the class is to help them build their confidence in writing and be able to target a specific task." Emily felt that "I never saw my students as needing to get a B or an A to pass the class. They just needed to get a C. . . They're still trying to figure this stuff out."

DISCUSSION

The concept of boss texts in institutional ethnography provides a lens through which to understand the restrictive nature of WLD 99's assessment ecology. Dorothy E. Smith notes that subordinate texts within an intertextual hierarchy must be recognizable as fitting within the procedural frame established by a boss text ("Incorporating Texts"). Given that the AWPE was the boss text of WLD 99, all other texts within that intertextual system—the essays assigned both in- and out-of-class, the textbooks, the rubrics, and even students' grades themselves—had to be recognizable within the AWPE framework. Examining the AWPE's role as a boss text illuminates how, programmatically, the centrality of the exam reified SEAE as the only acceptable dialect within WLD 99, enabling practices that disparately impacted first-generation students, students of color, and students whose home languages or dialects did not conform to SEAE.

In his article on critical systems thinking, Melzer urges WPAs to "look beyond individual actors within the system" and "focus on systemic oppres-

sion and its relation to the conceptual model that underlies the system and that the system normalizes" (92). An undated mission statement describes the purpose of the WLD 99 program as helping students "gain the writing skills they need to succeed at the University." In reality, WLD 99 courses functioned as test preparation classes as opposed to developmental writing courses, with the AWPE consuming all other educational considerations. UC Sierra's institutional desire to maintain the elite standards of the UC in WLD 99 by rigidly enforcing the AWPE created a culture a failure within the program that had a devastating effect on the students held for WLD 99 and negatively impacted faculty in the program as well. WLD 99 faculty exuded an almost palpable sense of frustration in our conversations, be it with the curriculum itself, with program administrators, or with their own peers. WLD 99's problematic assessment ecology was further exacerbated by the cross-institutional structure in which the program and its students were relegated outside the UC to be taught by faculty whose precarious positions offered them little room to advocate for themselves or their students. Ultimately, while faculty and program administrators like Anita and Joseph may be the easiest targets for criticism, as Melzer argues, institutional structures and systems are powerful influences that create conditions for systemic inequities to thrive.

One of those broader systemic inequities at play within WLD 99 was the allegiance to Standardized Edited American English (SEAE) as the primary measure of students' writing. Stanley contends that a periodic, recurring desire among some higher administrators in the UC system to use Subject A as an admissions requirement often coincided with periods of increased diversification along race, language, and class lines in California. The AWPE was also central to how students were targeted for instruction in WLD 99, given that most students placed into WLD 99 by either failing the state-wide AWPE, because they were unable to take the exam due to living out-of-state or internationally, or because they had not been able to fulfill the requirement through other means.[2] Research has demonstrated that writing placement processes have disparate impacts on first-generation students, students of color, and students from non-dominant language backgrounds, resulting in disproportionately high numbers of these students being placed in developmental coursework (Henson and Hern; Inoue; Nastal). Faculty participants largely reported that students from non-dominant language backgrounds experienced higher rates of failure on the final exam in WLD 99. The AWPE rubric and other programmatic assessment tools heavily emphasized elements of SEAE, which were reenforced by the group grading process and

the rigid and unchanging curriculum. In this sense, students who struggled with SEAE were specifically targeted by the AWPE for placement in WLD 99 and then held until they either demonstrated proficiency according to its standards or were dismissed.

The use of the AWPE in WLD 99 underscores the importance of resisting the view that assessment instruments and practices are neutral or colorblind (Davila; Haertel and Pullin; Inoue and Poe; Toth et al.) and demonstrates how institutional structures can enable deficit and racist ideologies to be embedded in writing assessment ecologies (Inoue; Molloy, "Human Beings"). The repetitive curriculum of WLD 99, wherein students continually composed essays in the same genre, echoes the types of "remedial" writing curricula Rose asserts are not only limiting, but also fail to actually prepare students ("Re-mediate"). WLD 99 also illustrates the persistence of deficit ideologies associated with students deemed underprepared, particularly when those students come from communities of color and other non-dominant groups (e.g., Guttiérez et al.; Hull et al.; Rose, "Rethinking").

LaFrance theorizes that boss texts can "regulate—and often standardize—practice, mediating idiosyncrasies and variability in local settings" (*Institutional Ethnography*, 43). In WLD 99, the AWPE was used to regulate and standardize not only the curriculum and its related materials, but also the practices of the faculty teaching the course. What it could not do, however, was meaningfully shift how faculty in the program understood their purpose as teachers or their individual goals for students, even as they often felt powerless to act on those perspectives. While UC Sierra administrators may have viewed WLD 99 as a necessary gatekeeper ensuring the standards of the university were being upheld, the folks on the ground in WLD 99, including faculty and program administrators like Anita and Joseph, continued to view the purpose of the class as developmental and their role as teachers to help students cultivate the skills needed to be successful in college writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ANALYZING SYSTEMS FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The results of this study suggest a key question facing Writing Studies researchers, WPAs, and those working toward reform in "legacy Basic Writing programs" (Molloy et al.) like WLD 99: How does a writing program work toward change when the institutional culture of writing is rigid and regressive? The recommendations below focus on bridging the microstructures of

curriculum and pedagogy with macrostructures like institutional ideologies and directions in Writing Studies research:

- *Address institutional systems shaping curriculum and practices*. Reform in Basic Writing should focus on addressing entrenched institutional structures and ideologies shaping curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy. This study reinforces Melzer's recommendation that WPAs "work for change at the systems level rather than tinkering with an isolated course, program, or department. . . " (90). The extent to which the AWPE was embedded in the curricular structure and culture in WLD 99 meant that simply changing or even removing the exam would not have been enough to fully address the impact of the deficit mindsets underpinning its harmful assessment ecology. Research on and reform within such programs should leverage tools like programmatic assessment to dismantle regressive institutional systems and attitudes. The 2022 CCCC revised position statement on writing assessment calls for the use of multiple methods in programmatic assessment (Hensley et al.)—institutional ethnography is an ideal methodology for such work, with its emphasis on engaging a constellation of data sources and voices in revealing how power structures shape everyday work within institutions.
- *Pursue research on the status of timed writing and exit exams in Basic Writing*. More research is needed to determine how common the structures and ways of thinking represented by the AWPE in WLD 99 are in Basic Writing programs across the country. Such research could provide valuable information to the field and inform guidance and support for WPAs working for change in such programs. A survey of WPAs in Basic Writing programs in 2- and 4-year institutions could shed light on how common practices like timed writing and exit exams are, as well as their relationships to curriculum and pedagogical practices in Basic Writing courses.
- *Listen to faculty voices*. This article demonstrates the value of examining curriculum not only through student outcomes or perspectives of WPAs, but also through conversation with faculty. Programmatic assessment (Hensley et al.) as well as reform in Basic Writing programs should draw from perspectives of faculty, who not only have a clearer view of how institutional structures impact everyday writing instruction but are often the ones to experience

> change most acutely. Soliday reminds us that "reform does not consist exclusively of a critique of curriculum but of a struggle to improve the conditions for teaching and learning that shape the everyday experiences of both teachers and students" (104). Researchers and WPAs should tap into the valuable wellspring of faculty voices, and when possible, include faculty in conversations in which they have a direct stake.

States across the US have increasingly been engaging in reform of developmental education. Taking effect in 2018, California's AB 705 overhauled placement of students in developmental writing and math courses in the state's community colleges, resulting in the elimination of many traditionally remedial courses. Though not affected by the law, the landscape of Basic Writing at UC Sierra has changed significantly over the last few years, coinciding with this state-wide shift in perspectives on remediation. In 2017, a new director for the Entry Level Writing Requirement was hired by UC Sierra, shifting the position from Undergraduate Education to the writing program and from a continuing lecturer to an advanced assistant professor. Increasing scrutiny of outcomes in WLD 99 based on the results of a 2018 program review and a taskforce report on closing the preparation gap for UC Sierra students created ideal conditions for the new director to successfully pilot new credit-bearing 2- and 4-unit Basic Writing courses in 2019. Taught by UC Sierra lecturers, curriculum for these new courses focuses on providing students with opportunities to practice and develop their knowledge and confidence in academic literacy tasks common across university discourse communities. Since 2019, the writing program has slowly increased the number of credit-bearing sections offered and as of fall term 2021, WLD 99 has been discontinued. The quiet closure of the WLD 99 program was also followed not long after by the retirement of the state-wide AWPE; the AWPE was offered one final time in May 2022 with increasing costs for administering the exam offered as explanation.

Soliday contends that reform within composition programs cannot occur "without a better institutional understanding both of the complex, long-term role writing instruction plays in providing access to the university and of the ways in which outside forces determine the kinds of curriculums we can institutionalize" (104). While this study illustrates the damaging impact regressive ideologies and structures can have within Basic Writing programs, it also demonstrates the profound dedication to both their students and the craft of teaching that many faculty working in Basic Writing

programs have, despite institutional devaluing of their work. As states and institutions continue to legislate for reform in developmental education, it is crucial that researchers and WPAs both partner with and advocate for faculty, who are simultaneously the most vulnerable to upheaval caused by large-scale change *and* the individuals most often tasked with operationalizing those same changes toward equity for students in their classrooms.

Notes

1. All names and titles of specific individuals, programs, and institutions referenced in this study have been replaced with pseudonyms, except for system-wide elements at the University of California (i.e., the AWPE, Subject A, the ELWR, etc.)
2. Other options include qualifying scores on the SAT, ACT, AP, or IB exams, or earning a C or higher in a transferrable composition course at a community college or university.

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APPENDIX

Please note that for confidentiality, all Appendix documents have been edited to either include pseudonyms or to redact information that could not be obscured with a pseudonym.

Appendix A: Instructor Interview Protocol

1. Institutional/Community Concerns

- In the questionnaire, you indicated that you have been teaching in the Workload 99 program for ___years. I'm interested in learning more about your experiences in teaching for WLD 99 during this time.
  - How did you first get started teaching WLD 99 and what was your impression of that experience at the time?
- Have you experienced any challenges when teaching in the WLD 99 program?
  - If so, can you give me some examples of times when you felt particularly challenged? What made those experiences challenging?
- Do you feel that you have experienced challenges related to your labor conditions when working for the WLD 99 program? If so, in what ways have you felt challenged?
- The WLD 99 community includes a wide variety of instructors and administrators from both GCC and UC Sierra.
  - Do you see yourself as a part of any of these communities? Why or why not?
  - Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly included in or excluded from the WLD 99 community?
- The Workload 99 program is shared between three different institutions—UC Sierra, GCC, and GCC's satellite campus.
  - Do you feel like you have a relationship with any or all of these institutions?
    - If so, can you tell me your perspective about your relationship to these institutions?
    - If not, can you explain why you don't feel like you have a relationship with these institutions?

2. Goals, Purposes, and Perceptions of WLD 99

- What can you tell me about your personal approach to teaching WLD 99 courses?

  - When you teach a WLD 99 class, what learning goals do you personally have for students? Can you give me any examples of these goals?
  - What types of assignments have you typically employed in your WLD 99 classes? In what ways do you feel these assignments support the goals you have for you students?
- What can you tell me about how you imagine your role in WLD 99 classrooms?
  - How would you describe your relationship with your students?
  - When you give feedback to students on writing, what do you tend to focus on? Why?
- In your perspective, what purpose(s) do you think the ELWR serves for UC Sierra students?
  - What specifically do you think distinguishes a student who is unfulfilled from those who are already fulfilled?
- In your perspective, what purpose(s) do you think WLD 99 courses serve for UC Sierra students?
  - What specifically do you think distinguishes a student who is unfulfilled from those who are already fulfilled?
- In your experience, how prepared do you think typical incoming WLD 99 students are to write at the college-level?
  - What are some typical ways your WLD 99 students have seemed prepared to write in college? Underprepared to write in college?
  - In your experience, what are the primary instructional needs of WLD 99 students? Can you give some specific examples?

3. Curricular/Institutional Changes

- Recently, several changes have been made to curriculum in Workload 99 classes.
  - In your perspective, have these changes impacted your teaching and/or professional life in the WLD 99 program? If so, in what ways?
  - In your perspective, have these changes impacted your sense of your role within the WLD 99 community? If so, in what ways?
  - Have these changes impacted your relationship with other members of the WLD 99 community? If so, in what ways?

4. *Final Question*

- Is there anything else you think I should know about your experiences in the WLD 99 program?

Appendix B: Administrator Interview Protocol

1. Institutional/Community Concerns

- In the questionnaire, you indicated that you have been working in the Workload 99 program for ___years. I'm interested in learning more about your experiences in working for WLD 99 during this time.
    - How did you first get started working in WLD 99 and what was your impression of that experience at the time?
- Have you experienced any challenges when working for the WLD 99 program?
    - If so, can you give me some examples of times when you felt particularly challenged? What made those experiences challenging?
- The Workload 99 program is shared between three different institutions—UC Sierra, GCC, and GCC's satellite campus.
    - Have you experienced any challenges related to this institutional structure? If so, can you give me some examples of these challenges?
- The WLD 99 community includes a wide variety of instructors and administrators from both GCC and UC Sierra.
    - Do you see yourself as part of any of these communities? Why or why not?
    - Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly included in or excluded from the WLD 99 community?

2. Goals, Purposes, and Perceptions of WLD 99
- In your perspective, what purpose(s) do you think the ELWR serves for UC Sierra students?
    - What specifically do you think distinguishes a student who is unfulfilled from those who are already fulfilled?
- In your perspective, what purpose(s) do you think WLD 99 courses serve for UC Sierra students? What do you think are the goals of these courses?
    - In your perspective, do these goals and purposes align or conflict with the larger learning goals at UC Sierra?
        - If you feel that they align, in what specific ways do you feel like they align?
        - If you feel like they conflict, in what specific ways do you feel like they conflict?
- In your experience, how prepared do you think typical incoming WLD 99 students are to write in college?
    - What do you think are the primary instructional needs of WLD 99 students?
    - In what ways do you feel WLD 99 instructors are prepared to support students with these instructional needs? In what ways may they be underprepared?

3. Curricular/Institutional Changes
- Recently, several curricular changes have been made to the Workload 99 program.
    - From your perspective, what do you feel are the primary goals and purposes of these curricular changes?
- Several changes have also been made to the institutional structure of the administration of Workload 99 courses.
    - In your perspective, have these changes impacted your professional life in the program? If so, in what ways?
    - In your perspective, have these changes impacted your sense of your role within the WLD 99 community? If so, in what ways?
    - In your perspective, have these changes impacted your relationship with other members of the WLD 99 community? If so, in what ways?

4. *Final Question*
- Is there anything else you think I should know about your experiences in the WLD 99 program?

Appendix C: Select categories and codes with definitions and examples from participants

Categories	**Codes**	**Definitions**	**Examples**
Curriculum & Pedagogy	AWPE & final exam	Instances when either the AWPE or the final exam in WLD 99 are referenced. Includes perceptions of the role of the test and its implementation in curriculum, grading practices and rubrics, and criticisms or justifications of the exam and its use in WLD 99.	"But what [the AWPE] does. . . is offer a clear window into what the university thinks is important for students to be able to do, and also what faculty expect students to be able to do and what they'll need to do." (Anita)
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Unchanging & rigid	Perceptions that WLD 99 curriculum was unchanging and/or rigid. Includes faculty perceptions of being micromanaged and discussion of the control faculty did or did not have over curriculum, textbook selection, and/or assessment.	". . . everybody had to teach from the same text. That in itself is very strange to me. That everybody would have to work in lock. The expectation is that everybody moved in lock step." (Sarah)

Purpose & Goals	Purpose & goals of WLD 99	Participants' perceptions of the purpose and goals of WLD 99. Includes discussion of how administrators and/or the institution viewed the course. Excludes discussion of personal purpose/ goals or approaches to teaching the course (i.e., those not identified by participants as being prescribed by the program).	". . . the determination has been made by somebody else that this particular student. . .needs more preparation before they're really ready for university discourse. So the goal of WLD 99 is to get them to be stronger, in terms of their reading and analysis, and in terms of the way they are able to write. . . ." (Joan)
Perceptions of People	Perceptions of institution or admin	Participants' perceptions of the thoughts, expectations, or perspectives, of the institution and/ or administrators. Includes administrator perceptions of the different institutions and actors involved in the partnership as well as faculty thoughts on the expectations or perceptions of administrators or the institution.	"So you should not like, an A or B is a rarity, was basically the message I got. And there was sort of an underlying pressure to not pass students, especially non-native speakers." (Jessica)