OPEN WORDS: ACCESS AND ENGLISH STUDIES

Volume 14, Number 1 (December 2022)

Special Issue on Grant Writing, Access, and Empowerment

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Open Words: Access and English Studies is dedicated to publishing articles focusing on political, professional, and pedagogical issues related to teaching composition, rhetoric, reading, creative writing, ESL, and literature to open-admissions and "nonmainstream" student populations. We seek original scholarship in areas such as instructional strategies, cultural studies, critical theory, classroom materials, technological innovation, institutional critique, student services, program development, etc., that assist educators, administrators, and student support personnel who work with students in pedagogical-ly difficult settings. Articles should consider the particularities of context—issues, for example, surrounding the identifier of "open access," intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability, regional and cultural differences, and the range of competencies students bring with them to classrooms—in conjunction with the goal of English studies to empower students' critical and creative endeavors. We value works pertinent to specialists yet accessible to non-specialists, and we encourage submissions that take into account what interactions with students teach us about the broader, democratic goals of open-access education and English studies.

Open Words is an established journal, which began in 2007, and has produced at least one issue a year since then with the support of Pearson. John Tassoni and Bill Thelin served as the previous senior editors. In 2016, the journal was handed over to Sue Hum, who brought on two additional co-editors, Kristina Gutierrez and Yndalecio Isaac Hinojosa. The work of producing an annual issue—reviewing submissions, identifying reviewers, sending manuscripts out for peer review, working closely with authors on revisions, creating proofs, and making copyedit corrections—is handled by the three senior editors. The first issue under their editorial leadership was published on March 13, 2017.

In 2019, the new editorial team transitioned the journal away from Pearson and to the WAC Clearinghouse for ongoing support and as the venue for publication. The open-access approach of the WAC Clearinghouse aligned with the philosophy of Open Words as an open-access journal with goals to cultivate a robust and dynamic body of scholarship on issues of access in higher education institutions and within communities. By address-ing issues related to class, this journal has been historically a part of the CCC Work-ing Class, Culture, and Pedagogy Working Group with a target audience that includes scholar-teachers and practitioners in rhetoric and composition, education, and affiliated disciplines who want to read critical discussions about issues of access. The scholarship published by Open Words complements the scholarship highlighting issues of access in other Clearinghouse journals, such as *The Journal of Basic Writing* and *The WAC Journal.*

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Charles Etheridge and Catherine Quick Schumann, Guest Editors

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Introduction from the Editors

We are excited to present this special issue, Grant Writing, Access, and Empowerment to not only highlight how grant writing can create access to meaningful learning opportunities for students (e.g., engaging in data analysis when assessing the needs of a community), but to also analyze the ways in which inequitable access to resources, including funding, among nonprofits helps maintain social injustices.

We thank Charles Etheridge and Catherine Quick Schumann of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi for accepting our invitation to serve as co-editors of this issue and underscore the multifaceted issue of access in grant writing, drawing from their robust expertise from coordinating grant writing projects with their community partners.

In addition, we thank Associate Editor Trevor Davis for his meticulous work in producing the proofs for this issue.

Our purpose is to facilitate conversation about how the level of access affects the potential of grant writing projects to promote social justice.

Y. Isaac Hinojosa, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Sue Hum, The University of Texas at San Antonio
Kristina Gutierrez, Lone Star College-Kingwood

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Grant Writing, Access, and Empowerment: Introduction

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Catherine Quick Schumann
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

The grant writing course is an increasingly common fixture in English departments, taking myriad forms. For some, grant writing is an anchor for a writing for non-profits program. For others, it's focused on science and technical communication. In others, it's a popular advanced writing elective. Often, grant writing courses employ service-learning methodology, giving students real-world experience in writing grants on behalf of university or community organizations.

Overview

Whatever the form, grant writing courses provide an interesting perspective on the complexities of *access*. The act of grant writing, at its most basic form, seeks access--to funding, to networks, to opportunities for creating or enhancing solutions to problems, whether scientific or societal. Teaching grant writing provides access for students to the language of proposal, empowering them to learn and use skill sets involved in asking for and receiving resources. Grant writing courses teach students to analyze communities critically, using data (Census reports, CDC statistics, FDA bulletins, etc.) that many English majors otherwise have little exposure to. Students often work with community partners to develop solutions to meet the needs their research has identified, and they learn to write for a very specific audience (funding agencies) that have specific needs and requirements. When successful, grant writing

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draws much-needed resources to communities. Grant writing is often a bridge (a metaphor of access) between those with resources and those who need resources. Students in grant writing courses are builders of those bridges, and the process of writing a grant helps students to see themselves in the role of advocates and potential change agents (Jones 2017).

However, the nature of the grant funding world complicates this picture of access. Instructors of grant writing ostensibly train students to work effectively in the non-profit world. However, that world is rife with inequities and may even actively deny access to the organizations that need funding the most. Power and money are in the hands of foundations, corporations, and government agencies who decide what organizations and causes get resources (Incite 2007). Smaller, grassroots organizations, including many social justice-focused organizations best positioned to address local community problems, may not have the resources, skills, or personnel to do the work necessary to navigate the complex, labyrinthian structures of grant funding. While universities, through partnership with local non-profits, may be in a position to provide some of those resources via service learning and outreach programs, such efforts do not disrupt the fundamental inequities in the non-profit funding world. Teaching grant writing is thus an ironic act, necessitating teaching students how to work within this unjust framework in order to seek resources to aid social justice causes.

The essays included in this volume explore multiple facets of access in the context of grant writing instruction. How do instructors of grant writing provide access for students—to knowledge and resources that will help them succeed, reach their goals, obtain economic benefits, or achieve other ends? This question of access, of course, is a fundamental (if problematic) question of higher education. However, grant writing instructors have a larger responsibility—to help students understand the complexities of access in grant writing. While writing grants may create access to resources for non-profit organizations, the funding system of non-profits is inherently inaccessible to many individuals and organizations who might enact social change. We must teach students not only how to write grants, but how one might disrupt the problematic system that requires grant writing in the first place.

The articles here explore both the practical and theoretical conundrums in understanding grant writing and access. We begin with Zosha Stuckey and Carrie Grant's article, "Localize, Prioritize, Decolonize: A Guide for Consciously Supporting POC-led Organizations," which is both theoretical and pedagogical, exploring the key questions of social injustice and access that are central to this journal issue. Stuckey and Grant detail what an anti-racist, decolonized concept of access in grant writing should be. Based on their experiences as white women working for a predominantly white institution in a majority POC neighborhood, they offer advice for how university/community grant writing partnerships can center POC-led community organizations. They first apply Audre Lorde's three tendencies of response to difference—ignore, copy, destroy—to question the status quo in the grant writing, non-profit context, which tends to perpetuate inequities in access to funding resources. Then they discuss how to work against these tendencies by "localizing, prioritizing, and decolonizing" grant writing and community partnerships. Heuristic questions for each of these anti-racist modes of thinking/acting help instructors and institutions consider how to better support local communities in grant writing and non-profit outreach work.

The next three contributions continue Stuckey and Grant's focus on deepening community engagement through a productive partnership between grant writing courses and local non-profit organizations. In "Guardians at the Gate: Grant Writing, Access, Long Term Partnerships, and Social Justice," Charles Etheridge describes the long-term, productive partnership between his grant writing courses and the Food Bank of Corpus Christi, Tx. This collaboration has benefited students and the Food Bank, with over $900,000 in successful student-written grants distributed so far. These grants have significantly increased access to needed resources for the Food Bank, addressing poverty, food insecurity, and health issues in the local area. However, the article also highlights the problematic elements of access in teaching grant writing—success at obtaining funds does not address the structural inequities inherent in the grant writing system. It's important that instructors, while teaching students the skills of grant writing, also help them understand the non-profit world's fundamental problems that sustain social injustice.

The next two contributions detail the writers' experiences beginning new partnerships with community agencies. In "'Writing the Watershed': The Place of Bioregional Pedagogy and Student Grant Writing in a Community-Based Professional Writing Course," Alex Ozbolt, Andy Ross, and James Wolf address the question, "what unique contributions does a grant writing project make for facilitating connections to place?" The article takes the unique approach of exploring the question from three perspectives: the grant writing course instructor (Ross), the community partner (Wolf), and the student (Ozbolt). With the trail at Baltimore's Stony Run Park serving as a metaphor of writing's winding through and making connections, the authors detail an ecocomposition-influenced grant writing course that shifts student perspective on place as something to write *about* to something to write *for*. The article concludes with a useful bulleted list of recommendations for instructors who might wish to develop a similar approach at their institutions.

Ian Weaver initially found that students pushed back against the community partner chosen for his course's service-learning project ("Popwalk"—a place-based immersive art experience accessed by smartphone app). In "Access as a Participatory Design Principle: Grant Writers Moving from Securing Resources to Codesigning with Communities," Weaver describes how his students criticized the project based on issues of access and elitism, given that the project requires a smartphone and focused on a "niche" art project. However, by using participatory design as the theoretical basis for the course, the instructor was able to help students complicate notions of access, moving from a resource-based assumption to one that centers community in the design and implementation of projects. Students moved from understanding grant writing as a genre skill to a deeper sense of the grant writer's potential role in facilitating participatory community work.

The final two contributions explore specific concerns for student access within the grant writing course itself. In "Online Access: Grant writing as Reciprocal Service Learning at a Hispanic Serving Institution" Rachel Jordan details her experiences teaching grant writing with a service-learning component online, demonstrating how online learning can increase access to traditionally underserved student populations. She explores the reciprocity element that students and community partners perceive benefit from the service-learning partnership. Students expressed benefits not so much in terms of skills or the production of a document but how the project gave them access to a professional context, providing valuable experience navigating professional relationships. Interestingly, community partners also perceived their benefits less from a product perspective (free grant writing services), and more as access to "fresh voices," needed perspectives on their organization within the grant writing context. Both of these expressed benefits highlight the fact that students and community partners were able to develop and maintain social connections throughout the course in an online context, and Jordan demonstrates how online access even enhanced these possibilities. Jordan's article is a solid answer for those who question online learning on the basis that it lacks a social element.

Finally, Kavita Surya discusses an access problem typical for grant writing courses—do students themselves have access to the resources they need to succeed in the course? In "Signaling Access in Grant Writing Pedagogy and Practice," Kavita Surya notes that access is a prevalent logistical problem for students enrolled in grant writing course for the simple reason that viable funding resources (such as RFPs) are often locked behind paywalls. She uses institutional logics and signal theory frameworks in an exploratory analysis of this problem in the context of teaching an undergraduate writing course at an MSI (Minority Serving Institution). She offers four pedagogical strategies to mitigate constraints on access to funding resources. These strategies provide students opportunities to not only produce work that supports funding of community-based projects, even without access to RFPs, but also to explore inequities in access to resources inherent in the grant writing context.

This collection of articles demonstrates that, whatever the context in which they are taught, grant writing courses are valuable, offering students the opportunity to gain not only marketable skills but the tools to question the unjust system of social inequalities that create issues of access in the first place. We, the editors, encourage readers of *Open Words* to explore the possibilities grant writing courses offer students, faculty, and programs for personal and professional growth, for deepening ties to the communities, for addressing the issue of social justice, and for promoting more equitable access.

The issue editors wish to thank the editorial board of *Open Words*, especially Yndalecio Isaac Hinojosa, for encouraging us to propose this volume and providing support throughout the process.

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About the Authors

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Localize, Prioritize, Decolonize: A Guide for Consciously Supporting POC-led Organizations

Zosha Stuckey
Towson University

Carrie Grant
Towson University

> Put simply, Black people are not a problem…the problem is the system of white supremacy and the fact that Black people are experiencing the ravages of such a brutal and inhumane system.
>
> Dayvon Love, "When Baltimore Awakes: An Analysis of the Human and Social Service Sector in Baltimore City ," 26

Introduction

When we consider creating access–to resources, to power, to healing–through grant writing, it's imperative that we consider who we are creating access for, and how. White people doing social and racial justice advocacy (as we the authors are)–specifically with grant writing and non-profit organizations (NPOs)–not only can center POC-led, community-oriented organizations, but need to do so consciously and intentionally. In this article, we will offer a framework for conscientiously forging new partnerships, developing cultural competence (in ourselves and our students), navigating relationships, and emphasizing community outcomes, all with equitable resource access in mind. We will include practical advice, tools, and illustrations from the Grant writing in Valued Environments (G.I.V.E.) program at Towson University (TU),

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which provides grant writing and infrastructural support to primarily Black-led, local non-profits through internships, undergraduate, and graduate classes, with a track record of over $700,000 in grants awarded. As described in a report from 2020 written by our colleagues on Black-led organizations in Baltimore, many are struggling to sustain themselves and urgently need funding, resources, and support (Sillah, Worgs, & Thomas 15).

In this article, we discuss our journey of localizing partnerships and projects to further address needs within the communities our institutions occupy or neighbor. Preventing unintentional harm requires "prioritizing the goals, viewpoints, and authority of these organizations and communities at all times–they lead us on the journey; leveraging resources for distributive justice within an acknowledgment of our role in historical inequity; and centering and uplifting local community knowledge and historically marginalized voices" (Anyanwu). Ultimately, we strive to decolonize philanthropy (Lawson, Mooney, & Young) which includes paying heed to Audre Lorde's insistence that we stop ignoring, copying, and destroying in the face of difference and instead create new "patterns for relating across human difference as equals" (Lorde 115).

G.I.V.E.'s context in the Baltimore-metro area informs our approach, and our community partnerships steer us. Baltimore is a hypersegregated city with a long and sordid history of Jim Crow, hyperpolicing, redlining, serial-forced displacement, and continued systemic oppression of its majority Black population. G.I.V.E., a university supported engagement project at Towson University, seeks to use grant writing and infrastructure support for community NPOs as a way to "return stolen resources" (Marcus and Munoz 2018), acknowledge legacies of injustice in our local and home communities, place students of color in leadership roles when possible, and prioritize work with under-resourced organizations led by People of Color. While TU's proportion of students of color has just surpassed 50%, TU had been a PWI (predominantly white institution) since *Brown v. Board of Education* and a "white only" institution before that, and recruitment from Baltimore City still lags. Faculty diversity is also taking longer to measure up to student diversity. We acknowledge our own role in this dynamic, as both of us who lead G.I.V.E. are white women (only one of us is a Baltimore native), so we strive to partner with faculty of color in Liberal Arts doing similar work and to support their vision and values.

The G.I.V.E. program researches, writes, submits, and tracks grants for small, community NPOs which fulfills needs for both parties: students gain professional skills in grant writing and increase their cultural competence, while small organizations receive assistance with infrastructure and capacity building in ways usually only granted to larger, better-funded NPOs. For G.I.V.E, TU's historical connections to West Baltimore have informed our emphasis on organizations there, as has our desire to work with organizations that most need our support.

As we teach and support grant writing, how do we prevent advancing more of the status quo, or what some call the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) (Kivel; Smith; Villanueva; Love)? In the introduction to *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, Andrea Smith explains that the NPIC "controls and manages dissent by incorporating it into the state apparatus, functioning as a shadow state constituted by a network of institutions that do much of what government agencies are supposed to do with tax money" (8-9). Grant funding as part of the NPIC, like all social systems, tends to reinscribe existing inequities which is known as a form of "Philanthropic Redlining" ("The Case for Funding Black-led Social Change"); power remains with organizations functioning as an extension of the state. It's much easier for those who already have money to gain more of it, and the system's processes thwart change.

In response to this system, we are committed to creating spaces that resist the harmful ideologies (racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism) that perpetuate inequitable practices impacting us and our communities (Anyanwu, personal interview). In laying out our framework for decolonizing grant writing and community engagement, we will first exemplify Audre Lorde's three modes of dealing with difference (ignore, copy, destroy) within a grant writing and community engagement context before then examining how to localize, prioritize, and decolonize our efforts within that same context.

The Problem of Whiteness

One seemingly intractable problem of living and working as a white person in Black city has been how to crack the code of whiteness. Can real repairs happen? When? In 1903 in *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Dubois examines the question "How does it feel to be a problem" with regard to "Black Folks" (1)? In what's below, we reiterate this question within a reversal. Using extensive personal and professional experience, we inquire into the impacts and consequences of whiteness in asking: as white people, "how does it feel to be a problem?" Many scholars and writers of color have constructed whiteness as a problem (Kendi, Dyson, Love, Lorde and more), so us doing this is not new. Yet as white academics, writers, and fundraising professionals, it is crucial that we understand and consistently apply principles and practices that ameliorate the harm whiteness has done and continues to do in communities of color and within a broader white supremacist system. In *The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America*, Lawrence Brown defines white supremacy as

> An ideological, philosophical, and theological perspective that spawns institutions, policies, practices, systems, and budgets that incur structural advantages for White people and neighborhoods and create structured disadvantages for Black, Brown, and Native people and neighborhoods. Structural advantages include material wealth, access to capital, high-quality public goods, respectful policing, and landownership, while structured disadvantages include wealth extraction, lack of access to capital, poor quality public goods, hyperpolicing, and forced displacements or uprootings. (28)

White supremacy is deep-rooted and will not abate on its own. Ijeoma Oluo, in her book *So You Want to Talk About Race*, shares that being a Person of Color is like being in an abusive relationship (34). In his chapter on "The Five Stages of White Grief," Eric Michael Dyson says that People of Color often don't tell white people the truth due to the fact that we can't handle it. Thus, we wish to talk truthfully about the problem of whiteness and offer ways to employ strategies to reduce and repair harm actively.

When we listen to the hard truths that Love, Oluo, Dyson, and our community partners tell us, anti-racist work becomes all the more urgent, even moreso for those of us claiming to "do good" or "create social change." Doing anti-racist work, however, requires persistence in rejecting cultural standards (Kendi 176) and in committing to arduous and often painful lifelong learning and action; essentially, we must enact a "racial reorientation of our consciousness" (Kendi 47). In the first half of our essay, we organize a racial reorientation for white people--academics, writers, and fundraising professionals--around Audre Lorde's three modes of our programmed responses to difference: that is, the tendency to ignore it, copy it, or destroy it. As Lorde tells us, "We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals" (115). In order to contend with the problem of whiteness, we will exemplify Lorde's three modes within a grant writing and community engagement context before then examining how to localize, prioritize, and decolonize whiteness within that same context.

Whiteness Ignores

Examples abound that demonstrate how whiteness ignores, fails to acknowledge, overlooks, rejects, and/or discounts Black people and Black communities' ideas, realities, histories, customs, needs, strengths, and accomplishments. In the context of grant writing for NPOs, we can think about how whiteness tends toward overlooking Black history and culture, which is a form of discounting Black culture--often this may occur without us realizing what we are doing. Because of this, we can't sit and wait to learn what we don't know; we have to seek Black history and culture out but be mindful of how we do that. Those of us working with organizations that work for, with, and/or are led by People of Color (as well as organizations led by anyone, really) must spend time learning local and national Black histories and Afrocentric ideas and incorporating them into our consciousness in a way that is mindful of ideological colonialism. In this context, we don't ever say "we don't know what we don't know"; rather, we say "we need to learn" and "our way of doing is likely not the best way and definitely not the only way" (Walker). We have come to realize that it's not only "our way" of doing that can undermine power in the communities and in the people we aim to actually empower, but sometimes, it is our mere presence that is a problem.

A case in point has been the onboarding to G.I.V.E. of a new organization: a historically Black neighborhood association that has existed in our backyard (just adjacent to the University) for generations without us ever having known about the organization or the community's important history. The history goes as follows: once those who had been enslaved on Hampton Plantation in Towson, MD were free, these ancestors bought houses and started a community in nearby East Towson in 1853. Over time as Towson University moved to the area and development grew, the boundaries of the Historic East Towson neighborhood slowly shrunk, limited now to just a few square blocks that descendants are fighting to defend against gentrification. We were dismayed that none of us had any idea that the community existed–though we had heard of the Plantation plenty. We were cognizant that whiteness engendered at least part of our failure to know the history of this Free Black community. Since, we've acknowledged that the line between not knowing and disregarding or discounting is thin, thus again we are compelled to educate ourselves and to accept that we shouldn't be so surprised to learn we had taken part in this erasure. This case in point concerning Historic East Towson will come into play later in this article as well when we discuss localizing our work.

We can ask ourselves: have we sufficiently learned about communities of color nearby us? Have we made attempts to experience those cultures and know people… have we spent time, energy, and money towards those intentions? Other ways that

Black history and culture can be ignored and discounted include not being aware of the fact that Black communities typically can know a lot more than us about many, many things and can know differently than us, and do not exalt all the same norms and standards. A few examples we have learned in relation with community partners include: it's a mistake to assume that Juneteenth is a new phenomenon; if you are the only white person in a space filled with others, don't assume anyone else is thinking about it as much as you may be; pay attention to how your practice of formalities and kinship may be odd and offensive; be aware that your hyper-productivity may not be esteemed; understand that being should sometimes trump doing and getting done (Walker). Read authors and scholars of color and cite them in your work while giving those authors full credit and attribution for the ideas.

In addition to our gaps in knowledge and our lack of being in and with communities, we see similar modes of "ignoring" Blackness emerge out of those who fund NPOs; from them, we witness a lack of interrelationship with Black neighborhoods and Black-led organizations. Time and time again, we see white-led funders maintain their distance and thus fail to acknowledge strengths and assets within the community itself. It can happen that funders prioritize their own publicity of the relationship with Black-led organizations, or just write a check and do nothing more, or prioritize the collection of data over real-time, face-to-face relationship building. To address this, we make it a priority to invite funders (including university personnel) to the spaces and to the neighborhoods that our organizations and we work in. We invite them to spend time there.

In addition to funders, we also find ourselves in spaces and communities that are less known to us. We work hard to acknowledge the complexities that might otherwise be ignored. In terms of funders and other folks who visit West Baltimore, often for the first time, they may assume that the trash in the street and in the neighborhood indicates that residents don't care about their blocks. The truth is that folks in those zip codes care a lot but are lucky if trash is picked up regularly. The lack of trash collection–augmented by the lack of public trash cans on street corners that are plentiful in the "White L" neighborhoods but not in Baltimore's "Black Butterfly" -is a practice of white supremacist culture that is wrongly attributed to people's individual morals (Brown)--. We need to consistently relocate the pathology as part of white supremacist culture and not of communities and people.

That is, we learn to recognize the daily and "ongoing historical trauma," that communities experience and that forgetting this fact can be its own kind of deflection (Brown). We acknowledge that things are often the way they are because, as Lawrence Brown contends, of ongoing white supremacist "policies, practices, systems and budgets”that include: hyperpolicing and hypersegregation, “slum clearance, urban renewal [gentrification], highway construction, post-industrialization, planned shrinkage, mass incarceration, stripping Black neighborhoods of public goods…mass closure of public schools and recreation, centers, underfunding of public health,” and more (55). Another example involves: asking someone from West Baltimore, “Where did you grow up” can be offensive when that question is contextualized within the “forced displacements and uprootings” that Brown includes in his definition of white supremacy (Walker). Folks may not have grown up in any one specific place. Asking someone in West Baltimore if they know anyone who has been killed by gun violence warrants the response: “you’re joking, right?”

Being in face-to-face community with folks being in relation and acknowledging how white supremacist policies, practices, systems, and budgets continue to do daily harm is only part of the repair. We also know that white bodies are not always wanted in spaces (Stuckey). We have learned how to decipher those cues, and to fade into the background or even leave entirely if the situation reads that our whiteness is an unhelpful or harmful obstruction or hindrance. If we weren’t “in relation” (Walker) with our organizations, we’d likely never be able to interpret situations accurately, which may cause more harm, which is why we prioritize long term, bonafide relationships. In the task of bringing attention to the many ways we overlook or discount Black people and Black communities’ ideas, realities, histories, customs, and needs, we are attempting to do less harm in our work in the NPO sector. And there is still so much to learn.

Whiteness Copies

As Lorde tells us, if whiteness can’t ignore or discount, whiteness then copies that which it perceives to be dominant. On a broader cultural level, we can see this trend for whiteness to copy Blackness in language, music, dance, fashion, and more. Related to the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC), the term "incorporated resistance" comes into play (Clarke; Love 52). “Incorporated resistance” is explained by Love as the practice of white-controlled institutions incorporating progressive/radical discourses while leaving white supremacist colonial power intact (52). Since we work for a white controlled institution (Towson University), we acknowledge that our progressive/radical discourses do not necessarily disrupt the white supremacist system we function, even thrive, in. Within the G.I.V.E. Project at Towson University, the composition of some of our most outstanding and enduring rhetoric came out of a collective effort led by a woman of color who was an underpaid student employee; yet, the institution now “owns” that handicraft.

Adopting and appropriating the ideas and language of others within the university milieu is one matter, while appropriating from communities outside the institution is another. Yet both situations call for an analysis that considers Love’s notion of controlling “thought leadership” (61). When leadership copies that which is thought to be superior–without acknowledgement–this can often manifest as vague commitments (Sillah, Worgs, & Thomas). Love, in "When Baltimore Awakes," talks about the need for organizations and communities to take back control of “thought leadership" (61) and have "autonomous intellectual innovation" (2). In the setting of a Black-led NPO organization, G.I.V.E. prioritizes these two principles: “thought leadership” is in the hands of folks of color within the organization, and the majority, if not all, of the “intellectual innovation” happens when white people follow the lead of folks of color or carry out those plans and strategies that have already been conceived.

In the setting of the university, we persistently advocate for our community partner Executive Directors to have a seat at the table. One very positive and tangible outcome of this collective work is that we’ve helped initiate a space where all of the folks at the university who either work with or want to work with an NPO (a specific NPO) come together regularly to coordinate. This will, at its best, allow the Executive Directors to communicate their needs directly, receive more support and access to resources, and have more control over their relationship with the institution; at its worst, there will be appropriation. Placing thought leadership in the hands of the community leaders, however, will take more time and commitment. Another benefit to some of what TU does is the emphasis in community engagement on TU Alumni of Color. This intentional focus is a boon to everyone involved.

In the work, we assess how the dominant paradigm of university/community engagement prioritizes the university’s outcomes and machination over that of *the* community. In this sense, "thought leadership" has a hard time landing in the lap of our Executive Directors even when that “thought leadership” is meant to be a large spoke in the wheel of community engagement. Furthermore, our E.D.s don’t need more work. Being asked to serve on university committees without renumeration isn’t equitable. Charging Black-led grassroots organizations full price for transportation and use of space isn’t equitable. For now, we attempt to prioritize the goals, authority, and the wealth building of organizations, the leaders there, and communities at all times; they lead us on the journey. At times, this can feel at odds with student outcomes; however, if these commitments are transparent and part of the community engagement strategy, then students learn a very effective method for doing advocacy *with* others. And, if our students are *the* community, wouldn't it be counterproductive to see those two outcomes at odds with each other?

In this sense, as we institutionalize our work we must also reorganize to think of our projects as doing more than "serving," "delivering" [services], or "doing outreach" (Grabill). We can focus instead on building infrastructure for small, community NPOs and institutionalizing aspects of NPOs within the university itself if that is what the NPOs want. Some questions to consider in an effort to avoid "incorporated resistance" which is a form of "copying," include: are the primary stakeholders leading the project, especially if the project is intended to grow or continue in the future? Did the project take care to credit all participants and treat historically marginalized groups respectfully and fairly? Are community members included in the feedback and evaluation process in meaningful ways? Are they compensated? Do staff from the organization have a seat at the table? Do they have significant input in how curriculum changes and grows, especially that which directly impacts them? Do they have access to resources on campus? Are interns, independent study participants, student employees (in addition to students in classes), and university staff and administration working for the goals of the NPO? Do NPOs have access to technologies available on campus? Are they offered certain privileges that other campus community members have like discounts on space use and transportation? Is our work at the university helping to grow and sustain the organization's work in ways that would not be possible without the partnership? All of these questions aid in the attempt to repair harm and avoid appropriation which is a form of how whiteness copies. But it also destroys. We must pay attention to appropriation as much as we pay attention to how whiteness can destroy Black wealth and Black innovation.

Whiteness Destroys

The norms of whiteness can push aside and destroy other ways of being and knowing. Kendi tells us that "we must reject cultural standards and level cultural difference" to be anti-racist (176), but we rarely discuss what those cultural standards are. Love asks, what makes a methodology white supremacist (38)? His answer describes a white supremacist methodology as standardizing and centering notions of individualism and objectivity and utilizing knowledge that emerges out of bodies of work rooted in white supremacy. Related, Edgar Villanueva offers a helpful description of white supremacy culture which includes: "perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, paternalism, either/or thinking, fear of open conflict, individualism, worship of unlimited growth, objectivity, avoidance of discomfort" (45).

Some real-life examples will help show how G.I.V.E. thinks about cultural standards. For one, we've been reminded that just because someone is not getting back to you by email absolutely does not mean they aren't getting the work done off screen (Walker). Because of our commitment to being in relation, we usually are also operating on a regular text and phone basis (rather than only relying on email) with our partners. Our experience with Black-led NPOs in Baltimore and beyond has revealed to us (and is backed by research) that Black-led NPOs receive significantly less funding than their white counterparts and are thus understaffed and overworked relatively (Maryland Nonprofits).

Other questions that have made us think through the harm involved in white cultural norms include: do you find yourself constantly apologizing? Are apologies a search for empathy? Are you in a hurry to get something done? Do you want to rely solely on yourself for getting projects done? Are transactional (versus relational) interactions your default mode (Walker)? Ways that these white norms show up in grant writing and non-profit work are all-encompassing. We often talk about the notion that "you can't be someone without someone else," which often translates into prioritizing "being with people" over workplace closures (i.e., meeting deadlines, finalizing decisions, crossing things off lists). It's not that deadlines are missed or that decisions aren't made or that goals aren't reached; rather, the engine of production emerges out of affiliation and rapport. We don't move forward until all of us in the kinship orb show up. We've heard from our partners that it's less the trauma from working with traumatized communities that burns them out and moreso the injuries caused by whiteness (Walker; Anyanwu, personal interview). There are so many ways of being that are unacknowledged due to whiteness being considered the standard. Another example comes from Molefi Kete Asante's notion (explained below) of "getting the language correct" (52). When we replace "ex-offender," "at risk," or "client" in our language, we are moving the white standard aside. We must do our research to "[get]the language correct" which includes finding out how those we write about want to be talked about. Again, this requires being in relation.

Asante offers another way to delimit cultural standards through his paradigm of Afrocentricity and Africology. Asante writes that Afrocentricity refers "to African agency and the centrality of African interests, ideas, and perspectives in social, historical, behavioral, and economic narratives…Africology is the Afrocentric study of African phenomena trans-generationally and trans-continentally (48). For Asante, western education and culture aggressively avoids African history and civilization and "robs" Black people of "intellectual and epistemic heritage" (51). Important to his theory is his three approaches to "conceptual liberation" which include: 1) "Getting the language correct"; here, Asante refers to resisting the rhetoric of negativity in relation to Africa and Blackness 2) "Getting facts straight"; here, Asante uses the example of a need to recognize the pyramid as "the functional basis for all modern curriculum" and 3) "Decolonizing of reason"; reason is not solely European. The Greek term *Sophia* (wisdom) is derived from an Egyptian (Kemet) term *Seba* (ibid). The seven principles of Kwanzaa, not attributed to Asante, also offer another explication of cultural standards (see Appendix I for more explanation): Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith) (Taylor). Perhaps most relevant to the NPIC is Asante's claim that we must change the "[r]hetoric of negativity when it comes to Africa" and that Black people "struggle against all forms of negative assertions" (52-53). Another way we've understood how whiteness can also "destroy" is by pathologizing communities and people of color. What makes this so important to resist is the fact that the NPIC feeds itself on pathology. White culture also tends to feed on Black pathology (Love 22). In response, we try to constantly move pathology out of the center of how we think and write about a community. We must perpetually disengage from deficit thinking and re-train ourselves to center assets. Examples include responding to a "needs" or "problem statement" prompt on a grant proposal by flipping the problem to the system in a way like how Brown locates the problem in policies, practices, and budgets rather than communities themselves. That is, the reason that families who have lost loved ones to homicide in Baltimore need and deserve healing is that the system has drained them of access to life promoting resources on just about every level, as both Walker and Anyanwu (personal interview) suggest. By and large, the problem is whiteness and the system of white supremacy.

Lorde's framework of how whiteness ignores, copies, or destroys Black culture adds limitless insight into NPO and grant writing contexts. As the G.I.V.E project has grown, we've learned that the rhetorical/compositional elements of engagement are buttressed by the development of a deep and transparent sense of trust within sustained relationships. Alongside trust is the candid acknowledgement of the harm–not just of white fragility (DiAngelo)--but of whiteness more generally. With the problem of whiteness comes the need to reorient ourselves to the world. From our work, we have noticed that our whiteness can function as an automatic dismissal; when we take things personally, that is a function of narcissism; when we don't know the facts or the history, we aren't telling the truth; when we feel responsible, we need to seek empathy elsewhere. We then can move into a position of knowing, remembering, and doing.

The next section will discuss how G.I.V.E. has localized, prioritized, decolonized grant writing.

How to Localize, Prioritize, & Decolonize

Considering all the way that whiteness tends to ignore, copy, and destroy, we'd now like to offer some specific principles and practical steps for localizing, prioritizing, and decolonizing grant and community engagement work. The process for practicing each of these principles is cyclical and ongoing, requiring learning, deciding, acting, and learning again. It's impossible to navigate community engagement work perfectly, but it is possible–and we argue imperative–to navigate it with conscientious ethical commitment.

Localize

Localizing grant writing and community engagement efforts means working where you are. Not just picking local partners but seeking to deeply understand the histories and needs in the communities that you, your institution, and your neighbors inhabit–before you act. There can be immense power in informed local action, as civil rights organizer Ella Baker articulates: "The major job was getting people to understand that they had something in their power that they could use, and it could only be used if they understood what was happening" (347). Acting right away, without first tuning in to the local community, is an assertion of white ignorance.

Discussions of localization within technical communication spheres typically examine how to adapt a product or design for a new market. It's common for this process to start from the designer/writer, then user testing of local adjustments may come in at a later phase. In Godwin Agboka's reframing, however, avoiding participating in disenfranchisement and exploitation through localization work requires learning about a community's needs from community members themselves, starting at the very beginning of a project (31). Though it may seem obvious from a community engagement perspective that efforts be localized to the specific community context, we wish to draw attention to a similar distinction to Agboka's: there's a difference between doing "local" work from the outside in, versus deeply understanding, listening, and attuning to a local community's needs starting from those with the needs themselves.

So where do you start localizing? If you're new to local community engagement–or even if you're not–getting started can be intimidating. A good first step in a new place or new arena is to talk to those already there: community engagement offices, already-engaged faculty–what kind of existing work is happening from within your own academic sphere? Do others have recommendations about organizations with needs that fit your skillset? This is of course only one narrow point of entry, but if you can find someone whose interests align with yours, they can be an invaluable guide. Zosha played this role for Carrie upon her arrival at Towson, allowing her to plug into existing relationships, needs, and gaps. Another initial step is a basic general survey–simply Googling organizations in your area, following local news, finding nearby events. You want to get a broad lay of the land. Some instructors even recruit students to take part in this process, creating an index of local organizations as a starting point for engagement. Gaining historical context is also hugely important. What is the university's history in the neighborhood, their reputation for community engagement? What longstanding local and regional issues have shaped the non-profit landscape and community concerns?

There is no singular right way to begin localizing your community engagement and grant writing efforts. Still, there are some approaches that we argue don't really count as localization in a decolonial sense. For instance: Starting your own campaign for an issue as soon as you arrive in a new place. Partnering with a national organization you follow on Twitter, even if you're aiming to take their work local. Jumping immediately to work with the biggest, best-known, and well-funded organization in the area. Anything that's not local, not driven by on-the-ground needs, not working against white supremacist systems–it isn't really localized community engagement.

A critical juncture for localization is deciding who to partner with. You've done your homework and identified numerous local organizations working hard to address community needs. Now, how do you choose? At G.I.V.E., we've found that delineating our selection criteria is incredibly useful to help both breakthrough decision paralysis and keep our local context in view. We draw consciously on Towson University's history in West Baltimore City, where our campus was originally located but moved north because the area had become "unsafe for students" (Pois). This past informs our emphasis on working with organizations in West Baltimore, now one of the most economically suppressed, violence impacted neighborhoods in the city. We try to identify the organizations that most need our support. Those without the resources for a paid grant writer of their own. Those with Black leadership who lack a foothold in the Maryland philanthropic (wealthy, white) social scene. Those responding to on-the-ground community needs related to social justice.

Our whiteness does inherently come into this decision-making process. As we lack the capacity to work with every organization that requests our help (and sometimes those who know enough to request it aren't those who most need it), we must make judgment calls about who receives our support. This is why the "work before" is so important (Pouncil and Sanders). We have to recognize our own biases, understand the systems that create them, and commit to consciously and critically working against them toward social justice in coalition with those with different identities and embodied knowledges of oppression.

It's also important to note that localization is a cyclical, ongoing process. Doing it well takes time, and a constant seeking and openness to new learning. As discussed earlier, G.I.V.E. recently faced a challenge to our commitment to localization as we realized our lack of awareness of injustice taking place right in our own backyard. G.I.V.E. typically prioritizes partnerships in West Baltimore because of Towson's history in the city, but we learned just this year that we had been obliviously unaware of TU's present-day implication in the squeezing out and gentrification of a historically black neighborhood near our campus. How did we not know this was happening? How could we miss this community that has always been here, right on our daily route to school? As the Northeast Towson Improvement Association President, Nancy Goldring, explains it, for a long time this descendant community's survival depended on their invisibility. Now, it will depend on their noise. We still feel that we should have known sooner, but now that we do know, we can help with grant writing support and publicity efforts to make bulldozing this community less easy for the powers-that-be. When confronted with our own white ignorance, we have the critical choice whether to continue ignoring, complicit in community erasure, or to learn, engage, and now–better equipped–to act.

We offer the following questions to consider in efforts to localize community and grant writing work:

- What histories of oppression exist in your area? How can you learn more about these histories (not just from dominant perspectives)?
- Whose voice is unheard, and how can you support amplifying it?
- How are you selecting partners? Can you develop a rubric to evaluate potential fit with your priorities based on your community's needs and history?
- What's driving your attraction toward specific organizations and causes? Can you unpack any biases created by white supremacy?

- Are you identifying the most significant partnership need, or just the most convenient one?

These questions might suggest that we advise against following your passions or personal investment in the causes you support. Not necessarily. Passion and personal connection can be important elements to sustain partnerships. But we would recommend really investigating why your priorities lie where they do, and whether the thing you are most connected to really needs your help the most. Taking the time to learn about your community's history, actors, and greatest needs as identified by community members themselves is a major first step toward community work that is localized, so that you can get on with the deeper action-oriented work that prioritizes community authority through transformational community partnerships.

Prioritize (Community Authority)

Once you've dug into understanding your local community, how do you go about the more day-to-day work of collaborating with community partners? Prioritizing community knowledge and following the lead of the community you serve can often be easier said than done. Sometimes, to be frank, it's not even said. Too often, projects done in the name of solving community ills do not even consult the community whose ills supposedly need solving. As Carlson's study with participants from an economic justice fellowship disconcertingly observed, high profile public projects consistently lacked community voices and input, even when these projects were explicitly intended to support community needs. A big problem here, yet again, is whiteness. Even when intentions are good and a project has identified a real community need, rather than moving forward with decision making in equitable collaboration with the community, something so often turns sideways. Profit gets in the way. Hubris gets in the way. White supremacist structures get in the way. We must begin dismantling whiteness by prioritizing community authority over convenient, ineffective Band-Aids on deep community wounds. This means letting the community be your guide at every step, not just listening to their concerns but actually addressing them, making collaborative decisions, and taking meaningful action.

A big part of the prioritizing work starts with developing cultural competence, in both us and our students working in partnership with communities. As whiteness can destroy other perspectives, we first need to become aware of where we may be imposing white cultural norms. Floyd Pouncil and Nick Sanders offer a helpful model emphasizing "the building of coalitions and centering of Black women's embodied historical knowledges at the intersections of oppressive social systems…" (284). To reach "upward critical collaboration," partners must first undergo "inward critical reflection" about their own positionality (Pouncil and Sanders 287). What is informing your judgments of effective versus ineffective strategies, appropriate versus inappropriate behavior, valued versus devalued outcomes? To conscientiously navigate our relationships with others, we need to have a sense of ourselves. When we do, we can participate in "outward critical reflection," negotiating our positionality and coalition in relation to others in order to collaborate toward shared goals (Pouncil and Sanders 288). At G.I.V.E., we are frequently examining our assumptions, motivations, relational approaches, and points of shared interest, striving to make sure we are really serving community needs and consider how we can do so better.

Even with these reflective practices, it's not just public officials who can struggle to hear community input. To give an example of how prioritizing the community's vision can become a challenge in the grant writing classroom: One semester in Carrie's undergraduate grant writing class, the class was writing to fund an after-school mentoring program. A group of students got excited about the prospect of creating a small library for program participants. When the students pitched the idea to the community partner, the executive director responded that they didn't think a library would be used, and they didn't really have the space for one in their small building. The students were disappointed, and a bit indignant. Why wouldn't they want a library, especially if we could find funding for it? Didn't they have just a small corner of space to spare? Don't they want to encourage kids to read?

We've seen challenges to following community-expressed needs in service learning come not just from students. Our intent is not to say that there can be no discussion about the right path forward. An environment in which no one can express concerns in deference to one person's or group's authority is not collaborative. But neither is one in which white faculty/students/governments bulldoze the community's articulation of their own needs. In previous articulations of our collaboration tactics with community partners, we've found that we can foster equity within our relationships by "balancing perspectives, aligning goals, and 'showing up'" (Grant 151). When you reach a point of contention navigating a decision with a community partner, it's a signal that it's time for some critical reflection. Sometimes, you may conclude that your concerns are in tune with community goals, and it's worth hashing out your differing perspectives with a partner to see if you can find mutual understanding. But probably more often, you'll want to defer to your partner's vision, honoring the lived experiences from those within the community and their right to self-determination.

In the case of the library, we sought a compromise. The funding source was designated for literacy programs, which were an express part of the organization's mission. But instead of building a library, we proposed a lesson sequence involving the students' school-assigned reading that also included public library visits to foster individual interest in reading. The organization was happy to host a reading program and always appreciates field trip opportunities, so we were able to get at the grant writing students' desire to foster the kids' love of reading, but without imposing an unwanted demand on the organization's small space.

Preparing students for this kind of compromise and deferral to community interests always comes with challenges, but we've found that readings and discussions starting from the beginning of the semester can help. Introduce students to service learning and community engagement principles like reciprocity, civic responsibility, and critical reflection. Help students understand relevant histories to the work you'll be doing. For G.I.V.E., we always start with some background on segregation and inequality in Baltimore. Encourage students to examine their own experiences growing up, and how they have been shaped by circumstance. If you'll be writing on behalf of partners with identity differences, explicitly discuss that challenge and the kinds of language and framework preferences you'll want to honor.

It's important to clarify that prioritizing community authority does not mean co-opting it. There is risk with this principle of enacting white copying through incorporated resistance. Sometimes it's difficult to figure out how to navigate implication with that power dynamic from a community engagement standpoint. For instance, for a past partnership, Carrie was connected with a new neighborhood community center that was interested in developing tools for evaluating their impact on the community. As she was considering the project, Carrie learned that there was some controversy surrounding the new center: it was being built and managed in a city partnership with a nearby megachurch that had a mixed reputation in the community. However, the center would be populated by new offices for several local grassroots organizations with very strong community reputations. The center seemed to be using these organizations to bolster their own credibility, and in the case of at least one of the small NPOs, they felt pressured into joining the new center by the city, who owned the building of their old office. An undercurrent whisper in the community asked, why wasn't one (or several) of the small long-standing neighborhood organizations approached to lead the new center? (The answer, unsurprisingly, involved money and power.)

In a service-learning work group, a peer told Carrie that they personally simply wouldn't partner with the new center–it would be participating in a colonizing institution. Everyone must face for themselves what they would or wouldn't do from an ethical implication standpoint. What level of compromising community authority is too much? Can harm really be ameliorated from inside corrupt systems? Is there a way to support community leadership as they are trapped under colonizing power? Ultimately, Carrie decided to proceed with the partnership, and over the next few years she was able to slowly start advocating for more community input into the center's decisions. Whether this created much tangible positive change is an unanswered question.

Here are some more questions to consider, and hopefully actually answer, as you navigate your own efforts to prioritize community authority:

- What does the community say that they need? How can you help make that happen?
- How can you work against your own potential biases and positionality within white supremacist systems?
- When having a negative reaction to an idea, unpack why. What assumptions, cultural values or expectations does this bring up for you?
- When the path forward is unclear, can you lay out your concerns openly and critically in collaboration with your community partner?
- How can you honor and support the community's fundamental right to self-determination?

Following the community's vision and taking action to support it are steps toward our ultimate goal in supporting POC-led organizations: decolonizing philanthropy so that POC-led organizations have the autonomy to fulfill their visions themselves without any need for our additional focused support.

Decolonize

Based on 2021 data from Maryland Nonprofits, the top 3.4% of organizations in the state are taking in 92.2% of all non-profit revenue. Of these few top-earning organizations, each with more than $5 million in revenue, 87% are led by a white executive director. When we talk about decolonizing philanthropy, this is the unjust state of funding that demands dismantling. The white supremacist structures still in place within the philanthropic sphere enact all three modes of problematic whiteness. These systems ignore grassroots Black leadership, denying the value of their work by denying them access to funding that could transform their communities without colonizing control. White philanthropy simultaneously copies Black ideas–taking credit for adopting lofty progressive aims, then bastardizing (or still ignoring) them in practice. Ultimately, colonized philanthropy destroys Black communities–through both neglect and the active harm of misguided efforts to enforce white visions of "help."

Decolonizing philanthropy is a large-scale goal obviously, not an individually achievable effort like localizing your own projects and prioritizing your partners' goals can be. However, we do believe that individual action can play a part toward broader change. Thinking of individual action that can leverage institutional power, university-based community grant writing programs like G.I.V.E. can enact distributive justice reaching the scale of thousands or even millions of dollars. As we've discussed, our goal is to redistribute power, by way of funding, back to communities themselves. To do that, we are expanding access to the typically guarded knowledge and resources of the university, in order to help community organizations better speak to the guarded institutions of philanthropic funding. If our grant writing efforts of just the small team at G.I.V.E. can shift that percentage of funding going to small, Black-led organizations even slightly, then we are taking small steps toward decolonization.

We don't intend to be self-congratulatory here–there is always so much more we can do, should be doing, and don't yet know how to do to help decolonize communities' access to resources. But we have experienced how keeping the vision of systemic change in sight can return dividends. If localizing is about understanding your community, and prioritizing is about following its lead, then decolonizing is about standing up for injustices against it. This is the arena where action is often least comfortable, but most important, and your identity becomes most valuable to serving community needs. G.I.V.E. constantly reflects on where we can use our whiteness and institutional circumstances to advocate for our partner organizations' goals. For instance, potential funders tend to like to see G.I.V.E. representatives in meetings, lending white credibility to our partner organizations' leadership, as well as our institutional backing and feel-good story of students' contributions. Our intent is for this credibility exchange to operate in the inverse of the community center example from the previous section. Rather than co-opting our partners' credibility with the community, we are letting them use ours for upward institutional power. We are arguing for our partners' places at the tables we have access to. We are putting our necks on the line to verbalize the risky critiques that could cost our partners some powerful person's support.

An example of risky critique we're currently navigating comes from a G.I.V.E. intern's experience at a recent community partner event hosted on Towson's campus. In a college access panel for Baltimore City youth, a Towson University office shared information on financial aid that our intern found to be inaccessible, alienating, and detrimental to encouraging participants' college pursuits. When our intern shared this experience with us at one of our staff meetings, we had a choice: Do we say, "Oh, that's a shame," dismiss the issue, and move on? Or do we think about how we can stand up against it, try to turn this one instance into a small opportunity for decolonizing college access? It wasn't fun to think about how best to initiate these conversations with our university's administration, but it was important. We are supporting our intern to lead the conversation, building up her own institutional navigation skill set while also offering our firm backing to push the issue forward. It's as of yet unresolved, but we're hopeful that there's a chance here to take baby steps toward making Towson University more accessible rather than foreclosing access. And all this effort is being made without risking our community partner's relationship with the university. The critique is coming from us, from within.

As you imagine a scaled-up vision for decolonizing philanthropy or any community arena you work in, here are some questions to think about:

- How can you leverage your position, identity, or credibility to build up your community partners'?
- What would community autonomy look like in navigating solving this issue? Are there steps you can take toward making that a reality?
- How can you help your community partner gain access to more resources within your university? Within other spheres you have access to?
- What critiques can you make more comfortably from your position so that your partners don't have to take the risk?
- Where's the money, and how can you help redistribute it?

Decolonizing philanthropy, of course, can't be accomplished overnight if it ever can in full. But we can work towards it, using our hard-earned localized understanding of our communities and prioritization of their interests as a guide to seeing and taking opportunities to dismantle white supremacy, one source of power at a time.

Conclusion

For now, we need to advocate for more resources to be directed toward POC-led organizations and for Predominantly White Institutions to install the thought leadership of POC. We need to reflect critically on the problem of whiteness and take steps toward dismantling white supremacy wherever possible. As we become conscious of how (our) whiteness ignores, copies, and destroys, we can begin working against it by localizing, prioritizing, and decolonizing our community grant writing and engagement efforts.

At G.I.V.E., we feel we've come a long way on our journey in community grant writing. Growing from Zosha's unfunded project in a graduate class to now having two regular faculty (with the addition of Carrie), four different regular course offerings, and a cycle of student interns, we now have more institutional power and support to leverage toward stronger outcomes for our community partners. We've learned through trial and error where we've overstepped in imposing expectations on our partners, as well as where we've underdelivered on their expectations of us. And we still have much to learn. We continue to grapple with the challenge of being white women faculty mentoring our interns who are young women of color. We don't have clear answers for how to get funders to take our partners more seriously while upholding their autonomy in decision-making. We are yet again surprised (though our partners are not) when someone we thought was an ally turns out not to have done the work before to unpack their own whiteness. We must learn our limits.

Moving forward, more support for decolonial grant writing and community work is needed, both across institutions and within our field, including addressing questions we couldn't get to in this article: Is there a replicable model for community grant writing classes? How do you effectively argue for funding from your university to initiate programs? What about getting them to value these efforts for tenure and promotion? How do we sustain what can be exhausting, at times discouraging, work? But localizing, prioritizing, and decolonizing where we can is a start, as we consciously support POC-led organizations of color in their missions toward autonomy and self-determination for their communities.

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Appendix I

The seven principles of Kwanzaa also offer another explication of cultural standards: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/21/dining/kwanzaa-seven-principles.html

"Umoja (Unity)
To strive for and maintain unity in family, community, nation, and race.

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.

Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)

To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.

Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)

To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Nia (Purpose)

To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Kuumba (Creativity)

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Imani (Faith)

To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle." (is all a quote from the NY Times article)

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Guardians at the Gate: Grant Writing, Access, Long Term Partnerships, and Social Justice

Charles Etheridge
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

> Fighting for our deepest convictions requires relinquishing control and accepting messy uncertainties. It demands working as well as we can at efforts that feel morally right, and then having faith that our labors will bear fruit, perhaps in our time, perhaps down the line for somebody else. If you expect to see the final results of your work, you simply have not asked a big enough question.
>
> Paul Loeb, *The Soul of a Citizen*

A Prologue of Sorts

The grantmaking system in the United States is like Cerberus, the three-headed hound guarding the gates of the Greek mythic underworld, keeping the living out and the dead in. However, in the grantmaking system, the "living" are people who lack access to vital resources such as income, food, shelter, or education because of societal structures that create inequality. The American Cerberus is not guarding the dead but rather tightly controls access to resources that could address or disrupt the systems of inequality that sustain social injustice. The hound's three heads are the three major types of grants: governmental, private foundation, and corporate. Each "head" has a different temper and a different appetite, and that head must be satisfied if one is to enter the vault, access needed resources, and take them back to their community. In classical mythology, Cerberus was tamed by Hercules; in today's system of restricted access to vital resources, the task of taming the three-headed hound falls to grant writers, who face a Herculean number of tasks: identifying if the vault has anything to help their community, satisfying the appetites of the hound so she can enter, and

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developing strategies to channel resources back to their community. Like Hercules, grant writers face a dizzying number of complex tasks, each of which must be performed correctly. And, like Hercules, the task of grant writing is only one of the labor necessary to address structural inequalities that cause social injustice.

The Herculean labor of addressing social injustice by increasing access to necessary resources requires long-term commitment. Universities, particularly technical communication programs, are in a position to provide long-term commitment by promoting more equal access to resources unequally distributed in our society. The approach taken at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi combines those taken at other universities. Like Rice at Western Kentucky University, we adopt a "comprehensive rhetorical and curricular approach" to grant writing, one emphasizing rhetorical situations and genres common in grant writing (2018, 186). Like Jones at University of Central Florida, we adopt a "hybrid service-learning" model that "emphasizes a social justice perspective for professional communication pedagogy" (2017, 7). And like Cella, Goldblatt, Johnson, Mathieu, Parks, and Restaino (2016), we depend upon "the power of relationships to sustain, invigorate, and guide us, despite the temptations to despair over lack of resources or the posers of capitalism that threat to overpower us" (41). This paper describes one model of how such work can be done by providing a brief overview of the grant making system in the US, acknowledging the limited but important role grant writing plays in increasing access, and describing how the technical communication program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has sought to address one particular access-related issue—access to food—over a partnership that has lasted nearly two decades.

The commitment to addressing hunger grew organically over the years, primarily because of the local Food Bank's effective use of student volunteers (from multiple academic disciplines) and its staff's ability to use student work in building programming and infrastructure. Examples chosen to illustrate points will mostly relate to food and food access; however, the ideas illustrated are relevant to other access-related issues. University programs or individual faculty with other interests should find that the ideas and concepts mentioned can be adapted to a variety of contexts.

The Complicated Positionality of the Grant Writer

To write grants is to live "intersectionally." Grant writing acknowledges the "ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination intersect to create unique dynamics and effects" (Center for Intersectional Justice). These systems of inequality create social injustice, characterized by lack of limited access—to food, housing, and other basic needs, education, jobs, or other basic rights. Working in or with partner organizations, usually nonprofit agencies, grant writers seek to address social injustices resulting from inequalities created by systemic issues—hunger, poverty, homelessness, lack of access to education, discrimination (the list of social injustices in the US is endless).

To succeed, grant writers must satisfy two different audiences. One audience is those who control the purse strings of grant dollars: government agencies, private foundations, and corporations—the very groups benefiting from systems of inequalities that unfairly restrict access in the first place. Governmental agencies control vast economic resources generated by a tax system that disadvantages people of color and anyone from a working-class background and preserves and increase the resources of the wealthy (Brown, 2021). Private foundations are structures that allow people of privilege to use personal wealth to influence society without paying taxes on this wealth. Known as the "Non-Profit Industrial Complex," Smith defines these institutions as "a 'shadow state' constituted by a network of institutions that do much of what government agencies are supposed to do with tax money," which in turn serves "as 'an alibi' that allows governments" to perpetuate injustices "under the veil of partnerships between the public and private sectors" (2007, 8-9). Although some corporations have philanthropic foundations, most corporate giving derives from advertising budgets, and philanthropy is generally limited to areas where the company does business—another form of advertising (Zhang et al., 2010). As part of advertising, corporate charitable giving seeks to benefit corporations' bottom lines. The grant writer must appeal to those who control the purse strings—the three-headed hellhound, Cerberus. They must be insiders, able to function within the system.

At the same time, grant writers must be insiders, resisting the ideology that keeps systems of inequity in place. Grant writers must be aware of social injustice, seek to address its causes, and often resist injustice by accessing funds to bring about change, however small, to individual communities.

They must become what Meloncon & Schreiber describe as "critical pragmatic practitioners," people with "a wide variety of practical and conceptual skills" who can "make and produce…a wide variety of documents and texts" while at the same time critiquing "existing structures," proposing "alternative solutions," all while maintaining "a strong ethical grounding" (2018, 333). Thus, the work of grant writers is intersectional, working at the intersection of systemic injustices and existing powers to try and effect change.

The Work of Social Change and the Grant Writer's Role

It's important to acknowledge that grant writing is a small part of the more considerable work of increasing access. Three different kinds of work are needed to bring systemic change to the larger system that limits access to necessary resources. The first is "front line work": agencies that seek food or housing for those who lack it, for example. Front-line work, or direct care, is usually the work of nonprofit agencies or, in some cases, governmental entities. The second kind of work is "awareness raising": protests, media campaigns, academic articles—efforts to document the existing injustices and bring them to the attention of the larger population. The third kind of work is policy work: organizations that create or enact policy, usually governmental agencies, with the power to affect real change. Each kind of work is important, necessary, and vital. Academics interested in justice can contribute in any of these areas.

Grant writing usually falls into the first category. Front-line work—working to increase access to resources—is the "bread and butter" of grant writing. From a pedagogical perspective, front-line work has several advantages. It's tangible in ways students can understand—they understand people in their community lack food or other resources. Rice notes that "narrowing grant proposal projects to local or regional opportunities provides students with a realistic and attainable goal" (2018, 189). Partnering with a nonprofit agency provides students with an entrée to do the kind of work Loeb talks about: "relinquishing control and accepting messy uncertainties" but knowing they are part of a sustained effort that will someday bear fruit (2010, 122). Students learn something about the causes of the problem—for example, senior citizens live on fixed incomes and find that grocery bills rise when incomes don't. Student grant writers learn what is being done (the Food Bank has a program to deliver food to where senior citizens live) and what could be done differently or better (more people need the service than can be served, so another mobile pantry can help the agency serve more people). This work is the kind of work Mathieu calls "tactical"—what she defines as "street initiatives" that "operate situationally, grounded in time and place" (2005, xiv-xv). This tactical orientation requires "letting go of comfortable claims of certainty and accepting the contingent and vexed nature of our actions" (2005, xv). University partnerships can provide support in other ways, such as how Towson University's G.I.V.E. program provides infrastructure for nonprofits through building a digital repository and through providing grant management assistance, or the ways Texas A&M Corpus Christi's Master of Public Administration program partners with various nonprofits to provide strategic planning support and program evaluation expertise. This approach "authorizes educators to work on vexing community problems by joining hands and minds across institutional boundaries" (Parks and Goldblatt, 2000, 587).

This tactical, front-line approach creates a space where university-based grant writing courses can provide value in addition to the deliverable of a submittable grant. Agency personnel are aware of what is happening "on the ground"—the grocery store in a rural community closed, so its place -bound and elderly residents can no longer easily access food. However, agency personnel's efforts focus on meeting needs, leaving little time to address the "whys" of social problems affecting those their organizations exist to serve. The traditional role of the grant writer is to document the need—to show a problem exists in a community—to create a needs statement, an essential component of most grant applications. Often, needs statements written by nonprofit agencies rely on internal data—number of clients served, number services given, pounds of food delivered, and so forth. While this data is important, it is incomplete.

A grant writer trained to be a critical pragmatic practitioner can do more. Grant writers in university-based courses occupy an advantageous position, with access to resources many nonprofit agencies do not have—particularly expertise and information. To continue the previous example about food insecurity in rural areas, universities have experts in economics, sociology, public health, government agencies, and many other fields who can help contextualize problems at the local level. A student in a university-based grant writing course might not be an expert in these fields, but they are trained in research techniques. They know they can ask professors questions. They know their academic libraries have resources, particularly databases, that can provide additional information. A professor of business might note that grocery suppliers have consolidated into four major corporations, all of which prioritize urban areas and have deemphasized or abandoned rural areas because they are less profitable than urban markets. A sociologist who studies older people might note that, because of fixed incomes, rising prices, and failing health, older adults are place-bound and have difficulty getting access to most things they need, particularly food. A nursing faculty member might note that most low-income elderly people suffer from micronutrient undernutrition caused by the inability to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables, which can have catastrophic consequences for older people. A college-based grant writing course can train students to correlate governmental databases maintained by the US Census Bureau, the Center for Disease Control, and the United States Department of Agriculture (to name a few) to understand better the issues a nonprofit's clients are facing and can provide this information to agency professionals. As a result, agency professionals will have access to information they might not have had otherwise, enabling them to serve their clients better. By studying societal structures, a grant writer trained to be a critical pragmatic practitioner can be a more effective grant writer.

As mentioned above, the grant writer must play the dual roles of "insider" and "outsider" at the same time. The grant writer must be familiar with the work of the agency, must listen to its staff (and its clients), must work with agency to articulate the community's needs in language that will appeal to funding agencies, and must accurately describe the agency's programs in terms that correspond to funding guidelines. Perhaps the most difficult task the grant writer will do is to match the agency's programs and needs with funding sources. Their labor is complex; it is Herculean. Long-term partnerships between universities and nonprofit agencies can make this labor more manageable.

Local Situation

Part One: The Coastal Bend area of South Texas

Part of being a critical pragmatic practitioner of grant writing is understanding local conditions—what they are and how they came about. Corpus Christi, Texas and the surrounding region provide a snapshot of unequal destruction of resources in the nation or even in Texas.

Local conditions: A city of 317,773 located on the Texas Gulf Coast, its population is 63.8% Hispanic or Latino,[1] meaning its largest ethnic group represents a traditionally under-resourced population. The city lags behind the nation in nearly every major economic indicator. The table below illustrates the consequences of lack of access to needed resources in Corpus Christi:

[1] These are the terms the US Census Bureau and other government agencies use to describe Latinx people. Latinx will be used as a as a keyword to speak to current scholarship in technical communication. Gonzales et al. provide an insightful discussion of the semantic and cultural distance between Latinx and Hispanic (2020).

Economic Indicator	Corpus Christi	Texas	United States
Median Income	$57,387	63,826	64,994
Persons in poverty	16%	14.2%	11.6%
Persons without Health insurance	20.7%	20.4%	9.8%
Value, owner-occupied housing	$150,100	$187,200	$229,800
High School Graduate	84.1	84.4	88.5
Bachelor's degree or Higher	22.0	30.7	32.9
Foreign born persons	9.1%	16.8%	13.5%

Figure 1: Economic Indicators illustrating lack of access to resources in Corpus Christi, Texas (Source: United States Census Bureau)

The most telling statistics are income levels, the percentage of people in poverty, and the lack of access to health insurance. Reasons for the systemic inequality in South Texas are numerous, but most are traceable back to people with wealth and power trying to preserve their capital and influence.

How local conditions came about.

A brief discussion of the region's history demonstrates how systemic equality developed over time in South Texas. Like most of the American Southwest, early sixteenth-century Spanish explorers encountered Native American, leaving settlements such as Corpus Christi in their wake. Descendants of unions between Spaniards and Native Americans have occupied the region ever since, living under a successive string of governments—Spanish, French, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederacy, and the United States again—all of which marginalized denied them rights to lands they have inhabited for centuries. Although these descendants have lived here since 1519, official histories trace the "founding" of Corpus Christi to 1838, when a Pennsylvanian calling himself "Colonel Kinney" came to the Republic of Texas, decided land was "available" (meaning unclaimed by English-speaking Europeans), and began trading it. South Texas soon was the site of large private land holdings, including the King Ranch (825,000 acres), the Briscoe Ranch (640,000 acres), and the O'Conner Ranches, (500,000 acres). Larger ranches dominated the cattle industry, greatly enriching their owners and increasing their influence in Austin, the state capital. Large ranches required large numbers of low-paid workers, which were mostly the Latinx people who already lived there. Although ranch workers were poorly paid, the ranches represented the only economic opportunities available to non-whites in the region.

Large landholders initially resisted changes brought by oil and natural gas industries; however, when they realized the petrochemical industry was more profitable than cattle, they came to dominate that industry as well. The descendants of unions between Spanish explorers and Native Americans were also excluded in this system. For decades, the oil industry was "white only" industry; people of Latinx descent were not hired in the oilfields, nor could they find work in the lucrative jobs in the refineries that grew up near Corpus Christi to process the petroleum.

This economic structure, which restricted benefits offered by access to land, cattle, and the petroleum industries, was perpetuated by a political system that severely limited Latinx people's right to vote. Even though Latinx people were considered "technically white" by US census rules (a convenient way to create a system of segregation that persisted nearly two decades after Brown vs the Board of Education ended legal segregation of African Americans), they were denied a place at the political table. One strategy was the poll tax, passed in 1902 to limit Latinx participation in voting. Another strategy was gerrymandering, creating oddly shaped political districts to dilute the power of Latinx citizens and give the advantage to white candidates. At the local level, the city council was elected using an "at large" system so that candidates represented the city "as a whole" rather than specific districts where people lived, so that people in minority-majority parts of a city were not allowed to represent themselves.

The aftermath of the systemic denial of access can be seen throughout South Texas today. It is reflected in lower income levels, higher poverty rates, and lower levels of educational achievement. Denial of access is evident in the fact that, despite its $1.83 trillion dollar economy, Texas is the 6th most food insecure state in the nation (Friends Committee on National Legislation, 2022). This aftermath is evident in higher infant mortality rates (Well Being in the Nation Network, 2022) and death rates from diabetes and other endocrine diseases— 33% higher than national rates—that have increased by 37% since 1980 (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2016). The most telling statistic in Figure 1 is the percentage of people without health insurance-- more than double the national rate. This is a direct result of governmental policy—the State of Texas has declined to pass any expansion of Medicaid (which funds health care for the poor) despite the availability of federal funds to pay for it (Harper, 2021), nor will it use state funds to extend participation in the Children's Health Insurance

Program (ChIP). To sum up this discussion about systemic inequality in South Texas, the final row of Figure 1 is important: percentage of "Foreign born persons." Because of its proximity to the US/Mexico border, those unfamiliar with the region assume that poverty is linked to immigration, attributing low income and educational levels and high poverty in Corpus Christi to an immigrant population, who, by their nature, are assumed to be "lacking." However, as Figure 1 demonstrates, the percentage of foreign-born persons in Corpus Christi is far lower than state or national rates. People who live here have been subject to systemic injustices that date back, literally, for centuries.

For the strictly pragmatic work of grant writing, only the first part of this discussion (a description of the current situation) is necessary to complete a grant application—the data provided in Figure 1 could plug nicely into a needs statement for many grants. For grant writers to fully engage in the community they write for, understanding how the situation came to be is critical, even if the information never makes it into the pages of a grant application.

Local Situation

Part Two: The Coastal Bend Food Bank

The Coastal Bend Food Bank has been an effective long-term partner with TAMUCC's grant writing program because it is an excellent site for service-learning in a variety of disciplines; in addition to working with its Executive Director (ED) and development staff on grant writing, nursing students work with Food Bank staff to assess health needs and assist with diabetes education initiatives. Students in the Master of Public Administration program have partnered with the agency on various initiatives, including program assessment. Another reason the Food Bank makes an excellent partner for addressing issues of access is because of the credibility it has earned in the Corpus Christi area (it serves an eleven-county region in the Coastal Bend area of the Texas Gulf Coast).

Initially begun in 1982 with the stated mission "to feed the hungry," Food Bank staff quickly identified the difference between providing food and providing healthy food in an area where diabetes, malnutrition, undernutrition, and other food-related illness run rampant. Corpus Christi has long been known for the highest diabetes amputation rate (Gibson, 2020) in the country. Food Bank staff soon focused on providing healthy food alternatives, only to discover that clients would not use healthier foods because they were unfamiliar. This disconnect led to nutrition education and cooking classes, which introduced new foods (often fresh produce), encouraged people to taste them, and taught healthy ways to prepare them. Other programs developed included a successful diabetes management program (the Coastal Bend Food Bank was the first food bank in the nation to have a registered nurse and a registered dietician on staff), nutrition education explicitly targeted to children (which became Kids Cafes, which also offered after-school tutoring and recreation), and backpack programs, which provide school-lunch eligible children with food to tide them over through nights and weekends. Additionally, the Food Bank now provides a social services program, assisting clients to complete applications for government programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), ChIP, Medicade, and Long Care for Seniors).

Food Banks work through partner agencies—the Coastal Bend Food Bank recovers food donated by grocery stores and through FDA government surplus programs and then distributes it to agencies that hold "pantry days" in various communities. Food Bank staff deliver to more than 100 partner agencies in eleven counties, so people needing assistance do not have to travel to Corpus Christi to get the food needed. Even with this wide distribution system in place, Food Bank staff noticed that gaps in coverage still existed, and that older people are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. As a result, Food Bank staff developed a "mobile pantry" system and, using geolocation software identified underserved places and arranged to have pantry days in those locations. In addition, staff from the Social Services Program come regularly to help identify client needs, to identify services they might be eligible for, and to assist in registration.

The above overview demonstrates how effective the Food Bank of the Coastal Bend is in identifying and meeting needs in the Coastal Bend. This center occupies a unique place of trust in the area, respected by the donor community, people of all political stripes, and, most important, it is trusted by people who are facing the effects of lack of access to needed resources and services. As a result, the Food Bank has become a major player in the region's disaster planning, recovery, and resilience efforts. In the past five years, the Coastal Bend has been struck by two major disasters, Hurricane Harvey in 2017 and the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2022. In both instances, the Food Bank was the first agency many turned to—not only for relief but with offers of help. In terms of assisting people with gaining access to needed goods and services, it is a vital player in the region.

Local Situation

Part Three: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC)

Located on the Texas Gulf Coast, TAMUCC has an enrollment of approximately 11,000 students. A federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), 49% of its student body is Hispanic or Latino, the largest demographic group on campus.[2] Furthermore, 42% are first-generation college students, 59% are from under-represented populations, and 38% are Pell eligible (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2021, 21). South Texas has long been a diverse region with a strong and proud history rooted in Mexican American culture and tradition.

Grant writing at the university began in the early 2000s by Susan Garza in the English department. Grant writing was initially offered within the umbrella course "Professional Writing Workshop"; the initial grant application was a project for the Boys and Girls Club of the Coastal Bend to fund an additional site in Robstown, a low-income community near Corpus Christi. A strong proponent of the value of service-learning in technical writing courses, Garza's grant writing work later took on the project of addressing conditions in colonias, "predominantly low-income, Mexican-American rural and periurban subdivisions characterized by irregular housing and poor water and sanitation infrastructure" (Jepson 2012, 615). Both projects were directly concerned with access—to resources for youth and affordable housing. Garza notes that neither project was funded but demonstrates that these projects were perceived positively by the client agencies involved in the grant application process. Furthermore, grant writing helped achieve course objectives and helped students move beyond their own perspectives, which she equates with the cultural value of individualism and toward a deeper understanding of the communities in which they will live and work (Garza, 2012). Her contribution "Why Are You Making Me Do This? An Examination of Student Attitudes Toward Writing with the Community Service Learning Projects" provides a useful case study describing how to work with a community partner and the challenges that can arise for students who initially may not understand the value of service-learning projects in a community different from their own.

The collaboration with the Food Bank began in 2005, in my first year at the university. A colleague knew its executive director (ED), noting that the Food Bank did a good job of providing students with meaningful learning experiences. Although

[2] Terms for Latinx people used by the US Census Bureau are used in this section.

I had written a number of grants at my previous institution, all had been university-based, seeking funding for programs at my institution or for my own research. This opportunity would be my first foray into writing for a nonprofit. From the start, it was a true collaboration between the Food Bank, me, and my students. The ED and I agreed that a capacity building grant would the best approach to take with the class, one that would benefit the Food Bank if funded but that was not critical for its operations. The ED noted she had never had the time to apply for a Kraft Grant and asked that our class focus on seeking funding to build a new room-sized refrigeration unit suitable for storing produce. The Food Bank received more produce than it could distribute before it spoiled—another refrigeration unit would increase the organization's capacity to store and distribute produce.

This initial project established a pattern that has benefited both the Food Bank and TAMUCC for years. Food Bank staff would identify unmet needs in the community (such as limited access to fresh food), develop a solution, and present this as a project for the grant writing class. Because most of these grants involved capital expenses—new equipment or facility expansion—they were specific programs with tangible benefits that appealed to private foundations. Such grants, while not simple to write, are relatively straightforward projects, ones that beginning grant writers can work on with a reasonable likelihood of success. That initial project was funded for $47,000: the refrigeration unit was built and continues to be in operation today. It also established a model that mirrors good grant writing practices.

Since then, student projects have provided grant writing assistance that has supported the creation of several new initiatives. Funded student-written grant projects include youth initiatives, programs for children such as nutrition education (Kitchen Kaptains) and diabetes prevention (Get Fit!), the first van for the mobile pantry (supporting rural food delivery), a new refrigerated truck to increase food delivery (twice), a kitchen to serve as the site for nutrition education, a backpack program for homeless youth, an initiative targeting malnutrition and undernutrition among adults, a program to fund additional rural delivery to senior citizens, and funds to support the construction of a new building.

In addition to materially benefiting the Food Bank and its programs, this long-term collaboration has yielded other benefits. Projects begin with community needs identified by Food Bank staff; however, they remain open to student perspectives. Although the collaboration between the university and nonprofit staff has built up a shared history of collaboration and expertise—in working with students in service-learning projects on behalf of the Food Bank and in the operations and needs on behalf of university faculty—students are new each time and bring a fresh perspective;

they are willing to ask questions precisely because they don't know how things have been done. As a result, Food Bank staff has been willing to rethink operations based on student input. Two significant examples illustrate the benefits of students' fresh perspectives. During a conference call between the grant manager, students, and the ED of the Food Bank while working on the Kraft Grant, the grant manager noted that to be funded, grant awardees had to demonstrate that, for each dollar spent, ten additional pounds of food would need to be distributed. This criterion was not mentioned anywhere in the RFP (Request for Proposals) or in any other published document, and the Food Bank staff would not have known about it if it hadn't been for the conference call students had arranged. The ED took this information back to her staff and they were able to demonstrate that, with a new refrigeration unit, the Food Bank would be able to distribute at least eleven additional pounds of produce for each grant dollar spent (and exceeded that estimate actually). Another example of the positive benefits resulting from the Food Bank's receptiveness to student input came when a student who was a retired Coast Guard storekeeper suggested adopting a new hardware-based inventory system he had used while in the military. For his individual project, he priced the hardware and software, suggested an implementation strategy, and wrote a successful grant application on behalf of the Food Bank, which now uses the inventory system suggested by the student, significantly increasing efficiency.

Partially because of the success of the collaboration with the Food Bank, the grant writing program has expanded significantly at TAMUCC. Initially begun as a special topics course, offered once every two years, it has developed into its own course with multiple sections offered every spring. The university could offer more sections if it had the faculty to teach it; three faculty members (Susan Garza, Catherine Schumann (this volume's co-editor), and myself) have taken turns teaching the course. The undergraduate version has been offered both online and face-to-face. Additionally, the English department has offered grant writing at the graduate level numerous times and, in 2015, TAMUCC's Master of Public Education (MPA) requested that English faculty begin teaching a graduate grant writing course as part of their program, which has been offered every spring for the past seven years. At times, this course has been cross listed between English and MPA, which has presented a unique opportunity for collaborations between English students, who bring expertise in using writing to address community needs, and MPA students, who bring specific expertise in identifying, documenting, and describing community needs. Over the years, TAMUCC students and faculty have collaborated to write more than

$969,000 in successful grant applications on behalf of various Coastal Bend area nonprofits.

The collaboration between the university and nonprofit agencies grew beyond grant writing. In 2012, Diana Cardenas and I interviewed a few effective nonprofit professionals in the Coastal Bend about the kinds of writing they do and about the communication skills an effective nonprofit professional should have. This project grew into a fully online Writing for Nonprofits (WNPR) certificate program in which students learn nonprofit writing genres (internal communication, media relations, publication, fund raising, and board relations), writing for the web, document design, grant writing, and a capstone course in which students create a nonprofit project benefitting a nonprofit.

Part Four: An Approach to Teaching Grant Writing

What follows is an overview of what we have learned at TAMUCC over nearly two decades of partnering with community agencies and writing grants on their behalf. We have been successful because we have had good partners—not only the Food Bank but other organizations willing to work with us.

We need to begin with some caveats. Because we are a Hispanic Serving Institution, we feel a responsibility to help train students to be successful, working professionals. We do not uncritically accept corporate ideologies sometimes implicit in workplace writing programs, nor do we think of the nonprofit system as inherently good. We want our students to be critical pragmatic practitioners, aware of the problems inherent in the nonprofit industrial complex, engaged with the communities their work will serve, and cognizant of structural injustices that create the inequalities that restrict access to goods and services people need. We also want them to learn how to write grants, because grant writing is a marketable skill that will help students find employment and because we want to do as good a job as possible for our community partners.

Here is an overview of how we ran our course:

1. Students write two grants; during the first half of the semester, they collaborate on a single, larger grant on behalf of a nonprofit agency (usually the Food Bank).
2. During the second half of the semester, students write a grant by themselves on behalf of a local nonprofit of their choosing. We maintain a regularly updated list of community partners. Many students choose a

partner from this list, but many are already involved with a community agency. In these cases, we encourage students to work with agencies they know and engage in causes they believe in.

3. We teach a specific process, one that is a hybrid of that found in many grant writing textbooks:
    - Document the need in the community the agency is addressing.
    - Describe the program the agency is proposing to meet the need.
    - Identify potential funding sources for the proposed program. Once a funding source is identified, students, with permission of their partner agencies, contact the funding sources themselves to determine whether a project is a match for that funding source. Note that finding a finding source can take time, and that other steps can be worked on as a funding source is identified.
    - Demonstrate how this program will meet the need (grant writing terminology for this is Goals, Objectives, and Strategies)
    - Be prepared to demonstrate whether the grant is achieving the results it's supposed to (Evaluation)
    - If required, have a plan for showing how the project will continue after the grant period is over.
    - Create a Budget and explain where the money is going (a Budget Justification).
    - Meeting the funding source's requirements for putting the grant together (which can include an organizational history or background and a summary, as well as a cover letter or abstract.

Students go through this process twice. The first time, they worked in teams, on separate parts of the grant. As the semester proceeds, readings and discussions introduce students to various aspects of the grant writing process. Each team has responsibility for a few parts of the process, and their contributions will be shared with the class when it is relevant. When the class is learning about Goals, Objectives, and Activities, the group preparing that section of the grant will present its work to the class, for example. In the end, the whole class assembles the grant, reads it through, and edits and evaluates it for consistency, clarity, and completeness. During the second half of the semester, each student will go through this process again.

1. We emphasize to the students the need for a clear line of thinking from the community need the grant is addressing to the budget:

Figure 2: The Logic of Grant writing

2. We emphasize that a budget is a moral document—that where an organization spends its money reveals what its true values are. In addition to this being good grant writing, this approach to budgeting offers another opportunity to address issues of access and how financial structures can help or impede communities.
3. The partner agency is contacted during the semester and asked to:
    - Identify a Specific Need that Needs to be Addressed—It is important to be clear that the partner agency is in charge: the agency contact is the "supervisor" for this grant.
    - Have a Specific, Defined Project—It is more helpful for student learning if grant agencies have a specific, defined project to meet the need. If an agency has several ideas, students are given a simple strategic planning exercise to help smaller agencies choose which projects are most likely to be funded.

- Maintain Regular Contact with the Student Grant Writer—We let partner agencies know up front that students may have lots of questions, and we let students know that people in nonprofits are busy and can't drop what they are doing to answer questions. We recommend that agency personnel and students communicate with one another once a week regularly. We also let students know that part of learning professional behavior is to identify which method of communication is the best way to contact their agency partner—phone, email, messenger, GroupMe, etc.
- Have Realistic Expectations about Student Work—We let students know we expect them to do their best, and that we will support them to the best of our abilities. However, students are students, and the work they produce will not always be "submission worthy." Agencies usually understand this. Most student-written grants are submitted by the agencies, others are revised by agency personnel and then submitted, and a few are not submitted.
- Provide Feedback on Student Work—Agency personnel are asked to provide a written assessment of the students' work—how well they understood the agencies work and its mission, things the students did well, areas in which the student can improve, and an overall evaluation of the quality of the grant produced. This is shared with both the student and the instructor.

To recap, we teach grant writing as a standalone course in which students write two grants on behalf of area nonprofit agencies. Students go through the process twice, once in teams and once individually. The first group-written grant is usually in conjunction with the Food Bank of the Coastal Bend, a long-term partnership that has fostered trust, history, and a shared body of knowledge about strategies to address problems stemming from lack of access to a basic need—food—in the Coastal Bend. The second grant, which students write independently, is done in conjunction with a nonprofit agency of the student's choice.

As an instructor in the program, I should note that teaching grant writing requires a great deal of effort. The semester before, the instructor must work with agency personnel to identify a larger project for the group grant and must communicate with other community partners to arrange potential projects for students when they write individual grants. During the semester grant writing is taught, a series of specific tasks must be completed so the grant can be ready for submission. Although students must assume leadership roles and work together to ensure the grant is written, they require a great deal of coaching and support. When the course is taught online and grant writing students don't interact in a classroom, a system of regular check-ins with each other, with other teams, and the instructor is needed. Through trial and error, we've developed a system that works, but it, too, is time consuming. Later, when students are working individually, the instructor must keep track of what project each student is doing, which funding sources are being approached (to avoid project overlap), and how students are doing. When different instructors teach different sections, coordination is needed so that no single agency is flooded with requests for student projects and no single granting agency receives multiple grant applications for the same funding source (so students don't compete with one another for the same grant). We have developed a database of grant projects that each instructor has access to, so we can coordinate with each other and avoid project and funder overlap.

As with the long-term partnership with the Food Bank, our institution's long-term commitment to teaching grant writing has created a fund of knowledge and institutional memory for how it can be taught effectively. This has changed over time, however. Since the partnership began, grant writing has changed from paper-based submissions to electronic. Four different presidential administrations have come, and three have gone, significant because each new president makes policy changes that alter the funding landscape. Course delivery has continued in face-to-face courses and has also developed in an asynchronous, fully online modality. The program continued through a pandemic. We have also worked with different partners for the group-written grant, always returning to the Food Bank because working with them as a partner provides our students with an excellent learning experience. Students in the program know they are part of a tradition, and the $969,000 they have raised to date on behalf of various nonprofit agencies in the Coastal Bend demonstrates that student work can be of great value.

A Conclusion of Sorts

Hercules was able to tame Cerberus, the three-headed guardian of Hades, just as generations of TAMUCC students have been able to tame the three-headed monster that it the grant making system, satisfying it sufficiently that it has allowed resources to flow from the vaults it guards and into the communities of the Coastal Bend. However, taming Cerberus was not Hercules' final labor, and our program leaves much of the work of access undone.

Although the programs funded by successful student-written grants have helped many people via the nonprofit agencies that serve them, the structural inequalities in South Texas persist. The number of people served by the Food Bank increases every year. Income inequality has increased, and high rate of food insecurity, poverty rates, and uninsured children persist. Students rarely see the outcomes of their work—they take the course and, even if both of the grants they helped to write are funded, the semester ends, and they move on to other courses or jobs. Some stay involved with the nonprofit they wrote for. Many mean to stay involved but don't because of other commitments.

There are also real limits to the way we teach grant writing. Because we prioritize student learning, we seek to ensure that the partner agencies we work with are sufficiently stable that they can support a student through the process. Although we do work with smaller nonprofits that are volunteer-driven or that are just starting up, our students' efforts on behalf of these agencies are less successful. If we were fully signed off on the ideology of the Nonprofit Industrial Complex, we could claim that these agencies "aren't ready to get a grant yet" because certain structures have to be in place for an agency to receive grant funding. We don't because it's not helpful. However, we don't have the personnel or expertise to help startup and volunteer agencies get to the point where they can "check enough boxes" that they can receive grant funding. We study our community, identifying the historical and societal structures that limit access to needed resources for people of underrepresented backgrounds, but we haven't done much of the "higher level" work of social justice identified in the "social change" section of this article—we haven't raised awareness at a large enough level to produce the kind of changes necessary to correct structural inequalities that continue to limit access to those who need and deserve it. Much is left undone.

However, we keep in mind the quote from Loeb that begins this article: "If you expect to see the final results of your work, you simply have not asked a big enough question" (2010, 123). We continue in the faith that our work and the work of our students is of value, that it makes a difference, no matter how small, in the lives of others. We encourage others who are contemplating teaching a grant writing course to do so because grant writing isn't hard--it's just a hell of a lot of work. If you're willing to do the work, your students will gain a valuable skill that will benefit them in nearly any career they choose; having had a grant writing course will increase their chances of accessing better employment and, therefore, more resources for themselves and their families. The work these students do in grant writing courses will become a small part of the larger work of making our communities just a little bit better places to live.

Teaching grant writing won't change the world, but it could make it just a little bit nicer place.

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"Writing the Watershed": The Place of Bioregional Pedagogy and Student Grant Writing in a Community-Based Professional Writing Course

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The Trail: Access and Ambiguity

The trail is broken in places, washed out, or pocked with scraggly turf. It's not definitively marked at entrances, and at times, a visitor is unsure if they are trespassing or walking along a well-loved thoroughfare. Changes in elevation provide views of the creek below, shining in the gaps around the shady canopy. A late-nineteenth-century rail tunnel represents the park's transportation history, a history that is now largely covered by graffiti. The space's natural history continues to evolve as dedicated stewards try to rebuff choking invasive plants and revitalize this liminal space into a hearty native woodland.

Stony Run Park is a three-mile unpaved trail surrounded by woodland stretching north and south through the heart of Baltimore. Its eponymous stream, which runs near the trail, is a tributary of the Jones Falls, a larger waterway that leads to the Baltimore harbor before finding its way into the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. One offshoot from the trail connects to the Homewood campus of Johns Hopkins University (JHU), where several university buildings overlook the park. Here

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community space blurs into campus, thanks, in part, to the use of the trail as a thoroughfare between JHU and nearby neighborhoods of Wyman Park and Hampden.

The trail, considered one way, is a common ground crossing fifteen neighborhoods that connect churches, university campuses, residential back alleys, and city parks. Framed differently, it is at times unclear who is responsible for the trail's upkeep, and thus it appears as space that doesn't really "belong" to anyone. Even as an ambiguous space, Stony Run Park is an access point, a way for neighborhoods and a university campus to integrate. Such access requires effort and intention—on the part of users and facilitators. The trail, if left unattended due to competing priorities, might languish in a state of disuse and disinterest.

A class that teaches grant writing is a bit like this winding trail, aspirational in its goals regarding connecting dispersed-yet-tangential communities. It requires thoughtful pedagogical orientation and navigation. It puts students into dialogue with other people, places, and issues as they write grants to support community initiatives. This type of course, or even an assignment that asks students to write public-facing proposals, is meant to connect—like the trail that connects the campus to the nearby neighborhoods. That connection asks writers to be both students enrolled in a credit-bearing course and participants in a largely non-academic discourse, generating work that can be driven by considerations other than grades.

In assuming the role of eligible applicants for real-world grant funding opportunities, students can operate from a unique and empowering vantage. In this case, the community partner brought in local NGOs who eagerly participated in the course.[1] NGO personnel provided tutelage and feedback as students identified and fleshed out projects that could be brought to life. Working with real-world players on a local stage provided a rare sense of civic circumspection. This exercise is intrinsically unique and compelling whether the funding is obtained or if the endeavor serves as a blueprint for later pursuits (as was the case with this class). Community connections that grew from the course remain, and the ideas that were kindled into projects live on to inspire possibilities for the work ahead in designing and advocating for a sustainable future.

In this article, we investigate what grant writing specifically offers to students enrolled in a place-based professional writing course. What unique contributions does a grant writing project make for facilitating connections to place and for developing what Phyllis Mentzell Ryder calls "a sense of how the world is, and what it may become" (6)? How might instructors meaningfully integrate pedagogies emphasizing

[1] NGO, a non-profit governmental organization.

the social and environmental literacies of grant writing "in place"? In short, how should professional writing courses invite students to become not just professionals-in-training, but actual participants in projects with non-academic stakes?

We respond to these questions from three different, interconnected perspectives: student, community partner co-instructor, and faculty instructor. As a student enrolled in the course, Alex Ozbolt provides a clear view of what it meant to navigate the process of designing and tailoring a grant proposal. James Wolf, in the role of community partner and co-instructor, describes what drew him to the opportunity and reflects on his approach to the course as a chance to bring various communities together around an issue he is passionate about. Andy Ross provides the full-time faculty perspective by drawing on the framework of rhetoric and composition pedagogy applied to the environmentally-informed lens he applies to many of his courses. Together, these perspectives contribute to a larger dialogue about what it means to use grant writing to help students access people and places they might otherwise not.

The Institutional Context for "Professional Writing and Communication"

The student body at JHU is remarkably diverse and involved in many extracurriculars. During the 2019-20 academic year, individuals from all fifty states and fifty-one foreign nations attended the University ("Get the Facts"). With approximately 400 registered clubs, twenty-two athletic teams, and 51 major programs, the University has opportunities for everyone to find a community that shares their passions or interests. Group chats for club organization or professional networking often evolve into social forums, and in public spaces like the library or the dining hall, people on teams or in clubs sit together because their extracurricular schedules inevitably align. Even during class lectures, people typically sit next to their friends so they can work with them as partners and spend more time together. This interest in academic and extracurricular diversity was also visible in our grant writing course, even though it fulfilled a university-wide writing requirement.

"Professional Writing and Communication" is a composition course designed to introduce students to the genres of communication most common beyond academia. It combines approaches from business and technical writing courses and supplemental components relating to public speaking. The goal of this course is to give students structured guidance and feedback that prepares them to communicate across a wide range of industries and audiences. Instructors select a theme for their course in the form of a broad and multi-faceted question or topic that can give the course a "flavor." The class is capped at nineteen students and meets synchronously, either online or in a face-to-face modality. It fulfills a university writing requirement, drawing students from many different majors and across all undergraduate levels.

This Spring 2022 version of "ProfComm" was sponsored by the JHU Center for Social Concern (CSC), an office charged with facilitating meaningful interactions between the university and its wider community. To promote "a lifelong commitment to active citizenship by integrating education, action, and reflection," the CSC sponsors faculty discussions and reading groups, hosts topical forums and events open to the campus and public, and provides financial support for community-based courses through a faculty fellowship. This last form of investment is essential, as it allows for community partners like James to be compensated for their time spent as co-instructors. Even before the semester began, the institutional support of the CSC was instrumental in introducing the course co-instructors and helping them find shared intellectual and social interests.

James joined the course as a community partner and representative of two Baltimore-based environmental advocacy organizations: Friends of Stony Run and the Baltimore Weed Warriors. Friends of Stony Run (FSR) is a volunteer-led organization that spearheads efforts to promote the well-being of the Stony Run watershed. As part of its mission to "improve the health of the stream valley and enhance the quality of life in the surrounding community," FSR routinely organizes cleanup projects, community gatherings, and educational events, and has been instrumental in developing civic cooperation through strategic planning. Baltimore Weed Warriors is a city-sponsored organization that certifies volunteers on the removal of non-native and invasive plants from city parks. For instance, as a certified "weed warrior," Mr. Wolf has hosted invasive species removal events in his Wyman Park neighborhood.

As a community partner, James felt as though the allurement of place—what Lucy Lippard calls "the lure of the local"—brought him to the course (5). The conviviality and unpretentiousness of Baltimore resonates with him, and he sees how universities have facilitated a breathtakingly rapid growth of understanding of the natural and continue to be home to many intellectual and economic resources applicable to environmental stewardship. Over time, the relationship between the city and its universities became more intimate in James's mind, and having long been interested in environmental issues, he enrolled in a graduate program at Hopkins studying environmental policy. He now lives at the doorstep of the university—drawn there in a subtle, organic way through a series of investments in place and the concepts they evoked.

To James, the opportunity to be at the front of the classroom as a community partner for the student grants felt like a moment of selection—like "being harvested" for the class. In thinking about this process of bridging the campus and its margins, he reflects that most or all university-centric communities have people deeply invested in what Robert L. Thayer calls "a life-place"—the "most logical locus and scale for a sustainable, regenerative community to take root and to take place" (3). The course served as a chance to promote this kind of community orientation to the needs and qualities of a particular watershed. For this reason, though the emphasis of the course was uniquely informed by the particularities of the place, the general pedagogical spirit and commitments could be transportable across ecological or geographic contexts.

Pedagogical Affiliations: Community, Place, and Bioregion

Having outlined some of the particularities of the course's institutional context and community partner perspective, it will help to describe the larger pedagogical goals for the course, which can best be described as a series of tightening concentric circles: a commitment to "community" at its widest audience orientation, then "place" as a more focused geographic locale that grounds the work of the course, and finally "the bioregion" as the most narrow, philosophically-specific commitment for our semester's work.

Writing, to be communicative, requires an ambition to connect. "We write to commune" (16), Brian Jackson reminds us in his book *Teaching Mindful Writers*. As a discipline, composition provides students with the chance to practice alongside other developing writers and the prospect of writing in public. "Communicating in Community" is one of the pillars of a contemporary writing course, particularly those influenced by Marilyn Cooper's ecological model of writing that emphasizes "engaging with a variety of socially constituted systems" (367). In a course like "ProfComm," students balanced several such systems: the academic community represented by their peers and instructors, the Baltimore environmental community as represented by partnerships with Friends of Stony Run and Baltimore Weed Warriors, the community of their grant organizations (whom they had not previously met but were now writing to), and finally the larger Baltimore community (represented by the neighborhoods or schools served by grants).

Answering Cooper's call for an ecological view of writing and how it is taught in the college classroom, "ecocomposition" has become a subdiscipline. Weisser and Dobrin, the first to offer a sustained theoretical model for this approach to writing, frame the term as signaling the mutual influence of composition and ecology on each other or "the coconstitutive existence of writing and environment" (2). More ambitious than simply reinstating nature as a subject deserving of written attention, Dobrin and Weisser posit ecocomposition as a bridge connecting the "hard sciences" (traditionally thought of as the domain of environmental study) and humanities discipline, thereby providing a "more holistic, encompassing framework for studies of the relationship between discourse and environment" (Dobrin and Weisser, *Natural Discourse*, 6).

While this capacious definition has inspired approaches to environmental praxis in the writing classroom, the most salient application of ecocomposition for our class has to do with the concept of "place." Julie Drew has advocated for a composition version centered on how "place plays a role in producing texts," including the academic writing that most college classrooms focus upon (57). Many students are asked to apply their writing to their own social context. In other versions, place is a more nuanced and inextricable part of the course—the character of a particular place made more front and center as the object of study. Drawing upon a long history of theory about public discourse, Jenny Rice has reinvested "public subjectivities" in place to understand better how individuals confront "those publics that populate, change, and undergo the effects of material places" (13-14). In this version, students respond to work from local writers and write for local readers.

The "ProfComm" approach to place-based learning was informed less by relation to other writerly subjectivities and more intended to introduce students to the unique character of the Stony Run watershed or bioregion. Bioregionalism, a school of environmental philosophy and activism, is deeply rooted in the notion of sustainable relationships to nature being best formed at the watershed scale. In his essay titled "A Rehearsal to Bioregionalism," Michael Vincent McGinnis defines a bioregion as "the intersection of vernacular culture, place-based behavior, and community" (3). "Bioregionalists," McGinnis continues, "believe that we should return to the place 'there is,' the land itself, the place we inhabit and the communal region we depend upon" (3). This return to the land is not necessarily about homesteading or some kind of performative primitivism. Rather, bioregionalism advocates "reinhabitation," a social, political, and even educational practice that, in the words of Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann, "involves learning to live-in-place" (81).

To thinkers like Berg and Dasmann, a bioregion refers both to a geographic area that can be identified on a map and a mental model— "a terrain of consciousness"—that inspires an ethical relation to community (36). This condition is what we aspired for in our course: we wanted students to see that there is a place from which they learn and live, and that they could actively shape that place through the work of writing. In particular, our course focused on environmental restoration, a collaborative, community-based process that Michael Vincent McGinnis, Freeman House, and William Jordan III describe as "a scientific exploration of the past with the present in mind" (208). Many course readings investigated approaches to this work, and all of the students' grants were built on a foundation of restoration ecology. As a hopeful, collaborative attempt to rehabilitate landscapes and the communities that share them, bioregional environmental restoration provided an analog for the mutual investment necessary in successful grant writing.

Even though this particular version of "ProfComm" narrowly focused on efforts to restore sustainably the Stony Run watershed, as co-instructors, James and Andy made clear that the course's lessons applied anywhere the students settled professionally and geographically. The lessons and the products of their assignments were widely applicable, both in terms of rhetorical fluency and environmental literacy.

The Rhetorical Role of Grants in a Community-Based Professional Writing Context

Because professional writing courses often focus on rhetorical strategies associated with technical, business, or other forms of skilled work, they rarely are pinned to a particular place (and are more focused on the ambiguous "workplace"). A grant writing component can shift a writing course from learning "about" a place, to learning "in" a place. In other words, students become more deeply invested and connected with a place when they actively write for it through an assignment like a grant. Thomas Deans calls these "writing-for'" courses, suggesting that through a pragmatic orientation these types of learning experiences "value workplace literacies and thus differ significantly from most courses that abide in the writing-about-the-community paradigm" (*Writing Partnerships* 18).

The place of grant writing in a place-based course is that such a project naturally moves students' perspective on local issues from discourse to action. Many composition courses themed around "writing about the environment" will include important genres of environmental writing: nonfiction "nature writing," rhetorical analysis of environmental representation (say, of a public service announcement or documentary film), multimodal writing that promotes science literacy, etc. A grant assignment convincingly complements these types of learning outcomes, as students familiar with the rhetorical character of particular environmental situations will feel all the more confident approaching their proposal.

Grant writing and community-based professional writing have in common an emphasis on teaching students to identify meaningful problems and respond to them from multiple perspectives (Eyler, Giles Jr., and Braxton). Thus, when students are presented with a specific community context and a narrowly-defined need, their work takes on a greater sense of energy. The more their project seems fundable, the more enthusiastic they become about the writing process and about the community need that inspires it.

However, as a genre, a grant is not the same as an "essay" or "paper," forms of academic writing most familiar to students. Similarly, students generally have little reason as undergraduates to seek funding in writing. Ironically, many of them will become much more familiar with grant writing in the immediate next phase of their careers, especially as they move into graduate study or other arenas that require soliciting various forms of funding. Thus, it makes sense to help students become familiar with the process and rhetorical constraints of producing viable grants as undergraduates to accelerate their confidence with the form.

Beyond the seemingly-inevitable professional need for proposal writing, grant writing teaches key composition skills that are crucial to other genres. For instance, the concept of "audience" and awareness of one's reader takes on a new vitality in the context of designing and composing a grant proposal. Specifically, whereas an academic paper might be directed to an instructor with interest in seeing how a student writer is interpreting a larger conversation about a given issue or research question, the audience for a grant is more pragmatically invested in the document's claims, reasoning, evidence, and logistics.

It makes sense then to teach students how grants are both written and read. The more a student writer is strategically aware of a grant evaluator's priorities, affordances, and constraints of grant evaluators, the more likely it is for their writing to find confident purpose. In our particular class, students needed to have a deep understanding of the real priorities of their audience and partner, engaging what Paul Heilker calls the "real tasks, real audiences, real purposes for writing" in a service-learning context (75). Instead of a course being built around a potentially abstract "topic," Heilker suggests that grant-focused service-learning makes the course cohere to supporting the genuine "mission of the agency" (75).

A grant writing course can be both pragmatic and ambiguous—less a semester describing "the right way to write" and more an open-ended question about how best to communicate given a very particular set of social circumstances. Such a shift feels akin to what Paula Mathieu describes as "tactics of hope"—projects that "encourage an orientation of frank questioning of the ethically troubling aspects of work in the streets" (*Tactics of Hope* 20). Focused upon "personal relationships, mutual needs, and a shared sense of timing," such projects pursue just, reasonable, and nimble partnerships—no matter how long they may last (Mathieu "After Tactics," 17).

As valuable as writing like a reader is, it's not easy for students working in this genre. If they are unfamiliar with writing grants, they are even more unfamiliar with what it is like to assess and fund such proposals. For this reason, "ProfComm" included time in class to examine the various Calls for Proposals (CFPs) student teams had selected, interpreting the questions and modeling rhetorical strategies that best appealed to their target audience. Students used these documents to construct their reader—tracing in them currents of priorities and aims, and identifying key terms that could be applied to their submissions. For this reason, students in a community-based composition course are not only "inventing the university" (Bartholomae), but they are also inventing their readers outside of the confines of academia. This challenge, though novel to many students, is exciting and fruitful for the way it reveals the pragmatic potential of writing.

While this interpretive practice translates nicely to other academic and professional genres in which the reader is somewhat obscured or ambiguous, as co-instructors James and Andy wish that they had connected student teams with funders in a more direct way. By being able to speak directly with a representative of the organization—perhaps even a grant writer themselves—student teams could have vividly experienced that "audience awareness" in this context means speaking to a very small group of readers with specific concerns. This is another opportunity to blur the lines between class and community that we wish we had pursued.

One challenge associated with this approach is that students may feel like their work is "unsolicited," or like they lack the credibility to make a meaningful contribution to their community partner. Reflecting on students' experience writing proposals in a service-learning course, Ryder suggests that students acutely felt their position as being outside of the community partner's rhetorical situation. Even when positioned as "consultants to organizations whose staff had been on the ground" much longer than members of the class, students felt they "had little authority" (9). "There was no exigency for the proposals," Ryder acknowledges. "No one at the organizations had asked for their advice. The task felt like an exercise in thinking, as something for the class; it did not bridge the divide between academic and public writing" (9).

Sometimes the challenge of a service-learning grant project goes the other way—that students unintentionally take on a relationship with community collaborators that feels judgmental, overly-intellectual, or politically lopsided. Even if inspired by a sense of service, the interaction can feel either like a shallow form of academic "professing" or institutional grandstanding. For this reason, Mathieu warns against approaching community partnerships from a "strategic" mindset that prioritizes what the university stands to benefit in terms of public relations (*Tactics of Hope*, 17). Aaron Schutz and Ann Ruggles Gere helpfully argue that community-based writing must move students from monolithic views of their community and issues it represents to more of an openness to multiple views on social questions, learning to value the "local, messy, and complex context" of their work (142). This value echoes Linda Flower's aspiration to a community literacy that is "an intercultural dialogue *with others* on issues that *they* define as sites of struggle" (19, italics original).

In all, a grant writing assignment or course has the potential to shift students' approach to writing from a passive "writing about" their community as outside observers to a mode in which they write "with" or "alongside" community collaborators. By focusing on clearly delineated problems worth solving, such projects can expand students' views of their social and environmental context and deepen their understanding of the purpose of professional writing.

Unconventional Utility: The Lived Experience of a Collaborative Grant Proposal

Before the semester began, the course's co-instructors met along the Stony Run Trail to set goals and learning objectives for the course, make plans for assignments related to those goals, and generally discuss how to provide a meaningful experience for the students. During these discussions, Andy expressed some reservations as a faculty co-instructor about the potential viability of students' proposals—it was hard to guarantee in advance how committed students would be to the work. James affirmed that the collaboration would be valuable independent of the final product, and that, as community partner, he could anticipate the goals of the course being reached even if the final proposals were still works-in-progress.

Beginning in the first week of the semester, Andy and James introduced the bioregional frame of the course by asking students to reflect on their relationship to the watershed. For some students, this was their first time meaningfully learning about this ecological concept and becoming familiar with the local terrain helped to open their eyes to the environmental character of their academic home. In one of our first meetings, the students collaborated on a bioregional quiz titled "Where You At?" which playfully highlighted gaps in our group's collective ecological literacy.

During his first presentation to the class as co-instructor and community partner, James carefully considered how to frame where students stood in relation to the topic of environmental restoration and sustainability. Visual snapshots of the stress the natural world is under right under our noses helpfully paved the way for a broader discussion of sustainability and its ethical implications. Moving back to the region and city, he shared examples of groups of people (including Friends of Stony Run and Baltimore Weed Warriors) not unlike the class who are strategically working to heal the wounds of neglect. This situated the work of the course as actively concerned with repair and maintenance of our watershed, the immediate territory we all exert some influence upon. In reintroducing students to this physical terrain, we wanted to remind students that writing "takes place"—it happens in real and vibrant spaces and communities. Thankfully, in one of the first class meetings of the semester, a student in the back row raised their hand to ask if we could hold class outside, a suggestion that prompted a subsequent trip to the Stony Run.

In February 2022, the class met along the trail to discuss the issues it represented as a case study for ecological restoration and conservation. Students had previously read about concepts like biodiversity, topography, urban ecology, invasive species management, and the stability of biotic and human communities. Now the group saw those issues "on the ground" and directly in the domain of advocates like Friends of Stony Run and Baltimore Weed Warriors, groups students would soon see as interlocutors.

The next few weeks of class were scaffolded around a series of research, writing, and public speaking assignments geared to help students connect to these environmental issues and participate in the discourse around them. First, students collaborated in teams to research and write a Stony Run watershed assessment report, an assignment that taught technical writing and research skills and the craft of articulating concise, well-supported assertions for a professional audience. During this assignment, guest speakers from various Baltimore-based environmental nonprofits joined the class to present their work around urban hydrology and waste management and also to share their professional perspectives as writers communicating environmental issues to public stakeholders.

"ProfComm" draws students from many different major programs and interest areas across campus. Our class had representation across the board, from athletes to artists, engineers to economists, and first-year students to graduating seniors. Each person had their reasons for enrolling in the class: for some, it was to fill a requirement, others to develop career-oriented skills, or even to explore their passion for sustainable Baltimore initiatives.

Alex took this course mainly as a senior to satisfy his final writing-intensive credit. Having enrolled in one other writing class in the past, he expected to compose weekly papers related to whichever subject we talked about in class. In reality, he was taken aback by the way the class was designed around a productive curriculum. Specifically, the grant project helped to flip his expectations. Sure, the course included more traditional or familiar resume and poster design assignments. However, unlike in other courses, students applied these skills to a community-inspired final project which will have real impacts onthe lives of many. A class that otherwise might have been a weekly grind became an outlet for employing Alex's strengths and developing his weaknesses in order to improve the community around him—the course became one he truly enjoyed and in which he wanted to succeed. Paradoxically, the curriculum felt extracurricular because of the immediate, measurable impact the course's work had on the Stony Run watershed.

Alex felt refreshed having discussions with people—both in the Hopkins community and outside of it—which he would never otherwise have. Especially after several semesters of virtual classrooms and meetings, the thought of engaging with people outside his sphere as a student felt foreign and unfamiliar. In March of 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted his fourth semester of college. Following the lack of in-person team meetings for over a year, Alex mainly looked forward to engaging with fellow students and community partners alike. While group work in other courses largely bordered on the theoretical side and did not require any collaboration past splitting up the work evenly, in this grant writing class, the division of work felt different and more organic. Team meetings felt enriching rather than compulsory because we each brought our own complementary strengths to the table.

Students had the chance to develop their own interests by writing a "source synthesis" on a topic they felt passionate about. This type of assignment, akin to a literature review, gives students freedom to select a topic about which to research and use as an opportunity to become immersed in a research area. Many students chose to deepen their understanding of watershed ecology through this assignment. Having synthesized existing research and identified a research trend or limitation regarding their topic, students made a short pitch presentation (in no more than 5 minutes) about what kind of grant they might design around the local application of such a topic. These presentations helped to identify common interests around which teams could form. For the first time within a class, Alex found he belonged to a group formed on the basis of interest rather than technical skill. This allowed the team to leverage their personal skills toward a common goal rather than simply dividing the workload into identical parts.

The culmination of the course was a team-based proposal assignment, in which teams of students would conceive, design, write, revise, and pitch a grant manuscript in response to a CFP from one of a set of local funding agencies. While teams developed their grants independently from each other, several themes were shared among the group. Many teams wrote grants with educational aspects—one team's grant sought funding for a watershed field trip intended for local primary school children hosted by JHU undergraduate students. Another group proposed a rain garden project to be installed at a local elementary school as part of a stormwater mitigation effort. Other groups focused on biodiversity and conservation through projects directed at invasive species removal and tree plantings, including in underserved areas facing environmental inequalities. One group directed their proposal to the campus sustainability office, pitching improved infrastructure along the Stony Run Trail in order to improve accessibility and safety in the area.

As the semester progressed, anxieties over the end product shifted to a trust in the process of pursuing shared aims. It became clear that the most valuable aspect of the course would not be the grants themselves but rather the networks formed in the process. This may sound a bit trite. But beyond being about heartwarming friendships, we argue that developing a mutual association, a collaboration that felt productive and professional, was as equally important in the end as a viable grant. In addition to facilitating greater confidence navigating a new professional genre in a grant, one of the most rewarding outcomes of this project was seeing the way students revitalized a portion of their home geography that was otherwise empty space. Many students who said that they had previously been unaware of Stony Run now affirmed a familiarity with the place.

In addition to filling-in their environmental map, many students found expanding their social network by working with a community partner like James to be refreshing and inspiring. James took an active role in defining students' goals and advising them on the characteristics and needs of the watershed. Often, groups appeal to the university to receive help from classes and organizations but do not actively participate in the process. As an engineering student, Alex has often heard about consulting jobs bogged down by unreliable communication of project expectations and specifications from the clients. On the contrary, the course's community partner was there for us every step of the way, vastly exceeding Alex's expectations for how an organization gets involved in class. James was always available within 24 hours via email and participated in class virtually whenever he could not make it in person. He also invited us to get personally involved with the campaign to tackle invasive species and spread awareness of such issues which plague the Stony Run watershed. Toward the end of the semester, the classroom felt more like "collaborative workplaces" (Reither 197) than top-down instructional spaces, as groups met and worked together, sometimes moving into a hybrid mode to consult with the community partner and faculty instructor over a question or draft.

In our final class meeting, student teams presented their grant proposals to their classmates and to members of the Stony Run community, including several environmental advocates who are experienced grant writers. A nervously-excited energy pervaded the room, as teams readied their slides and speaking notes. In the presentations and the discussions that followed them, students experienced what it is like to receive immediate feedback from someone other than their instructor and answer questions presented from a practical, non-academic vantage. As a capstone to the project, this experience demonstrated the effort and care that students had invested in delivering feasible, audience-sensitive proposals. It also highlighted the potential benefit of facilitating interactions with non-class readers earlier in the semester so that their helpful questions and suggestions could be integrated more fully into the grant proposals themselves.

At the end of April, a few members of the class, including Alex, attended the annual Friends of Stony Run general meeting, where they supported James as he was inaugurated as the group's president. This was a special moment that capped the end of the semester in which students dove headfirst into an immediately relevant problem, an experience that felt far different from taking exams or completing assignments. Participating in an active grant proposal for a real-world organization helped students realize that curriculum can be delivered in unconventional ways, often making more sense and delivering more utility than a traditional lecture-style class.

Recommendations and Reflections: The Trail Forward

Below are some concluding recommendations regarding approaches to planning and executing sustainable, place-based writing courses in which a community partner is actively involved in leading a grant assignment.

- Instructors and community partners should set realistic expectations for the collaboration, mainly what outcomes would be most meaningful for the various stakeholders. Ideally, all parties would articulate a clear definition of success and reasonable means for accomplishing such a goal.

- Grant collaborators can recognize that, as Laurie JC Cella suggests, many community-based projects "don't fit neatly into a standard definition of success" (3). This reality carries some risk for instructors and community partners alike. Even still, stepping outside the comfort zone of traditional academic norms can generate relationships that, over time, form sustainable links between academic and community institutions.

- While remuneration may present an institutional roadblock, instructors interested in collaborating with community partners should pursue meaningful ways of providing compensation. This added benefit is especially important if the community partner acts as a co-instructor for the course.

- A grant project can seem more deterministic than assignments based on loose parameters intended to inspire student autonomy. We recommend deliberately planning how to balance the needs of a community partner with student autonomy. Confidently advising students to develop projects within the framework of a community partner's goals will require some advanced planning.

- Consideration should be given to who will be responsible for "executing" the course of action the grant proposes. We recommend securing a willing matching partner from the university—a group willing to provide funding, volunteer hours, or both. Many schools have service centers or similar community engagement programs that could help identify how a grant might become a meaningful campus-community collaboration.

- Be intentional about timelines and set expectations for completion. Is the grant finished when written? Submitted? Funded? Relatedly, if the grant is funded, who will do the work proposed by the application? We suggest celebrating the short-term accomplishments and acknowledging that even semester-long projects can have long post-semester lifespans (Cella 8-9).

- We recommend that instructors follow the framing of Thomas Deans, who argues that developing the relationship with the community partner is usually "the most critical part" of a community-based writing course ("Sustainability Deferred" 104). Students should reflect periodically on how their relationship with a community partner has formed, its norms, and the ways that interactions with non-student partners are influencing their research, writing, and larger views on an issue.

- It will help to find meaningful ways to discuss writing as service and what community service informed by genuine engagement and community literacy can accomplish. Establishing with students the norms and expectations of the community partnership can help students become rhetorically flexible and more comfortable participating in iterative, ambiguous, non-linear projects.

- Consider partnering with the university's writing center. "Writing center values" (Nichols and Williams 88) often align well with the goals of non-profits and other community organizations. Because writing centers often bypass semester calendars and grade-based assessments, they are uniquely positioned to collaborate with community partners less bound by traditional academic norms.

No class is perfect—the goal of this manuscript has not been to present our teaching and learning as such. Many elements of the course might have worked better with a different approach, and nothing here is intended as incontestable pedagogy. It is perhaps best left to the reader to determine whether the expansive nature of this course is the most fruitful track considering its specific objectives and institutional context. A wide exploration of the ecological and organizational landscape allowed for much free thinking and project diversity. However, if the objective is for a project to gain funding and to be implemented, a narrower focus on fewer projects or a single project is advisable. We hope that our research and reflections have provided a framework that other instructors might adapt to their unique institutional and ecological locale.

The trail winds on, sometimes circling back on itself, sometimes moving purposefully through a clearing. The work of connecting, of providing students with access to communities and places that they can find sustaining dialogue with, continues. Though that work can be ambiguous and unguided, it models for students the potential of community-based collaborations and the agency it affords to participants. A grant thus becomes an invitation to a reinhabitation, a dialogue between a place and its inhabitants, and a path forward toward progress.

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Access as a Participatory Design Principle: Grant Writers Moving from Securing

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Introduction

Grant writing is an exercise in precision rhetoric, tailored audience work that seeks to customize a rigid writing genre (e.g., Miner & Ball, 2019) to align the values and interests of nonprofits, funding agencies, and communities. Grant writing requires researching the best fit, defining problems, articulating thought-out solutions, and attending to community needs. It is storytelling in report-writing form (Clarke, 2009). But how can we help students view grant writing as more than a specialized rhetoric for requesting money? Students in my grant writing courses understand, on the surface, how grant writers act as advocates by securing funding for those who need access to resources. But how can we help students recognize their role as agents of change as grant writers (Jones, 2017), especially in working with social justice issues? This article highlights a form of power or influence grant writers have in facilitating access not only to resources but also access for citizens to be part of designing the spatial narratives that act as historical memory in their communities. I present a teaching case of my recent undergraduate grant writing course to explain this influence.

As a technical communicator, a grant writer's influence is tied to their intermediary role between funding organizations, nonprofits, and communities, which draws attention to how their work is tied up in issues of access and power. Scholarship in technical and professional communication has theorized this intermediary role, illustrating how technical communicators are knowledge workers who coordinate (e.g.,

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Slattery, 2007; Conklin, 2007) and direct content (Dubinksy, 2015), act as boundary spanners (e.g., Peng & Sutanto, 2012) to facilitate (e.g., Read and Swarts, 2015) knowledge creation, and advocate for oppressed groups (Jones, 2016). Building on the role of advocate, scholars have noted how technical communicators can enact socially responsible design (e.g., Rose, 2016). It is Kristen Moore's work specifically, however, that helps me explain what I call the technical communicator's role as an access mechanism. Moore illustrates how technical communicators doing public engagement work are not only facilitators but also participants and designers (Moore, 2017). I argue that helping students see themselves—as grant writers—as being both participants and designers offers them a methodology for helping citizens "participate in the shaping of the worlds in which they act" (Simonsen & Roberston, 2012, p. 4).

This report presents a case where students vocally resisted the class project because they felt the nonprofit's service via mobile app was not accessible. Students expressed concern that the app was not well advertised, was dismissive of non-smartphone users, and was too eclectic. This point of resistance opened the door to discussions of access and then discussions of what critical position grant writers play as access mechanisms in facilitating connections between project designers (usually nonprofits) and citizens to collaborate and co-design. While the students' concerns about access were justified, the broader social positioning of the nonprofit in our community project revealed how "open access" to nonprofit services was more complicated than simply gaining access to resources. The students moved from helping citizens make use of an app to providing underrepresented citizens a platform for rewriting the spatial narratives of Wilmington, NC. Existing historical markers and downtown Wilmington sites currently put forth a racist spatial narrative that misinforms and erases the calculated, state-wide hate crimes of white supremacists that spanned from the post-civil war period well into the twentieth century. In 1898, the democratic party spurred a coup with violent acts that amounted to a massacre of 14 black citizens – 14 documented and possibly as high as 60 (Umfleet, 2006, p. 1) – a major reduction in black voters, and a migration. Once students visited locations around the city that have clearly erased the event from history, they were committed.

For our class, access became a key ethic that helped identify layers of power that grant writers should be aware of in their training. After providing a brief overview of my course, I explain the nonprofit we worked with and provide a short history of the 1898 massacre. I then tell the story of the students' pushback, accompanied by their reflections and site visits. I close by considering the need to distinguish between UCD and PD approaches to grant writing.

Course Structure and Framework for Analyzing Reflections

The Grant Writing Course

My department's grant writing class was developed to appeal to both English and other majors. The class fulfills a professional genres course requirement in the Professional Writing English major track and the department's Certificate in Professional Writing. Outside of the major and certificate, students from other departments often enroll in the course. We see a presence from creative writing, political science, art, art history, psychology, environmental science, and other science departments. Though the course is broadly focused, it favors training in writing grants for nonprofits as many of our students intern or graduate and become employed by nonprofits in the area.

The Project

The nonprofit grant proposal was the last of three major assignments in the semester. The nonprofit project asked students to write LOIs, feasibility reports, a series of drafts, and a final grant we would send to the nonprofit Sites Set for Knowledge. To begin the semester, we discussed the possibility of working with Sites Set for Knowledge to address local representation of the 1898 events. The students expressed interest in this idea, but I left the option open for them to decide whether to work with this nonprofit or to find another.

The grant assignment included both collaborative and individual writing tasks. Each student was required to write and submit a full grant proposal individually, but the class collaborated in researching and assessing the proposal dependencies. Together, students made decisions on key rhetorical strategies, shared notes via OneDrive, and wrote group reports. For example, students wrote feasibility reports in three groups and voted on which funding agency best fit the nonprofit's goals. They also relied on one another through peer reviews as they drafted section by section. Over the summer I have been condensing the twelve grant proposals into one, which will be sent to our nonprofit partner, Sites Set for Knowledge. Completing this grant has highlighted the need for participatory community work, so this project is ongoing.

The Nonprofit

The nonprofit we chose to work with was Sites Set for Knowledge. The organization offers artists, performers, and historians a way to exhibit site-specific digital art through their smartphone application named Popwalk. This app displays digital artists' work—usually video and/or audio—on location, attached to specific and purposeful sites. The app uses geofencing technology, kind of like a Pokémon Go for artists, to display the artwork. Users must "unlock" (see Figure 1) the works by visiting the location. While services like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and other platforms can be viewed in any location, Popwalk restricts access to content based on location. It is this site-specificity that makes such an exhibition exciting. David Lindsay, the nonprofit director and creator of Popwalk, developed the platform because digital artists had no method for displaying truly site-specific artwork. Sites Set for Knowledge has hosted multiple exhibits worldwide, some in coordinated art exhibits with museums and art galleries (e.g., Granary Arts, n.d).

The Popwalk app builds on the long tradition of site-specific artwork, drawing inspiration from artists like Christo or Jeanne-Claude's site-specific environmental installations, such as the Running Fence in 1976. While site-specific work can enhance and praise the sites in which they are installed, the medium has equal potential to disrupt and draw attention to erased histories and silenced voices (Deutsche, 1996; Kwon, 2002), such as Mary Jane Jacob's (1991) *Places with a Past* exhibit at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC in the early 1990s. Jacob's exhibit used the city of Charleston as the backdrop for site-specific artists to draw attention to the city's problematic history with slavery.

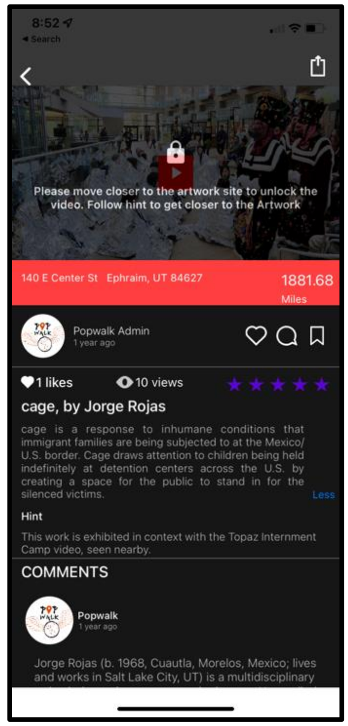

Figure 1: screenshot of Popwalk interface displaying “Cage” exhibit page.

An example of site-specific work on Popwalk is Jorge Rojas’s performance art titled “Cage.” Rojas’s description on Popwalk states, “cage is a response to inhumane conditions that immigrant families are being subjected to at the Mexico/U.S. boarder. Cage draws attention to children being held indefinitely at detention centers across the U.S. by creating a space for the public to stand in for the silenced victims.” Rojas’s video is a montage of video clips from congress and clips from performance art he directed. The video of congress shows presiding congresswoman Karen Handel in 2018 preventing Representative Ted Lieu from playing an audio recording as evidence of U.S. border agents forcing children from their parents at the Mexico/U.S. border. Juxtaposing these clips, Rojas includes selections of a performance he directed of Mexican Chinelos draping Mylar blankets over individuals sitting on the floor of the Salt Lake City public library (Figure 2), invoking a moment of silence for the families at the border. The video in and of itself is powerful and provocative. But Rojas intends viewers to watch the video while standing next to a student housing unit on Snow Colleague’s campus in Ephraim, UT. This building is a repurposed barrack from the Topaz Internment Camp from WWII. Through the combination of his artwork (the video montage) and the site-specificity, Rojas invites viewers to connect racist, local past events and spaces to current day examples, also revealing a very in-the-moment example of how such histories are erased. The site-specificity encourages users to identify with past and present examples of racism and human brutality while at the same time acknowledging that the innocent-looking housing unit in front of them is yet another example, another layer, of such history.

Figure 2: screenshot of Rojas's "Cage" video

The 1898 Massacre

On November 10, 1898, an armed mob of "Red Shirts," soldiers, and armed citizens marched from an armory in downtown Wilmington toward the city's only black owned and operated newspaper, The Daily Record. By the time the mob had reached the press, as many as two thousand had joined the procession as the mass of armed white supremacists worked itself through the neighborhoods. They broke into, ransacked, and burned the building. Then, following a rumor of riots, the mob moved to the Cotton Compress on the other side of the city. At the sight of the mob and having seen smoke in the distance, black workers at the Compress feared and fled to move their families to safety (Umfleet, 2006, p. 132). The armed crowd followed. About ten blocks northeast from the compress, the first shots were fired, white supremacists killing at least three black men. At the sound of shots, white officials approved using two rapid-fire guns to establish order. Loaded in the back of a horse drawn wagon, a team of Wilmington Light Infantry soldiers and citizens crossed the Fourth Street Bridge and fired their machine gun, "killing as many as 25 black men" at 6th and

Brunswick (Umfleet, 2006, p. 144). As the search for and murder of black men continued, many black families fled to the nearby black cemetery and swamps to hide. The number of black people killed that day is contested; Umfleet writes that the "coroner performed fourteen inquests but other evidence indicates that the total number of deaths was as high as sixty" (p. 1). Some died from exposure in the swamps and others from gunshots. In a report, a resident doctor at the Wilmington City Hospital noted that of the two white men and twelve black men that were brought in that day, "'all except the two white men were shot in the back'" (Zachary, 1899, 134, as cited in Umfleet, 2006, p. 174).

The 1898 Massacre was a calculated series of violent outbreaks that led to a coup. Two days before the shooting, white supremacists had violently intimidated black voters and stuffed ballots to ensure county seats were given to Democrats. Afterward, they ran the mayor, chief of police, and other citizens out of town, both white and black. In 1898, Wilmington was the largest city in North Carolina with over 20,000 people. Fifty-six percent of the population was black, which included middle and upper class. Eleven of the city's alderpersons were black men. Of the 26 police officers, ten were black. North Carolina had 126,000 registered black voters; three years later, the number dropped to 6,100. Today the black population of Wilmington is 17% (U.S. Census Bureau). The Wilmington 1898 Massacre was not the first of its kind in the South, but the white supremacists' tactics inspired the murderers in the Atlanta Race Massacre of 1906.

Framework for Reflections

Students vocally resisted working with Sites Set for Knowledge until they learned about the massacre and visited some of the forgotten sites of 1898. To help students think through their change in interests, I had them write three reflections. The first came directly after our class discussion, in which the students pushed back on the project. The second came directly after they went into downtown Wilmington to visit the sites related to the 1898 Massacre. The last acted as their final for the course, inviting them to reflect on grant writers' role in doing locally-based social justice work.

Because the first two reflections related to particular events in the class and the third was a summative reflection, I analyzed the reflections independent of one another. I downloaded and de-identified each reflection. I then did multiple coding passes, starting In Vivo and later adjusting to theme coding. Under my university IRB's approval, I gained students' permission to use their reflections and names.

Analysis and Findings

The Pushback – Nonprofit Project in Upheaval

Students' initial reaction to the nonprofit's service was pushback. They appreciated the goals that Sites Set for Knowledge sought to achieve, but they were concerned that technological barriers of Popwalk might prevent the Wilmington community from accessing—using and thereby benefiting from—the service. As I will explain, though their initial reaction was one of hesitance, their pushback opened the door to discussing issues of access in grant writing.

The Class Discussion

Students expressed concern after having met with our nonprofit client. In a debriefing conversation, we discussed their takeaways and concerns in working with Sites Set for Knowledge. We began by naming the strengths and potentials of Popwalk. The students admired David's passion for supporting a community's social justice work through digital art, and they hoped David could find a way to financially support artists. They also appreciated the idea that the exhibits on the app. could potentially exist indefinitely. After these first few points, the discussion became less moderated by me and turned into a conversation in which students started responding to each other. This change came as the students tried to articulate how Popwalk worked. They wanted to know how a site or location would enhance art and vice versa. They wanted to know how digital media—observed through a mobile device—could actually enhance a person's locational experience. They started asking questions about what type of art would and would not be included. Popwalk's service was, in a word, abstract to them; and unfortunately, there were no exhibits published on Popwalk in the Wilmington area, so students could not view an example. This conversation of questions quickly turned into a list of major concerns and limitations that students were passionate about.

Visibility was one primary issue students cited: if the grant was funded and artists produced works in Wilmington, would citizens know to visit the locations and view the art? Would people know about the Popwalk app? Students wanted assurance that David had a clear plan for broadening and promoting Popwalk's viewership. Only participating artists, a few university art programs, and a handful of art galleries and museums knew of the app, David had explained. Outside of this audience, the application was niche. The students questioned, therefore, why David would not use a platform such as YouTube or TikTok. David, they interpreted, seemed hesitant to adopt mass-media distribution techniques to promote the application. At the suggestion of using a major video-sharing service, the students' conversation became quite passionate, with one student raising their voice, exclaiming, "then why not use YouTube!?"

A second issue was access to technology. Would viewers have the means to download the app and watch digital media on location? At first, a couple of students explained how they appreciated that Popwalk was not a gatekeeping tool. They liked that anyone with a phone could view the art, and that access was not dependent on visiting museums or galleries. But at the mention of "phone," the tone of the conversation switched. They disliked that access to the art was entirely dependent on smartphone technology and most likely data plans. One student questioned how the nonprofit's service could be considered a "public" service if it precluded members of the public without smartphone access. They felt this was a serious socioeconomic oversight and assumption on the part of Sites Set for Knowledge.

The last issue was the eclectic nature of the nonprofit's service. Popwalk seemed to favor "high art," a term students used to describe art created and appreciated by an art-literate community. When David explained that Popwalk published site-specific digital artwork, students did a double take. What is site specific, they asked, and what counts as "digital" artwork? The students questioned whether "digital art" could include a static image, such as a digital painting or a photograph of a painting. They referenced our conversation with David and an example he gave of artists' skill at transforming space, to turn a seemingly random field into something important and memorable. Why, they asked, would this be desirable? Students could not conceptualize a realistic use scenario for the Popwalk app. One student was flabbergasted by the notion that anyone would want to view art in location on a mobile device. Doesn't the "digital" part defeat the purpose of being in the environment, they asked, doesn't holding a mobile device cheapen going into nature?

The class conversation concluded with a stressed and disgruntled feeling. Put succinctly, the conversation ended with three concerns expressed in this basic narrative:

1. First, will people know about Popwalk?
2. Second, if they know about it, will they have the means to use the technology?
3. Third, if they do have the means, will they understand or desire to use the service?

The First Reflection

After this class discussion, I wondered whether we should switch projects. The students had an entire week and a half (due to spring break) to think through the project between our pushback discussion and our next class meeting. When we convened, I asked students to articulate their hesitations and concerns in a reflection. Their responses identified six issues: increasing user base and awareness, understanding the technology, explaining the how-to's and technical concepts, being persuasive, fitting or matching with stakeholder (the granting agencies') goals, and securing funding.

In the reflections, students highlighted the need to increase the app's user base and understand the technology well enough to describe it to others, two points related to their concerns about access stated above. One student pointed out that David seemed to target users already familiar with the app, which seemed to contradict the aim of granting agencies intending their funds benefit as many people as possible. They saw a need to increase the user base, but they also expressed unease about the pressure for writing a grant if they did not understand the nonprofit service. Jenna Tripp highlighted the rhetorical need of matching the nonprofit's goals "to the actual [funding] org. values," and Dylan Sessoms explained, "I don't have the 'high art' mentality that I worry may be needed to write the grant efficiently and effectively." Learning to think like an artist was a concern echoed in many of the students' reflections. They felt that if they did not understand the app, they could not believe in it; such belief, they implied, would be necessary for them to write a successful grant.

After they reflected, we discussed their desire to move forward. If the students did not believe in the cause this nonprofit sought to achieve, I did not want to force them into the collaboration. I pointed out that we had not yet discussed the particular community need this nonprofit's project would address. If we abandoned this project, we would be neglecting the ongoing racist aftereffects of the massacre that occurred in 1898. We agreed that we would learn more about the 1898 Massacre before deciding on whether to work with Sites Set for Knowledge.

The Reversal – Nonprofit Project is Important

Guest Speaker

The day after our pushback conversation, I learned that my colleague Dr. Josh Roilland and his journalism class were studying the 1898 Massacre. To help his students understand the impact of 1898 in the city of Wilmington today, he took his students on a tour of some of the relevant locations. Dr. Roilland graciously took me on this tour, and visiting the sites made it immediately clear how the Popwalk app could draw out erased histories and inform those unaware of 1898. Dr. Roiland then agreed to come speak with my class to help them understand the political context of the event and how it impacted the city today. His visit provided students with a passionate account of the events and examples of what the impacts are today, giving students context for connecting the historical events to the city's current streets. He described his journalism class's work with the Third Person Project, demonstrating how nonprofits today can help our community seek racial healing.

Site Visit

I had two goals for the site visit: one, help students connect history to the spaces in which they live, and two, help them understand how Popwalk functions "in the field." We visited the location of The Daily Record, the intersection where the first shots of the massacre took place, and the city's 1898 Memorial. In between these sites, we followed a path that imitated the sequence of events from November 10, 1898, which I patterned after my colleague Dr. Roiland's tour. Students had the option of not attending because the trip was not a stated expectation of the course. To account for students who may not travel with the class, I created a Google map that detailed the path we would take during the visit. Ten of the twelve students came. Of the two who did not attend, one was sick, and the other had already visited the sites. We caravanned in five cars, and to narrate the trip I hosted a Zoom call in which students who were passengers in the cars joined so they could hear me explain each site. The trip took about an hour of class time.

Figure 3: Photo of the location of The Daily Record, now an empty lot.

We visited the location of The Daily Record first (Figure 3). We parked along the narrow city street and stood, phones in hand, in front of what is now an empty lot. On the left side of the lot is a house with a historical plaque indicating the home's construction date and the names of its historical owners. On the right is the Saint Luke AME Zion Church. In between is an empty lot, the former location of The Daily Record, owned and now used for parking by the church. No sign or plaque marks the burning of the newspaper, and the students are horrified. The location itself is nondescript, contrasted with a photograph of the Red Shirts after having burned The Daily Record. In the photo, the second floor of the building is charred, and a large mob of white men stand with rifles and smiles, posing for the picture. The empty lot juxtaposed with the photograph imparted an odd feeling of silence, and the students described it as surreal and somber. Later, one student described the empty lot as painfully underwhelming. To test Popwalk on location, students watched a placeholder video. They noted some usability problems but also emphasized how such an app could help reframe the experience of standing in front of the lot. From this location, we drove four blocks east to drive by the historical marker of Alex Manly, located on a downtown main street. Figure 4 shows the text of this marker. Other scholars have noted the problematic language on this sign, as did the students.

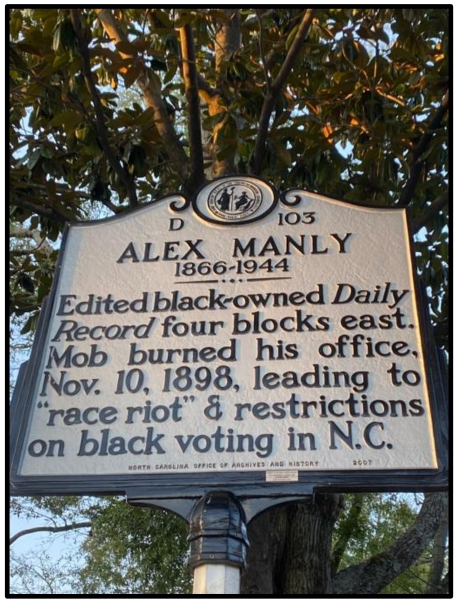

Figure 4. Note the skewed representation of the event as a, in quotation marks, "'race riot.'"

Next, we visited the intersection of 4th St. and Harnett St. (Figure 5), where the shooting began. Like the empty lot of The Daily Record, this location is indistinguishable from other downtown Wilmington streets. On 4th street, there area few restaurants, and on Harnett, a line of apartments and houses. The northeast corner is an empty lot. No sign, markers, or otherwise reference the event. Considering the location's history, the space was also underwhelming. In their reflections, students mentioned evidence of gentrification and an emptiness. They described the location as evidence of purposefully erasing history, evidence of community disdain. They were surprised at the lack of 1898 acknowledgment. Students again used Popwalk to try and envision what it would be like for users to come to this location and view content on the subject.

Figure 5: 4th St. and Harnett St., location of the first shots fired.

The third site we visited was the 1898 Memorial Park (Figure 6), located a block away from 4th and Harnett. The memorial was dedicated in 2008, and it represents the hard-earned success of individuals like Bertha Boykin Todd in raising capital to construct a public space that "influence[s] our understanding of the past" (Mattingly, 2008, p. 135). The artist Ayokunle Odeleye created the sculpture, which features six large paddles in a semicircle to symbolize water, "an important element in the spiritual belief systems in Africa and their descendants who resided in Wilmington during the 1800's" (Todd, 2010, p. 130). The students noted how digital artists may align with Todd and Odeleye to claim "prized public space" (Mattingly, 2008, p. 140) to honor the victims and learn from the events of 1898.

Figure 6: Photo of Ayokunle Odeleye's installation at 1898 Memorial Park.

The Second Reflection

The class period after the site visit, I asked students to reflect on how going to the locations and using Popwalk impacted their understanding of the project. The site visit changed their perceptions of 1) Popwalk, 2) the historical event, and 3) the sites and city locations themselves.

Most notably, students' attitudes towards Popwalk and the grant writing project changed. While students initially resisted working with the app, Faith Kane wrote, "Standing in the physical, now void, locations was a somber experience that increased the importance of using the platform of Popwalk to inform people of the Massacre of 1898." Others, such as Connor, expressed similarly that "visiting the locations…broadened my understanding of how Popwalk can be used." Though many noted some usability concerns with the app, they nevertheless stated, as Connor continued, that in class "we should shift away from talking about…issues with the project itself and focus on what makes Popwalk unique. …I believe the uniqueness and potential of Popwalk has vastly outweighs any issues the app has currently." Students explained how going into downtown helped them understand the purpose of art in addressing a community need. The empty lots and lack of signs prompted the students to suggest that Popwalk needs to focus on awareness of the event.

Visiting the sites also enhanced their understanding of the 1898 Massacre and Coup. Lucy Heuring wrote, "visiting the locations of the 1898 Massacre truly gave me a better understanding of the event itself…; however, being able to see and be at the physical locations where these events occurred aided me in gaining a real understanding at a more personal level." Jenna mentioned how Dr. Roiland's class visit put her "into the mindset of thinking about what happened not as a piece of history, but as a piece of the spaces where I live." Jenna realized that she currently had "a polaroid of my roommates and I on the grounds of the first shots fired in the massacre." When she had taken the picture, she did not know of the massacre. Visiting the location prompted her to write, "what a horrible part of history that I just have sitting in my living room." The historical, yet unmarked, sites "grounded" the event, "intensified" and helped her "appreciate the true gravity" of the historical event. At the close of the site visit, Madeleine Burrus said to me that the combination of the guest speaker and site visit changed her perception history. "I always thought history was what happened. Now I see history is always changing." The site visit helped students connect to 1898 events on a more personal level.

Last, the site visits changed the students' perception of the community spaces in which they live. It made the locations "surreal" and "chilling." Though the empty and nondescript spaces had initially seemed "innocuous," the unmarked and empty lots "just made the space feel almost dead," Connor wrote. A number of the students mentioned the intentionality of the unmarked spaces. Some wondered if the city was trying to "conceal history," and others questioned the "factual" ethos of historical markers. Faith wrote, "visiting the physical locations where horrific events took place in our city intensified the gravity of the event and developed disdain for situational/locational ignorance in my mind." Many expressed their frustration, as Hope Grubbs exemplified, "it feels like very little effort was put into recognizing and honoring the histories of these places." Victoria Anderson added, "even as a local I did not know this history and it goes to show how much information is hidden away within society." The students' second reflection expressed somberness about the spaces in which they live.

Though initially concerned, by the end of the site visit, students were passionately committed to working *with* Sites Set for Knowledge. Going to these sites seemed to change how they not only looked at the app and the project, but it also changed how they thought of the personal spaces in which they live, work, and recreate.

Discussion

Observing my students resist and then embrace our semester project helped me see the benefit of balancing rhetoric and genre instruction with community work in grant writing classes. The site visit's influence on my students' attitudes showed that they are capable, and even want, to understand how their rhetorical skills apply to greater causes. I argue, then, that grant writing classes have the potential to help students see and contribute to participatory community work; as intermediaries, grant writers can advocate for using PD methodology to include citizens in the creation of projects intended to improve their communities. Participatory design (PD) methodology has helped me reflect on and understand the major shift my students exhibited. The methodology also helped us in class discussions explain the grant writer's potential intermediary role in nonprofit community work, and it gave students a better sense of how nonprofit work fits and can be facilitated within the broader aim of community design. I use this last section to explain how I used PD to make sense of the students' shifting interest in the project; then, I end with some suggestions for how this might be applied to other grant writing classes.

Access as A Principle of User-Centered Design

Regardless of the app's UCD limitations, addressing the students' concerns paved the way for them to find value in the project, which helped me articulate a more critical view of access. After the site visit, we, as a class, examined their initial hesitation to Popwalk. First, we realized how our perception of Popwalk's value was influenced by video services like TikTok and YouTube, which make video access ubiquitous; we can view any video in almost any location. Access to content on Popwalk, in contrast, is dependent on physical location. A black artist's content on Popwalk, therefore, would not need to compete with biased—even racist—algorithms (e.g., Bryant, 2020). Second, we recognized that the students' initial focus on Popwalk's limitations overlooked the power of site-based narratives (O'Brien & Sanchez, 2021; O'Brien, 2022) and the potential that locational technologies have for encouraging democratic discourse (Butts & Jones, 2021) and building participatory counternarratives (Frith & Richter, 2021). Popwalk's location-dependent access to content offers affordances for artists to tell stories in ways that ubiquitous-sharing video apps do not. Popwalk, we realized, might provide a way for citizen artists to challenge the dominant 1898 narratives in Wilmington.

Access As a Principle of Participatory Design

Participatory design emerged as the second type of access. While UCD attuned us to whether a user could access art via the app, PD helped us recognize the power citizen artists might access if they could become co-designers of 1898 public memory. We developed a more layered understanding of access, then, by asking ourselves the questions:

- Who had access?
- To what did they have access?

Popwalk helped students understand how grant writers can be agents of change. Not only were students aiming to fund stories that would impact end users, but they were also seeking to fund community members to act as co-designers, via Popwalk exhibits, of the city's historical narratives.

While access is a principle of PD, it is not often listed in heuristics for its implementation. One exception is Michelle Simmons's (2007) community work in helping citizens become decision-makers in environmental justice issues. Access is a principle of power, Simmons notes, as the methodology positions users, citizens, or any non-experts as designers. Traditionally, notes The Denizen Designer Project report (2022), "[i]t is often the lack of access to design materials or formalized design thinking that limits" (n.p.) citizens from becoming decision makers in projects created to help their community. PD methodology, therefore, asserts that citizens and users have expertise that designers do not, explains Simmons. Clay Spinnuzi (2005) somewhat indirectly offers a term for characterizing the role of a technical communicator. He notes the need for having "mechanisms," such as shared language, that allow users to participate in a design project. He does not name these mechanisms "access" mechanisms. However, something like shared language does act as a form of access for users as well as highlighting the important role of access mechanisms in facilitating co-design. I argue that grant writers are uniquely positioned to act as access mechanisms. For one, they act as mechanisms when they facilitate the movement of resources from one to another. But stepping away from a rhetoric-focused approach to grant writing, we should also view grant writers as access mechanisms in their potential for providing community members formal or a validated entry and means of participation in a project.

Providing access is crucial because, as O'Brien (2022) details, not all citizens have the means to change spatial narratives through institutional means, such as historical markers. Historical markers are an informational report, explains O'Brien, that are often racist in their location, selection of content, and representation of historical events. Obrien's argument about Texas historical markers resonates with this cause in Wilmington, NC: "the institutions empowered to approve new markers" and "the exclusionary and ambiguous application process" preclude, erase, and "minimize experiences of BIPOC people" (p. 121). In North Carolina, for example, historical markers must be placed on numbered county or state roads. This explains why the historical marker for Alex Manly (Figure 4) is four blocks away from the location his press was burned. While the current location of the marker is installed where more people will see it (a main street downtown), visiting the actual location is void of any historical reference. Popwalk, the students noted, is positioned to offer artists a way to develop a counternarrative in this particular location.

Grant writers are in a unique position. They must align the values, mission, goals, and needs of multiple parties—namely, the nonprofit organization, the funding agency, and the community—into one document in order to write a persuasive grant. Grant writers, therefore, often go into their communities to observe and learn how intended projects may fit citizens' needs. As such, they can be in positions to identify who needs to be at the design table and what kind of expertise they can bring to design a project. Likewise, as contracted or hired by the nonprofit, the grant writer is positioned to understand the traditional designer intents for community projects. This intermediary role offers grant writers the opportunity to influence community projects. Not only can they ensure communities receive the funds they need, but they may also be positioned to empower users and citizens as designers, giving "primacy to human action and people's rights to participate in the shaping of the worlds in which they act" (Simonsen & Roberston, 2012, p. 4). Considering PD, then, instructors can encourage students to ask these kinds of questions when working with nonprofits: what is being designed? Who has access, and who does not, to be designers? How can we include those currently excluded as participants, not simply recipients of grant funds?

The Third Reflection

While the students did not explicitly reflect on their understanding and application of PD, their third reflection did ask them to think about the role of a grant writer. Their comments fit into two categories, comments that indicated a role of being rhetorical experts and genre masters and comments that indicated a sense of community building and PD. Rhetorical expertise comments identified the grant writer's role in securing funding, writing eloquently, researching, directing funds, and ensuring alignment of goals. Community-centered comments included building genuine connections, bringing people together, working towards a better community, providing a voice, advocating, having genuine interest in the project, and serving as ambassadors of communities they serve. Two students specifically noted a shift in thinking about grant writing as rhetorical activity to a community activity. Hope explained that grant writers "don't just show up with a check, they involve themselves in the community to provide the best support possible." And Connor wrote, "Initially I would have said that [a grant writer's] role is to create a rhetorical narrative framed around a grantor's needs in order to gain funding for their agency. However, I would now… say that a grant writer is also an ambassador for the needs of their community."

Conclusion

While grant writing is a rhetorical activity, grant writing classes should seek ways to help students see their work as extending beyond persuasive writing and genre mastery. This article reports a case in which my semester began with an unbalanced focus on rhetoric. Due to students' pushback in working with our nonprofit, the semester shifted towards helping students understand their role in facilitating participatory community work. After pushing back, students visited downtown Wilmington, NC sites to consider how the nonprofit might help address the skewed and erased history of the 1898 Massacre currently provided through historical markers and empty lots. The site visit offered students a way to see that, in terms of access, grant writers can ensure that concerns of usability and UCD are addressed while also finding ways for community members to enter the design of community projects created by nonprofits. Instructors should help students see the difference between the types of access UCD and PD.

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Online Access: Grant Writing as Reciprocal Service-Learning at a Hispanic-Serving Institution

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Introduction

In Spring 2022, I had the opportunity to teach our upper-division, undergraduate grant writing course. I taught at our public, four-year university for ten years and, though I had never taught a grant writing course before, had been a Ph.D. student in Texas Tech University's Technical Communication & Rhetoric Program for two years. I was enrolled in a grant writing course myself that same semester.

The course I agreed to teach didn't have a history of filling and was vulnerable to cancellation for several reasons. Though we have a technical writing certificate that includes the grant writing course, the course proposal was outdated, does not fulfill a general education requirement, and is not part of a major. However, we had some enrollment success moving the course online. I wanted to offer students a valuable learning experience and find a way to help recruit students to the course. As a non-tenure track faculty member, I put myself in a vulnerable position by accepting a course that historically got canceled, but I was afforded some security through my three-year contract. So, I began to think about ways I could fill the course. My mind went directly to service-learning. I've taught First-Year Composition service-learning in the past, so I had some experience and realized if I was asking students to write grants, why not be writing grants for our local non-profits?

Grant writing courses only occasionally leverage service-learning as part of their pedagogy. However, service-learning is one way to increase access to experiential learning, strengthen career readiness, and deepen students' connections to the local

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community. Especially for marginalized students who may not be able to afford to take more "traditional" internship positions, service-learning can be an excellent opportunity to gain experience.

Of course, Writing Studies, in general, has a rich history of using service-learning. For example, Beaman & Jackson (2019) offered best practices and challenges for creating service-learning courses at community colleges. They found, through scholarship and analysis of their own community college's service-learning courses, that "service-learning programs attest to the transformational power of these programs when students, especially at-risk or underprepared students, recognize their own agency to make change through action in their communities" (Beaman & Jackson, 2019, p. 83).

Current research supports teaching grant writing and other technical communication courses as service-learning courses (Jones, 2017; Bentley & Swan, 2018); some even specifically note the strength of service-learning technical communication courses in online spaces (Soria &Weiner, 2013; Bourelle, 2014; Nielsen, 2016). In particular, "through service-learning activities, students in online technical communication classrooms develop professional skills, contribute to the classroom and community, and take greater responsibility for their education" (Nielsen, 2016, p. 250). This scholarship highlights a precedent for teaching service-learning courses as online courses and service-learning in a fully online modality can be successful.

Scholar-teachers have also addressed how service-learning grant writing courses meet social justice needs and goals (Presley, 2020). However, research also suggests service-learning is sometimes run on a deficit model for first-generation students because instructors approach these students "as a homogeneous, deficient group and reduce learning to an input-environment-output (I-E-O) model" (Taylor et al., 2019, p. 350). Taylor et al. (2019) argue for more acknowledgment that "learning is a process of becoming, a process in which individual learning is always embodied, social, and contextualized" (p. 359).

With this research in mind, I took the existing course and redesigned it into a fully online and asynchronous, service-learning, grant writing course for the first time.

Service-Learning at California State University Channel Islands

Though the term "service-learning" appeared in Sigmon's 1979 publication, "Service-Learning: Three Principles,"to describe students who received internship credits for participating in community-based projects and which offered a foundational view of service-learning pedagogy, the term "service-learning" has expanded to include many definitions and pedagogical practices. These practices range across schools and contexts and vary widely even between courses on the same campus. Experiential learning and community-based research have many crossovers; in some instances, these approaches are combined (Preiser-Houy & Navarrete, 2006; Goss et al., 2010; Nandan, 2010; Dorner et al., 2017). Some scholars even remove the criteria of college credit, citing how service-learning is "a method through which undergraduates work alongside faculty mentors on projects collaboratively designed with community partners, includes active reflection, and enhances the content and experience of their programs of study" (Anderson et al., 2019). Though service-learning has diverse contexts, applications, and even definitions, a resounding agreement is that service-learning achieves course objectives through both engaging with a community and reflecting on that experience. In Writing Studies, I use Baca's (2012) definition that the goal of service-learning is "to apply academic objectives in specific community settings by using critical, reflective thinking while creating a sense of civic responsibility" (xi).

California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) is the 23rd campus in the California State University system (CSU), the nation's largest and most diverse public university system, educating 477,000 students a year across the 800 miles from Humboldt to San Diego (California State University, 2022). Students at CSU represent 95% from California and 87% first-year students come from California public high schools (California State University, 2022)

Established in 2002, CSUCI is the newest CSU and has about 7,000 students. Students who identify as Underrepresented Minority (URM) make up 59% of the student population, and 62% identify as first-generation college students (CSU Success Dashboard) and, because of their location in that identity, bring strengths to the classroom. In line with Jean (2017), I want to challenge the use of labeling these students "at-risk" or "underprepared." Jean (2017) argues that "labeling a segment of the student population as 'at-risk' because they have experienced historical poverty and vicious discrimination, however, is problematic" (p. 28) and underpins how these students "benefit tremendously from campus housing, experiential learning, club involvement, and overall engagement" (p. 28). Not only do students benefit from service-learning, but they also bring valuable assets to the service-learning experience.

Community engagement is a CSUCI mission pillar, and CSUCI has an active Center for Community Engagement as part of the CSU system-wide community engagement initiative. The CCE (2022) shares "each year over 1,800 CSUCI students enroll in a service-learning course providing on average over 40,000 hours of service to the community" (Center for Community Engagement).

Using an asset-based model, I created a partnership with our Center for Community Engagement (CCE) to turn our existing grant writing course into a service-learning course where students chose a CCE community partner and worked with them to develop a full grant packet. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in a predominantly Latinx community, this course is a useful case study for how students worked with local community partners on grants to help support the specific needs of this community, relying, in part, on their own lived experiences and expertise. Students became a bridge between the community and the university (Jones, 2017).

This article will explore the access granted by a fully online and asynchronous course for students who juggle jobs, school, and family and how the course enabled these students to work with community partners on real grants addressing real community needs. These connections fostered reciprocity by giving students valuable grant writing experience while providing a free grant writing service for local non-profits with already stretched funds. Grants ranged from working with land conservation, to resources for immigrant families, to a local LGBTQIA+ youth foundation. This article, that involves using student reflections, community partner surveys, and pedagogical analysis will argue how the course's fully online nature helped increase students' access to participate and engage in service-learning by writing grants for their community partner clients.

Asset-Based Model

When I introduce my university's context, I want to make clear that my students' material and social realities, their lived experiences (Collins, 2000), and their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) can all be used as assets in their education. Bourdieu (1986/2011) used cultural capital to help explain how power was maintained, transferred, and upheld in society through three sources: objective (goods, art, literature), institutional (education), and embodied (language, gestures). Inherent in Bourdieu's cultural capital is a deficit model many have now challenged. For example, Yosso (2005) made a move away from deficit interpretations and instead took cultural capital further through community cultural wealth, "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and used by communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (p. 15). Yosso's specific focus on Latinx students and communities is especially relevant to my students' experiences at an HSI. Yosso outlines six forms of capital in her work: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, social capital, navigational capital, familial capital, and resistant capital; all braided together to form community cultural wealth. Many other scholars have used a community cultural wealth framework to inform their own pedagogy and practice (Huber, 2009; O'Shea, 2016; Fernández et al., 2020).

Inspired by Morrison's (2017) work on asset-based pedagogy in library science, I wanted to make sure to not only acknowledge the assets my students bring into the classroom but to give them the space to leverage their strengths and skills in the academic work they do. Morrison (2017) deftly argues how "the traditional academic space invalidates the knowledge of cultural wealth my students bring to the classroom" (p. 181). However, I set up my course to try and work against this invalidation. Through their work with community partners, one goal of the course was to validate and have students see how they could wield their cultural wealth to impact their own education and the local community.

An asset-based model applies not only to students but to community partners as well. For example, other scholars have examined how communities, not just students, use community cultural wealth (Fernández et al., 2020). Therefore, asset-based service-learning requires that we work with community partners rather than view community partners as needing "help" or "rescue."

One goal of this service-learning grant writing course was to teach students and give them the opportunity to learn how to work in coalition with their community partners. Before students began researching funding opportunities or anything else, they met with their community partners so community partners could share their goals, needs, and experiences with students. The community partners are the experts -- they know their organization and its projects, and most have had past success securing grants. Students then used their own assets to research funding and write a grant packet the community partner could use as a launching point for applying for funding. Many grant writing instructors have their students call their community partners "clients" to acknowledge community partner expertise. However, I wanted the language to match the CCE language used in their databases and on the website, something that students interacted with, which is why we referred to them as community partners. Also, "community partner" centers on the idea that we are working in partnership with the organization, not on behalf, or in place, of them.

The (New) Course

Our grant writing course is capped at 22, and I had 15 students enroll. By the end of the semester, one student had dropped, and one student withdrew, so I ended up with 13 students engaged in the course. The students must be in upper division standing at the time of enrollment, so the course consisted of a mix of transfer and non-transfer juniors and seniors.

At our university, students must register with the CCE if they are involved in a service-learning course. Although the course is listed in the catalog as a service-learning course, many students were unaware the course involved service-learning. Though this could be a major issue in a traditional service-learning course, one affordance of the course's asynchronous online modality, and the project's writing intensive nature, was that students did not have to go physically to a location for their service-learning project and could conduct the whole project asynchronously from home. Waldner et al. (2012) specifically highlight access as a benefit of online service-learning, citing how online service-learning "can engage populations that otherwise may be unable to participate in a service-learning activity" (p. 126) such as students with disabilities or students who live in remote locations.

Much in line with the demographics of the university (the overall campus is 66% women), the class was all women except for one man. Most students in the course were also English majors. In our English Program, 52% of our students are Hispanic/Latino, 34% are white, 10% are Black/African American, and 3% are Asian. My class demographics matched the English Program as a whole.

These statistics are only one small aspect of my course and students' positionalities. Demographics are important to understand the context of our university and the class but do not tell the whole story. The "incompleteness" of this demographic data is why I found it so important to insert my students' voices into this piece and rely on their reflections and their own words, to share their experiences, successes, and challenges with this course.

It is also important to discuss my positionality in this course. I am a full-time lecturer, non-tenure track, faculty member, and I have been teaching at my institution for ten years. I'm a white, queer woman, mother, and current Ph.D. student. Though I do not share the majority of my students' racial or ethnic cultures, I do come from a working-class background where my mom and stepdad worked as servers at a restaurant for most of my childhood and teen years. Like many of my students, I have a blended family and am the first person in my immediate family to pursue a graduate degree. Like my students' contextual information, I write about these various positions not as a deficit but with the need to acknowledge the various contexts we inhabit when we prepare and teach a service-learning course. As discussed often in service-learning, preparing and teaching a service-learning course requires extra labor (Ziegert & McGoldrick, 2008; George-Paschal et al., 2019; Yusof et al., 2020), so it's important to know that I am NTT faculty (like many faculty who teach service-learning courses at my university) because NTT faculty have already high teaching loads (I teach a five-five load). One consistent tension in service-learning is the amount of extra work teaching a course like this requires.

However, the extra work is worth it, including the time it took to change modality to an asynchronous online course.

Grant Writing and Access

Since 2012, our grant writing course has reached sufficient enrollment numbers only when offered online, so I knew that offering the course asynchronously would provide the best chance of attracting enough students to run the course. As many scholars have pointed out, access is not just about "getting in." Particularly for a HSI like CSUCI, "access entails a more complicated process of taking up residence as a writer and rhetor on a college campus" (Lloyd, 2019, p. 55). One way students who may have geographical constraints can still "take up residence" is through online courses.

In student surveys and reflections, one theme was how the online environment enabled them to participate in the course. One student used the term "accommodating," and one specifically noted how "online courses are always a better option for me; the stress and time required for meeting in person takes away from my ability to learn/focus/enjoy the material." I knew conducting a service-learning course fully online would present unique challenges, but I also know good pedagogy is good pedagogy, no matter the modality.

At the beginning of all my classes, online or not, I have students fill out a "Learner Info Survey" to learn more about them, and so students have the chance to share, privately, any information they'd like me to know. One question specifically asks how students are feeling about being in an online class. The students overwhelmingly responded that the online modality offered them access to courses they would not be able to take otherwise. Students "appreciate the convenience and flexibility of online class" and were "excited," "appreciative," and "comfortable."

From the surveys collected in the course, about half of the students worked full-time and/or cared for family members while going to school, which also affected their ability to attend class in person and on campus. I had many Zoom meetings with students while they were in their homes with family members walking through their blurred backgrounds, from their cars, from the library in-between classes they had to take in person, and even from break rooms. Students were able to access the course itself, my office hours, and set up appointments with me on their time and schedules. After a few discussions with various students worried about emailing their community partners late at night after getting off work, we did a quick mini-lesson on how to schedule emails in Outlook so students could send emails during their community partner's "work day." This small affordance in Outlook was something I had taken for granted, but students were excited to learn, and it use as part of the course.

Of course, access has limitations. To participate in the course, students need access to the internet and a laptop, computer, or mobile device. Our university offers free Wi-Fi, and students can check out laptops or use the computers in the library to conduct their coursework if they do not have access to the internet or a device at home. Access to the course was also limited to students in upper division standing. However, a strength of this limitation is many students had already taken a mix of online and face-to-face courses in their first two years of college. As their responses to the learner info survey showed, many of them felt prepared and even excited about the online nature of the course.

Access to these courses, however, is only the beginning. Students gaining "entrance" alone is not enough. Instead, they need support, resources, and well-designed, equitable, and asset-based online courses to turn that access into more.

Grant Writing and Lived Experiences

In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000), Collins discusses the importance of lived experience to knowledge construction and wisdom. She explains how lived experience is a criterion for meaning in a Black feminist epistemology as "those individuals who have lived through the experiences about which they claim to be experts are more believable and credible than those who have merely read or thought about such experiences" (p. 257). Our students, too, can use their lived experiences as expertise, especially if our courses are set up in a way that gives students room to invoke, use, and rely on their lived experiences.

For our first grant, we worked with a local non-profit focused on animal rescue and I located a funder and grant opportunity. I had all the students write to this same funding source and work on the same grant, but individually. This allowed students, many without grant writing experience, to get practice writing grants. I then took the most substantial aspects of multiple grant proposals and submitted them as one packet to our community partner.

However, for the second grant, students oversaw everything. The asset-based model influenced my decision to have students choose their own community partners for the second project and second half of the course. Working with the CCE, I had a list of community partners interested in grant writing services. Before the semester began, the CCE facilitated Zoom sessions with these community partners, where I discussed the class and the project and provided an opportunity to answer questions. So, when the second project began, students chose a community partner from the list or, as in one case, chose a community partner not on the curated list. I created the list on a simple Google Sheets page with the name of the organization, the contact email, a link to their "profile" on our CCE database, and a short description of the organization. Setting up the second project this way gave students the opportunity to work on a project where they could put their own lived experiences into practice.

Many of our local organizations are specifically run by and offer services for our local Latinx residents, including migrant farmworkers. The ability to work with community partners with shared backgrounds was important to my students. For example, while chatting during office hours with one student, she shared how her parents are migrant farmworkers. In her discussion board post about the community partner she chose, she shared how "being a part of that community myself it is really important to me to do something to help in a bigger way than I've been doing…it's because of my immigrant parents that I am here today and like so many other immigrant parents they did whatever they could to give their child a better future." Through the course, she was able to partner with a local non-profit that works on voter registration and hosts citizenship fairs for our migrant farmworker population. She had the opportunity to work closely with a community she cares about and for a cause she is passionate about. So, not only did she learn valuable grant writing skills, but she was also able to leverage her own identity and multilingual abilities to work with a local organization.

Since much of grant writing is about the research it takes to find funders and suitable grant possibilities, students leveraged their own knowledge about the community, their community partners' past experiences, and what they learned in class in order to search for grants. For example, I attended a Zoom meeting with the student mentioned above and their community partner, where they discussed possible projects to find funding. At this meeting, the community partner commented on his gratitude for the student understanding the community. The student was able to make a deeper connection with the community partner due to her own life experiences. Later in the meeting, the community partner shared information with her about funders they had successfully received funding from before, giving the student a place to start her research on funders.

Allowing students to choose their community partners based on their own interests and/or experiences meant students entered the project with knowledge and more confidence. For example, one student explained how they "used my previous volunteer work to help shape how I interacted with community partners." While many students were nervous about working with a community partner, this student relied on their past experiences to help them work with their community partner. They drew on aspects of communication they learned in other contexts to situate themselves in the service-learning project.

Another student shared how "my nonprofit helps students who feel marginalized… my past experiences with interpersonal challenges helped me articulate why a supportive service is important to vulnerable communities." This student used their own experiences to shape the rhetorical appeals in their grant work and convincingly share how supportive services are an important part of serving the people their community partner works with daily. This student relied on their expertise as a person who used similar services to the ones the non-profit she chose to work with provides.

In other words, students weren't doing this alone. For each grant, students wrote a draft they turned in to conduct peer review, worked on revisions, then turned in a draft for instructor feedback, and worked on revisions again. Many students also came to office hours or asked for additional feedback on their revisions before submitting the grant packet to me and the community partner at the end of the semester. They had ample practice, examples, and learning activities throughout the course to help prepare them for the actual writing.

The community partners also relied on their own lived experiences to participate in a successful project. One community partner, when asked about their experience in the online format, commented, "2 years of the pandemic make that aspect familiar enough." This community partner relied on what they had learned during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in order to have a successful partnership with a student.

As Gonzales (2019) found in her own case study in teaching technical communication at an HSI, specifically on the US/Mexico border, "we continue learning from the expertise of students and professionals who embody border(ed) identities and experiences, as their orientations to technical communication work echo the multiplicity and dynamism that we strive for" (p. 186). Our students' abilities to bridge their lived experiences and their expertise with new writing skills they are learning and connect with community partners is one example of how we can make access be more than just entering our classrooms, virtual or otherwise.

Reciprocal service-learning

One goal I had for the course was to make sure that the work we did with community partners was reciprocal; that both the students *and* the community partners benefited from the relationship achieved through the course. Part of the strength of service-learning is how "students can give back to the community as they learn about their community, reinforcing the reciprocal dynamics possible" (Remley, 2011, p. 127).

Students gained valuable experience writing grants, and community partners received a grant packet at the end of the semester with information about possible future funders. Students leveraged their grant writing experience on their resumes, in job interviews, and in other community work they participated in. One student wrote a grant for the non-profit they were going to start working with after graduation. Not only did their future employer get a grant packet for equipment essential to the research they conduct, but the student got grant writing experience and was able to show their future boss and colleagues a unique skill they possessed in being able to find funding, write a grant in response to that request for proposals, and find possible future funding opportunities.

Reciprocal service-learning is vital for many reasons. One reason is the possible mobility afforded by this type of learning, especially in regard to civic engagement (Scott, 2004). For example, Benenson (2017) examined how civic engagement is connected to economic mobility, particularly for low-income students, and found that "study participants were often able to mobilize and deploy the social and human capital assets that they accumulated through civic engagement into employment and education opportunities" (p. 998). I'm excited to see how my students' new skills in writing grants will transfer into other areas of their lives.

Community partners recognized the course's reciprocal nature. One community partner wrote that they agreed to participate with the class because "I believed it would be of benefit to both our organization and the student," explicitly stating how the project benefits both the community partner and student. This community referred to themselves as "responsible for grants" in their organization and how the student's efforts would support them in that role. Another community partner commented on how they are "in need of all the help I can get, and if that need can provide someone meaningful engagement in the professional world, mores the better." Here, the community partner acknowledges they see the student's work as a service, but they also recognize how this project could help with the student's own professionalization as well.

Community partners also pointed out the sustainable nature of the writing students did on the grant. One community partner explained how "we have a nice finished product that we can take and adapt as needed for future applications as well." Though at first it may seem that the grant packet is a "one and done" deal, the grant packet can form the basis or early writing for future applications. Even if funding does not occur from that specific attempt, the community partner still has the packet and can "take and adapt as needed" into future projects. Since this class is offered every spring, the packets could also be used as a launchpad for the next course if the community partner wants to work on the project again.

The goal of sustainability is also why I had students include possible future funders in their grant packets. Students needed to share the research they did on possible funders with their community partners so that the community partner could have a place to start when looking for other funding. As anyone who has worked on grants knows, sometimes the most challenging and time-consuming part is researching funders. Students had already put in that work and then shared it with the community partners to help sustain their work.

Unintended Outcomes

Multiple Literacies

When I started planning the course, I did what most of us do at first: I pulled up my learning objectives. As a full-time lecturer since 2011, I was not the person who wrote the learning objectives, and it was my first time teaching the course, so I needed to familiarize myself with the goals:

- Understand the fundamental components of a grant proposal, such as the abstract or summary, background and significance, specific aims/goals and objectives, project design and methods, sustainability, assessment, broader impacts, dissemination, budget, budget justification, and cover letter as well as the overall grant submission process.
- Locate available funding opportunities.
- Identify and practice the skills needed to prepare competitive grant proposals.
- Submit a completed grant proposal to an agency of your choice. (Jordan, 2022).

I knew from the beginning that the whole goal was for students to learn about what grants are, how to find funding, and how to complete a grant. So, under these course objectives, teaching this course as a service-learning course seemed like the best possible way to achieve these goals.

However, students not only learned grant proposal components but gained other literacy skills. One student reflected on how the service-learning aspect of the course was a "safe way to learn how to manage a professional relationship…thinking of how to approach the conversation and direction of the interaction." This student points to the sorts of communication and interpersonal skills that are required for working alongside a community partner. As Deans (2012) argues, "relationship-building may not seem like a mode of literacy because it is not explicitly textual, but it is in fact a literacy because successfully negotiating new relationships with local citizens and community partners proves essential to producing both the learning and the texts demanded in service-learning contexts" (p. 229). Students not only learned this relationship-building and communication but did so in an online environment through emails, Zoom calls, phone calls, and even text messages in some instances.

Community Partner Response

One outcome of the course I did not expect was the response from community partners. Though they made it clear from our initial Zoom meetings that grant writing was a much-needed service and they were grateful the course offered them a free grant writing service through our students, I still hadn't expected the outpouring of support my students and I received from our community partners.

Another community partner with more experienced staff even noted how working with students through the class "helps to see a different perspective in how to write a grant. Doing so many grants, the application process can become rote, so having a fresh voice helps." The community partners, as well, worked from an asset-based model. Community partners, many with more grant writing experience than the students, still recognized how having a different perspective, or "fresh voice," helped them in their funding endeavors.

When I designed the course, I mostly thought about the end product: the grant packet. However, community partners shared other positive effects of working with students on the project. For example, one community partner shared how working on the grant "got our agency organized about our budgetary needs." Students discussed possible projects with their community partners before searching for funding opportunities and writing the grant proposal. We had many class discussions on how a strong project helps make a strong proposal. Asking the community partner to highlight some of their problems or needs and then projects that address those needs and estimates for a budget meant the community partner needed to have organized information for the student.

Another community partner pointed out how they not only submitted a grant but saved time. They shared how "we submitted a full grant application with 1/10 the amount of time input from me - that is a huge savings that allowed us to work on other pressing projects." Time is incredibly important to non-profit organizations. Having a student work on a grant project meant even the community partners gained more access: access to other important projects, access to more support, and access to more time.

At the end of the year, I attended the CCE Celebration of Service, where one of the community partners we worked with was giving the keynote address that day. They pulled me aside to let me know they had learned so much through the students in my class about grant writing. Another community partner noted on their survey that participating in this project "helped one of our staff members learn more about grant writing as she moves into a new role." When I first constructed the course, I didn't think about the possible ripple effects my students and their work would have across the non-profit organization itself. To see the effects of my students sharing what they learned with their contact at the non-profit, who then shared it with their staff members, was a wonderful outcome I had not anticipated.

Social Connections

Though social presence (Rourke et al, 1999; Garrison et al., 2000; Lowenthal & Snelson, 2017) is an essential aspect of online courses and something I strive for whenever I teach online, I was still surprised by how often students brought up their social connections with each other, the community partner, or me as their professor in their reflections and survey responses. Though the possible loss of social connection is many people's arguments against online learning, the students specifically made a point to bring up their social connections. When asked about the most valuable part of the class, one student responded, "All of it! Professor Jordan, Course materials and organization, community partners, classmates, class materials and research and my own introspection." This student highlights not only social connection but also the affordances an online class offers through materials and organization and their ability to reflect on their own learning.

Students were also open about how they specifically learned from each other. In a reflection, one student commented on how the "discussion board posts also helped because it allowed me to see how my peers felt, what was going well for them, and what parts they were nervous about. Seeing that I wasn't alone in how I felt was relieving but it was also awesome to take some of the strategies that helped them and apply it to my own grant draft." Here, the student shares how they were emotionally affected by reading their peers' responses and how they took the advice and strategies their peers offered and applied it to their own work.

Another student specifically spoke to the strength of writing to the same funder and for the same grant as the whole class at the beginning of the semester. They wrote, "I also found that it was helpful to write the same proposal as my peers, that way we were able to share insight with each other and sort of figure out the process together." The course's online format gave students access to each other virtually, and as these students attest, they maintained social connections that aided their learning and their experience.

Challenges

We can only discuss service-learning courses if we discuss the labor involved in these courses for all parties involved - the faculty, any staff associated with the project, students, and community partners. Quite honestly, teaching this course felt like teaching three courses in one.

One difficulty that arose during the semester, particularly on our campus but possibly at others, was an email domain issue that led to two weeks where emails from students and me were not reaching community partners or landed in a community partner's spam folders. What looked like a lack of communication, causing a flurry of concerned emails, was an unforeseen technical issue. Even though everyone was reconnected and the email issue was resolved, that two-week period created extra work for me as the instructor and moved the students' timelines on their grants. The email domain issue that caused issues for our class was also a major issue for the staff at the CCE. My contact point had to make numerous calls, including to the community partners for my own course, to inform community partners about the situation.

Some community partners were also confused about the project. Though we had meetings before to the semester, I need to be more explicit and clearer with the community partners about what is and is not the students' responsibility. A few community partners found grant opportunities with a quick turnaround timeline, and those students became stressed with that timeline. I need to make it clear that students still work within the framework of the course; students are not "unofficial staff" during the semester.

Also, students may not complete their work for the course which impacts their community partner. In my own class, as I saw the work start to dwindle, I wondered, what is my responsibility to the community partner? Luckily, this only happened with one student. Howeverit put both the community partner and I in a somewhat awkward position as we tried to negotiate my responsibility as the instructor. Though this will vary by institutional context, how I handled the situation by sending the community partner any work I had received on the grant, and then I put the community partner's organization on a "priority list" for the next time I teach the course. This arrangement was, by no means, a perfect solution to this problem, and I am still working out how I want to handle a missing final grant packet in the future.

Lastly, we must acknowledge that grant writing, with its specific genre conventions, rules, and professionalization, can be a space for white language supremacy. In his 2019 Chair's Address at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Inoue explains how white language supremacy is insidious, how "many of us can acknowledge White language supremacy as the status quo in our classrooms and society, but not see all of it, and so perpetuate it" (p. 357). The following year, Young extended white language supremacy to "include a critique and effort to defeat white rhetorical and communication supremacy" (2021, p. 627). Recognizing my own complicity as a white teacher in this space, I made choices in this grant-writing course to use a grading contract, to give students choice and agency in choosing their community partners and writing to projects important to them or closely related to their own experiences, and left room for reflection and listening throughout the course. Though these actions aren't a solution, they are a step in the right direction. Acknowledging how white language supremacy is enacted in our classrooms opens up areas for further research and interrogation of our pedagogy and practices.

Conclusion

Though labor-intensive, the online nature of this course offered students access to service-learning and using their grant writing skills. Students learned from and with each other, their community partners, and the course objectives and material. Creating service-learning courses in an online environment is vital for students who need the flexibility of an online course but could still benefit from service-learning experiences. This course illustrates that it's not enough to just give students access to a course through an online modality. Though that is an essential first step, the access granted to these students was achieved through a mix of the online modality, social support, and a reciprocal service-learning project that allowed students to use their cultural capital and lived experiences to create meaningful relationships and a sustainable final project. Access does not end with entry. Entry is just the beginning.

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Signaling Access in Grant Writing Pedagogy and Practice

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Introduction

Grant writing ideally opens doors to opportunities for communities in terms of addressing unmet needs. Grant writing courses facilitate those opportunities by equipping students to negotiate varied and complex research strategies and texts to develop, submit, and implement grant proposals. Yet an everchanging "web of conditions" (Scott et al. 14) can both enable and limit access to grant opportunities — for instance, the effects of diminished funding opportunities, not only for potential grantees but also for peer reviewers facing more applications for fewer resources (Gurwitz et al. 1), social inequalities in grant funding (Odedina and Stern; Le; Martinez), and user design issues in online grant proposal templates (Gallagher et al.).

These possibilities and constraints certainly involve students beginning grant writing courses with varied expertise. Alongside barriers previously mentioned, locating funding among governmental and foundational sources is often a disconnected process – and efforts to compile them for easier access are often hidden behind the paywalls of organizations like Candid and GrantWatch. The scope of government requests for proposals (RFPs), especially federal, can be too extensive to navigate in a single grant writing class, which might be the only formal training in grant writing students receive. On the other hand, some RFP requirements are scant, surfacing potential inequalities in class requirements to be negotiated. Of particular concern is accessing RFPs, which may involve such constraints as existing community partnerships, proof of 501c3 status, and previous funding history.

In this article, I utilize institutional logics and signal theory frameworks to locate shifting variances and possibilities for intervention concerning funding access

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among grant writing students, practitioners, and instructors. These frameworks are first used to analyze initial experiences as a grant writing student and professional to locate emergences and barriers of access, especially stemming from those of resource availability, expertise, legitimacy, and quality in these experiences before doing so in the teaching of an undergraduate grant writing course at a minority-serving institution (MSI) – adding to the dearth of studies focused on undergraduate grant writing students (Wark 1). These students, many continuing their education after years, or even decades, arrive with attuned awareness of their communities' needs and how to address them. Yet they also (unevenly) experience barriers to accessing funding source information, particularly RFPs. Subsequently, they mainly consult local/regional sources and confront, in turn, limited access to current and/or past RFPs in our large, competitive metropolitan area of the Southeast U.S. These access issues are compounded by those involving variabilities in individual grant writing genre knowledge and other writing skills.

Next, I discuss past and future strategies for mitigating these constraints in my classes, keeping in consideration individual student needs. These strategies draw from existing research, including: (1) drafting the most common grant sections (e.g., Need Statement, Program Plan, Budget, and Evaluation) with attention to signaling legitimacy and quality, (2) utilizing examples from other RFPs and proposals to increase RFP access, (3) taking an entrepreneurial approach to funding, and (4) cultivating multi-actor and institutional relationships for class visits and projects. I conclude that use of institutional logic and signaling theory frameworks facilitates opportunities to intervene in funding logics, particularly for those who need these interventions most.

Institutional Logics and Signaling

To locate how access can emerge for grant writing and funding, I utilize a combination of two frameworks most often used in management and social sciences research: institutional logics and signaling theory.

Patricia H. Thornton and William Ocasio draw from foundational works to define institutional logics as "the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" ("Institutional Logics and the Historical Contingency…" 804; e.g., Friedland and Alford 243; Haveman and Rao 1607). Institutional logics are vital for "analyzing the interrelationships among institutions, individuals, and organizations in social systems" (Thornton et al. 2). The framework aims to deviate from earlier structuralist (e.g., Giddens), and specifically, neoinstutionalist (e.g., Meyer and Rowan; DiMaggio and Powell) theories by locating enactments of partial autonomy (or embedded agency) among individual and organizational actors to both maintain and disrupt these interrelations in differential, historically-contingent ways (Friedland and Alford; Thornton and Ocasio; Thornton et al.).

Institutional orders of state, market, corporation, religion, profession, community, and family, which form an inter (and intra)-institutional system conditioning sensemaking and activity for individual and organizational actors, as well as contingent amalgams of orders, individuals, organizations, logics, and more that constitute institutional fields, such as those shaping grant funding (Thornton et al. 53-54; 61; Friedland and Alfred 232). It must be noted that boundaries co-constituting these fields, actors, and orders, as well as their relations among one another, are drawn for analytic purposes rather than constituting definitive causalities and realities (especially orders as "ideal types" – See Thornton et al. especially 74-75, for theoretical overview of ideal types).

I draw upon Thornton et al.'s delineations of market, corporate, and profession-based logics to analyze field-level funding access, alongside what Bitektine and Song term as "Socially-Oriented" (order) logics (e.g., community, family, civic, and social welfare, with social welfare encompassing Thornton et al.'s definitions of state-ordered logics) (3; 10; 25-36). Socially-oriented logics are bound by characteristics, such as empathy and cooperation, as well as concern for the common good and the underserved (Bitekine and Song 10). Each order is contextually perpetuated by various, shifting elemental categories (i.e., its material, but also symbolically-significant practices) that further organize individual/organizational actor preferences and behaviors inside (and I add, outside) the order's sphere of influence (Thornton et al. 54). Of particular focus for this analysis are relations among the elemental categories, "sources for legitimacy" and "basis of attention" within and across orders, although I also reference the categories, "economic system" and "sources of authority" (Thornton et al. 74).

For example, among professional orders, legitimacy can be associated with expertise(s) as source(s) of authority and attention within and beyond these orders at organizational and field levels. I focus primarily on what Bitektine and Song term as sociopolitical legitimacy, or the locating of legitimacies constituted per moral (Suchman) and sociopolitical (Aldrich and Fiol) norms associated more closely with socially-oriented logics (6). (However, I emphasize Mark C. Suchman's point that there may certainly be self-interest involved (579).) While such legitimacy discussions have largely focused on relations among fields, organizations, orders, and logics, I argue here that this concept can be extended to individual actors in these interactions as well.

In a baseline example, a corporate foundation's director enacts personal and (representational) organizational expertise via their credentials, experience, and performance of responsibilities that can structure sociopolitical legitimacies to evoke authority and attention for themselves within the foundation and parent organization, communities the foundation/organization serves, professional associations the director belongs to, and in other ways. This expertise can also shape emergence and engagement with these elemental categories for the foundational/organizational actor across corporate, market, and socially-oriented ordered logics, stemming from elements like board, upper management, and shareholder assessment of foundation operations, market position of the organization in terms of foundation/organization visibility, and adherence to communal norms of reciprocity between the foundation/organization and surrounding geographical area.

Institutional logics have also been posited as a meta-theory (Thornton et al. 180) to be used in combination with other sociological frameworks (Lounsbury et al. 274), and I add, with other disciplines. Loundsbury et al. emphasize the importance of logics as complex phenomena rather than static and reifiable (263). One way relations among individuals, organizations, and orders have been conceptualized more dynamically (or specifically, to highlight their historicity and overall contingency) involves the use of signaling theory. Signaling theory in economic, management, and other contexts focuses on conveying legitimacy, and ultimately, (overall) quality, to address knowledge gaps at various actor levels (Spence, "Job Market Signaling" & "Signaling in Retrospect"; Connelly et al.; Certo; Certo et al.;; Bitekine and Song), especially for less-established entities (Higgins et al.). Connelly et al. define quality in a signaling context as "the underlying, unobservable ability of the signaler to fulfill the needs or demands of an outsider observing the signal" (43). Expertise signaling is also certainly key to signaling legitimacy and quality (Certo 436 - 437). For example, finding alternative ways to signal expertise, legitimacy, and quality is crucial for new nonprofits to access funding with few or no data-based indicators of responsible stewardship and community impact.

While Connelly et al. consider quality to be indiscernible, efforts have been made to empirically locate how both legitimacy and quality are signaled. For example, Saurabh A. Lall and Jacob Park analyze signaling of legitimacy and quality among market-based and socially-oriented (or specifically, social welfare/values-led) logics for social ventures seeking commercial capital that have already received philanthropic grants.

Distortions in signaling environments can impact signal observability (Connelly et al. 45), or in other words, which signals garner attention to generate, disrupt, and/or enforce logics among orders and actors. In particular, these distortions can be attributed to fit issues between environmental stimuli and accessibility of stored knowledges comprising logics of various orders among which individuals [and organizations] interact and associated elements, e.g., values and schema. The greater the fit, the more likely these stored knowledges will be accessed, resulting in greater likelihood that expertise, legitimacy, and quality will be signaled, and attention will be received. Accessibility and fit are augmented (or primed) by repeated exposure to stimuli but can also spur alternative logics (Higgins; Bargh; Biketine and Song; Thornton et al.). As I'll discuss in more detail, invite-only RFPs can multi-directionally disrupt the signaling of grant availability among funders and potential applicants. New applicants, like many of those in my grant writing classes, are excluded from even knowing about such opportunities without careful research and networking, while funders remain unaware of potential grantees. Geographically-based stimuli, such as increased competition for foundations and state/local funding sources in larger metropolitan areas, can exacerbate these funding access inequities. Yet event-organized stimuli, like those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, have shifted these renderings of signaling fit among actors, stored knowledges, and order logics to not only open up funding opportunities from agencies and corporations to more actors (such as individuals and grassroots organizations assisting those disparately affected by COVID-19), but also to provide more support overall for operating costs. And certainly, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, individual and organizational actors have enacted embedded agencies stemming from stored knowledges and actions among themselves and orders to expand funding logics, such as those centering on advocating for those most often affected by distorted signaling environments through practices like providing funding, engaging in consultation work, and disseminating information regarding these efforts and ongoing needs via media platforms.

Yet, there seems to have been limited, and at times, indirect utilization of either institutional logics or signaling theory in rhetoric, writing studies and technical/professional communication. Louise Wetherbee Phelps analyzes institutional logics in the structuring of rhetoric and writing programs ("The Institutional Logics of Writing Programs"; "The Historical Formation"). David Wright as well as Michael Meng incorporate signaling to examine sound in technical communication and screenshots in software documentation respectively, while Ryan Omizo and William Hart-Davidson do so to help situate genre markers within academic writing contexts. Jared Colton and Steven Holmes combine considerations of both institutions and signaling in positing how technical communicators as individual actors can bring about social justice without waiting for institutional and other cues.

The following exploratory analyses expand upon uses of these theoretical frameworks in rhetoric, writing studies, and technical/professional communication to further their potential for detailed description and study in these fields. I utilize these frameworks to locate various logics and their associated signaling of funding access that have, in turn, informed grant writing logics among actors and orders for my students and me, invoking both constraints and opportunities for individualized embedded agency among various organizational and institutional entities. While the primary focus of these analyses involves me as an individual actor (including my embodied, positional limitations), I discuss pressing needs for further inquiries in the Conclusions and Future Directions section of this article, especially with direct involvement from students, funders, professional grant writers, grant writing instructors, and others, as well as with expansion beyond U.S.-centered contexts.

Signaling Grant Access among Actors, Orders, and Logics

My Initial Experiences as a Student and Professional

My introduction to grant writing occurred approximately 20 years ago as a graduate student at a minority-serving institution (MSI) in a medium-sized city within the Southern United States. I had grown intrigued about grant writing practices a few months prior while witnessing the nonprofit I worked for at the time renew funding for the program paying my salary. This event enacted and was enacted by stimuli activating stored knowledges and signaling patterns that invoked socially-oriented, but also professional and market logics. This was especially the case in terms of fit among stored knowledges of my individual and employment organization's values and beliefs of further assisting local youth identified as having less access to (socioeconomic) resource environments (e.g., Thornton et al.).

Yet these logics emerged differentially among individuals, organizations, and orders. As an individual actor within the organization, enactments of socially-oriented logics stemmed from stored knowledges and signaling patterns co-constituting what I would consider a (sub)logic of privilege. Privilege is defined here as greater access to a richer resource environment from birth. Combining socially-oriented with professional logics, I was also seeking a new professional direction that would allow me to more directly make a difference in others' lives, while earning a wage and other benefits doing so. Yet, decision-makers, and at times colleagues at my organization, could be construed (as discussed further shortly) to be driven by a more lateral, socially-oriented, as well as professional and even market logics activated by their own professional accomplishments despite initially limited resources to help those from similar backgrounds achieve educational, and eventually, professional success. Furthermore, the activation of these logics was also fine-tuned by such elements as geography, race, and class, especially in terms of addressing "local, social needs" (Biketine and Song 36; Pache and Santos 979).

These mutual, yet differential, logics within and across our organization involve signaling patterns of stimuli (re)invoking sociopolitical and pragmatic legitimacies, as well as quality. While informed by previously-discussed stored knowledges of past experiences, values, and others (also indicating their historicity), these signaling patterns with my then-employer actually began during the employee screening process (Spence, "Job Market Signaling" & "Signaling in Retrospect") with the position posting's articulations of organizational mission and job responsibilities. In turn, I addressed information gaps about employment suitability via articulations of my interest and experience tutoring/mentoring youth of similar ages and backgrounds as my employers' target population in my application materials, co-constituting an initial, mutual fit between employer and employee. The signaling strength of my claims to sociopolitical and professional legitimacies and their associated logics were augmented through practices demonstrating expertise in my daily responsibilities and interest in strengthening our organization by working on this grant proposal. Meanwhile, my then-employer's signaling strength of these legitimacies increased for me as an individual actor, as their organizational mission and histories were re-articulated and put into action in meetings, conversations, and other activities. These practices also included writing grant proposals in terms of ongoing demonstrations of expertise – and authority – by leadership personnel. Our grant writing efforts also added to stored knowledges of grants for us (as individual and organizational actors) as a means for nonprofit organizational actors to access enriched resource environments for their targeted, underserved populations – especially the signaling of such access through the availability of grant application platforms (particularly RFPs).

These structured attentions to grant writing logics among actors, organization, orders and logics (in turn garnered by stimuli, stored knowledges, and actions comprising signaling patterns of expertise, legitimacies, and overall quality) invoked a moment of embedded agency for me as organizational-individual actor – enrolling in a grant writing course at my institution. Yet with limited access to stored knowledges invoking formal training and work experiences in grant, and even professional writing, I felt more apprehensive than I ever would again navigating new writing genres.

When the course began, I started to gradually add to this knowledge by exploring governmental and foundational funding resources and their requirements provided by my professor and through my own web research. I settled on a national foundation only requiring a letter of inquiry for a project at my organization because both project and RFP seemed manageable. I was also fortunate to enlist my organization's director, who had certainly worked on more complex grants. Her input invoked further, ongoing signaling of authority and expertise, as well as sociopolitical and pragmatic legitimacies as an individual-organizational actor among various socially-oriented, professional, and market logics. Each week, I drafted portions of the letter based on the most common proposal sections like Need Statement, Program Plan, and Evaluation (albeit in condensed, LOI form), until finally, the letter was ready.

"See? So easy. Done," my director declared as she signed off on the letter. Yet to me, the process had felt like anything but, even though the scaffolded drafting of sections for feedback each week had certainly helped. In many ways, my experience was typical of grant writing students (and/or other novice grant writers). Karen Englander (24) and Lynne Flowerdew (2) draw upon John Swales to position grant proposals as "occluded" not readily accessible to anyone other than grant seekers and makers, making them difficult to predict and produce for those unfamiliar with them, or in other words, subject to weaker, multi-directional signaling patterns of funding access. And as Linda Wark discusses, many students, even at the graduate level, do not yet have this familiarity (3), i.e., the stored knowledges needed for facilitating the activation of embedded agencies to strengthen such patterns in order to modify and/or adhere to applicable logics.

Yet I also felt empowered by the ability to gain immediate access to a RFP, then to submit and complete a grant application with an established nonprofit in the hopes of assisting our targeted communities, even though our organization did not ultimately receive funding. These stored knowledges of expertise, as well as sociopolitical and practical legitimacies signaling and structuring my attentions among socially-oriented, professional, and market logics, were (re)called and strengthened in subsequent positions. This was the case, even though my schematic engagements with these knowledges have been continually (re)configured based on divergent stimuli, actions, logics, and orders. Key moments of (re)configuration involved assisting first-generation college students at minority-serving institutions alongside increasing attention to structuring of professional, among pedagogical and nonprofit logics, as I moved from enrolled student in a grant writing course (and grant writing comprising an ancillary part of my position) to signaling of expertise and quality in grant writing constituting a more significant focus of the paid positions I've held – including my current position involving development and instruction of grant writing courses. I discuss these shifts in greater detail in the following section. For now, I state that despite such shifts, my stored knowledges, and ultimately, signaling patterns involving grant writing logics among logics of various orders, were ones I would largely take for granted. As I later discovered, stored knowledges and logics of privilege I accessed and enacted seemed to obfuscate distortions in the funding signaling environment of logics, orders, organizations, and individuals for me as an individual actor. These distortions persisted, despite stored knowledges of general, systemic inequities between funding supply and demand. Other hidden, stored knowledge that, as signaled through stimuli from course texts and lectures, as well as through observing and participating in complex interactions involving multiple individuals and often extended time commitments to complete organizational grant proposals (despite the previously-mentioned claim from my then organization's director that grant writing was easy). The stimuli structuring my attention up to teaching my first grant writing course largely involved ready access to: (1) socioeconomic resource environments, (2) other actors' signaling of expertise in my professionalization as a grant writer, and (3) RFPs as an individual actor among large-scale organizational actors, but seemingly even so as a student and novice grant writer researching RFPs in ways that were largely self-directed, although with helpful instructor guidance.

An Instructor

In 2020, I was asked to develop an undergraduate grant writing course at the request of my department chair. By then, it had been some years since I had worked in grant writing and administration capacities. I had certainly taught writing more recently, which informed greater attention to pedagogically-based logics involving scaffolding as one of its elements from stored knowledges of my training in writing studies and technical/professional communication – especially to assist students with their stored knowledges of commonly-used, professional writing genres. Speaking again to historicity-as-element fueling shifting logics, the signaling strength of scaffolding also seemed amplified among these pedagogical logics by stored knowledges invoking its helpfulness as a novice grant writing student and in subsequent professional positions involving grant writing.

I also initially called upon other expertises signaled from stored knowledges of grant writing inculcated in socially-oriented, market, and professional logics that were in turn also shaped by pedagogical logics. One pedagogical logic was greater stored knowledges of targeted community needs based on grants I worked on (augmented by training, teaching, and practice of rhetorical audience analyses). A second pedagogical logic involved common rhetorical moves I could make across various grant applications-as-genre that also facilitated content repurposing and template creation for expediency, even when accounting for overlapping yet differential values, norms, practices, and logics across individuals, organizations, and orders. Examples included signaling sociopolitical and pragmatic expertises, as well as overall quality in helping first-generation college students among varied grant funding contexts, such as enhancing training and minority representation in STEM fields in one proposal, developing curricula more responsive to our institutional location near the U.S.-Mexico border in another proposal, and assisting on a university compliance manual for faculty with grant-funded projects.

The class was first held (entirely online) during the Spring 2021 semester and contained sixteen upper-division students, with students majoring in Psychology and Human Services, Integrative Studies (an interdisciplinary major), English, Administrative Management, Business, Film Production, and Legal Studies. The university, located in a relatively limited resource environment in a major metropolitan area of the Southeastern United States with most students residing in the surrounding area, is classified as a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) with significant Hispanic or Latino and Asian populations. The average student age in spring 2021 was twenty-six.

The course, summoning aforementioned stored knowledges of scaffolding as signals of legitimacy and quality among pedagogical and professional logics, focused on selecting a project and funding source, as well as drafting major sections for most grant proposals throughout the semester. I promised students that I would work with them individually as needed to repurpose content drafted in major sections for specific funding source requirements, signaling repurposing as an element of professional (writing) logics, and specifically, those grant-related that I had acquired from pedagogical and professional stored knowledges. However, students were not required to submit their proposals to the funding source, although some did.

For the first weekly module, students were asked to introduce themselves, explain their experiences with grant writing, and propose a project for grant funding. Most students did not have experience writing grants. Among those with experience, this varied from previously receiving grants to currently working on proposals for nonprofits. However, when describing their proposed projects, most students mentioned a desire to help communities identified in their project descriptions, sometimes directly identifying themselves and/or family members as members of these communities. However, all projects were entirely or partially situated in their geographic (city, county, state, and/or country-based) areas of residence (even if there were plans for geographic expansion of proposed projects), regardless of whether students directly identified themselves as part of the targeted communities, and which signaled another dimension of communal belonging. This assignment generated stimuli activating expertise, and ultimately, sociopolitical and pragmatic legitimacies – all of which stemmed from stored knowledges that in turn, enacted pedagogical logics enfolded among socially-oriented (community, and/or family-based), and at times, professional and market-based logics.

After receiving quick feedback on their proposed projects, students were asked to finetune their project idea, if necessary, based on this feedback as well as propose a potential funding source. Considering that most students were not experienced with grant writing, I encouraged them to pursue foundational, city, or county, rather than more complex state or federal funding sources. And as I had recently moved to the local geographical area, a colleague provided a list of resources specific to our region, which was then shared with students. A number of students frequently selected these and other geographically-specific resources. They were also encouraged to discuss potential sources with me prior to submitting the assignment.

This step of selecting funding sources proved to be most difficult in two key, and often interrelated aspects, indicating individual, organizational, and institutional moments of distortion within the signaling environment and affecting fit between stimuli and stored knowledges for both my students and me as actors to signal access, expertise, and overall quality. The first aspect involved accessing RFPs to determine their appropriateness for student projects. Students came across invite-only RFPs, or screening questions asking for such items as verification of 501c3 status that they didn't have, or for time-sensitive RFPs, their requests were outside the window to access them. (Although in one case, I was able to work with a student to obtain a past RFP.) Links to resources like GrantWatch and Candid's Foundation Directory Online provided limited free information from funders, like full or any RFPs, as well as previously-successful proposals. The other challenge involved students matching their projects to appropriate funding sources, even if RFPs were available. For example, some students (initially) still chose federal sources beyond the scope of the course to complete because they were accessible online and also seemed relevant to their projects, despite examples being given of such resources and why they should be avoided. Ultimately, implementing this step first disrupted signaling of both financial and educational resource access, as well as student expertise and conveyance of quality, especially involving stored knowledges of their intended project populations and grant/professional writing practices. These disruptions extended to use of my own previously discussed stored knowledges for invoking socially-oriented / pedagogical / professionally-ordered expertises, legitimacies, quality, and logics.

Scholarship analyzing bias in how submitted grant applications are evaluated and funded, especially biomedical research proposals (e.g., Hug and Aeschbach; Gurwitz et al.) does not seem to have extended to shifts in signaling access to applications for existing funding opportunities, especially for individuals and smaller, formative nonprofits (i.e., those most applicable to my students). However, non- and for-profit organizations dedicated to assisting with grant writing have noted this trend in pre-application screening processes, specifically invite-only RFPs by foundations (Le; Peeps; Smith). They argue that although grantmaking has always been relationship-based, foundations' invite-only RFPs have only heightened the need for such relationships and perpetuated inequities, with one organization, Peak Proposals, observing increases in these RFPs ("Rise of Invitation-Only Grant Opportunities"). Vu Le, former Executive Director of a Seattle-based nonprofit dedicated to developing leaders of color, explains that such practices aim to (understandably) reduce administrative hardship involved in reviewing grant applications while also preventing unproductive efforts by potential grantees. These cost/benefit analysis practices can be configured for analytical purposes in part as stimuli signaling sociopolitical and pragmatic legitimacies, as well as quality for funding organizations, and in particular, for elements of managerial, market, and welfare capitalist economic systems (Thornton et al. 55) – all invoking socially-oriented, market, and corporate institutional logics. These signaling blocks for potential/current grantees could certainly be exacerbated by geographical stimuli spurring increased competition for funding from foundational and governmental sources located in large, metropolitan areas like where my institution was located, especially in comparison to the somewhat-smaller area where I lived when enrolled in my grant writing course. Vu Le also explains the following to funders in ways that summon, in particular, sociopolitical and pragmatic legitimacies:

> …organizations led by communities of color, for example, will rarely have the same relationship with you, or run in your circles to eventually build a relationship with you, or have a big enough marketing budget to get noticed by you. The relationship-based funding model is inequitable because marginalized communities in general have fewer relationships with those who have power and resources. Unless

> you are specifically focused on finding and supporting these communities, your invitation-only process is likely leaving them behind, and you may not know it, because you are invitation-only.

Similar signaling disruptions rendering exclusion could also apply to screening questions prior to accessing RFPs (such as whether they had been funded by the organization before), and certainly, submitting grant applications. Many of my students were forming or thinking of forming their own nonprofits during the course to help their immediate communities, again, based largely on personal experiences involving themselves and/or loved ones. Although the lesson of forming grant writing coalitions with more established organizations was a valuable one, these distortions in signaling resource access alongside expertise and quality were telling. At the very least, it would be helpful to have greater access to previous RFPs to assist newer organizations in ascertaining whether their needs meet funder priorities, as well as obtain greater insights into organizations they could partner with until their own organizations can sufficiently signal legitimacy and quality in funder circles to apply on their own.

Yet notably, there has been increased, clearer signaling of funding access due to shifts in sociopolitical legitimacies, structuring of attention, and logics stemming from stimuli involving the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a joint study by Exponent Philanthropy and PEAK Grantmaking, foundations are: (1) allocating more funding for organizations outside their usual portfolios, as well as small businesses and individuals directly impacted by COVID-19, (2) streamlining application processes and post-award administration, and (3) loosening funding restrictions like operating costs. (The study authors also acknowledge anecdotal prioritization by funders to address racial inequities amplified by the pandemic, but study findings did not confirm these anecdotes. It can be argued that these attentions to racial injustices are structured in part from similar types of shifts in legitimacies, attention, and logics catalyzed by events signaling attention to police brutality, racial injustice and others.) These shifts in signaling funding access also afford opportunities for funding organizations to, in turn, signal sociopolitical legitimacies, and ultimately, quality to potential grantees and other social actors. Yet, another report from The Center for Effective Philanthropy indicates that funders plan to scale back changes as pandemic concerns recede (Orensten and Buteau12), and it follows that longer-term impacts involving equitable funding practices remain to be seen.

In this extended discussion of student funding source selection, informed in part by RFP access issues, we can both sum up and delve further into kaleidoscopic configurations of individuals, organizations, and order logics that emerge in field-level funding signaling environments. Ostensibly, funder RFPs signal stimuli organized as opportunities for potential grantees to increase access to goods and/or services to impact earmarked communities who need them, also signaling their sociopolitical legitimacies and quality to potential grantees. Potential grantees as recipients of this signaling draw upon individual and organizational engagements among socially-oriented, professional, and other order logic-based configurations of expertise to pursue these opportunities and increase access to goods and/or services for designated communities while strengthening their own capacities to signal their legitimacy and overall superior quality to potential funders for future opportunities. As described in such texts as course catalogs, schedules, and syllabi, grant writing courses signal stimuli organized as potentials to acquire and/or enhance expertise in grant writing skills and improve funding access.

Yet again, these signals become distorted in their efforts to address information gaps, such as funders' awareness of organizations that can help accomplish their funding goals, organizations and/or individuals' awareness of funders and funding opportunities to address their needs, or a grant writing instructor's capacity to assist students with accessing and responding to these opportunities. It could be argued that the increased prevalence of (neoliberal) market-based institutional logics drives this underlying distortion, an unsurprising finding well supported by literature (e.g., Alexander and Fernandez; Spicer et al.; Thornton et al.). Again, demand for grant funding has increased, and, most importantly, outpaces supplying capacities of funding entities (Karsh and Fox), which can be augmented by increased competition in large metropolitan areas, as well as smaller cities and towns. Competition for resources perpetuates efforts for funders to drive down administrative costs to maximize abilities to keep up with supply while also signaling the privileging of potential grantees who, in turn, signal the highest quality. Legitimacy often surfaces as a key indicator of quality but can be differentiated by stimuli like 501c status and past funding from a particular grant organization or others, as gleaned from screening questions and elsewhere, but also via a relationship-based familiarity – which can also be cultivated for potential grantees by partnerships with organizations conveying more established signals of quality with funding entities. Profit-based entities further distort the signaling of resource access through paywalls to access RFPs and other relevant funding organization information. These distortions, in turn, can open up needs for grant writing expertise signaled from external actors, like consultants and professional grant writing organizations, to help navigate these signaling barriers to convey legitimacy and quality to funders. However, those who need the most assistance are individuals and fledgling nonprofits who may face financial barriers to accessing it.

Such distortions also include those involved in acquiring grant writing expertise in classroom and other settings, such as: (1) market-based logics influencing institutional and class enrollment decisions and affecting whether instruction can be offered, (2) limited access to RFPs, (3) usage of texts emphasizing scarcity of traditional, (governmental/foundational) grant funding and encouraging partnerships with more established organizations and an overall entrepreneurial approach, and (4) instructor knowledge of local funding sources.

Pedagogical Workarounds Invoking Embedded Agencies

I now outline pedagogical workarounds to at least some of these current access issues in my capacities as grant writing instructor to strengthen students' signaling of expertise and quality in their grant proposals and to overall facilitate the embodiments of their embedded agencies despite organizational and institutionally-ordered constraints. I draw upon experiences teaching this course, as well as previous scholarship. Yet, I proceed with the caveat that working with students individually (Bourelle 179; Roundtree 3) through a combination of methods was key to meeting their needs for the course and more so than any other course I have taught up to this point in light of variegated stimuli, e.g., projects, funding sources, familiarity with grant writing, and general writing skills.

Drafting the Most Common Grant Sections with Attention to Signaling Legitimacy and Quality

After students completed modules introducing the course, selecting a project and funding source, as well as discussing style and boilerplate items to have available (if possible), they drafted major sections for most of the remaining modules. I reviewed these drafted sections, with students incorporating feedback into a proposal template, or what I termed as a "master proposal" that could be drawn from for future opportunities. (As mentioned previously, some students drew from these sections to complete and submit proposals to funders both during and after the course.) At times, students needed to revise in order to complete the following assignment, such as incorporating feedback on initial budgets to submit a revised budget and initial budget narrative draft for the next assignment. Then, toward the end of the course, I reviewed students' master proposal rough drafts and provided additional feedback prior to them turning in the final versions at the course's conclusion. For future courses, I plan to implement peer review, at a minimum, for rough drafts of their master proposals (Wark 2; Wooley).

During the week I reviewed full-proposal rough drafts, we focused on an overview of post-proposal follow-up (reporting, site visits, and obtaining feedback on unfunded proposals), although students were certainly guided throughout the course on structuring projects in ways that could be feasibly implemented and evaluated per funder organizational-institutional norms to signal sociopolitical and professional legitimacies, as well as quality. As mentioned earlier, this scaffolded process of writing and receiving initial feedback on the proposals by section emerged from my own stored knowledges of grant writing logics. A scaffolding approach to teaching grant writing is, in turn, directly and indirectly supported by various sources (e.g., Roundtree ; Bourelle; Leak et al.; Wark).

Utilizing Examples from Other RFP's and Proposals to Increase RFP Access

I drew from sample RFPs, proposal sections, and full proposals to illustrate rhetorical choices made in each, such as tying together goals, objectives, and how they would be assessed through project activities in an evaluation section. However, in another signaling disruption of access, expertise, and quality, our text did not include an example of a grant writing proposal with all sections included, which would have been helpful to see in terms of how all major sections should fit together. So, it was often up to me to come up with proposal section examples, as proposals found online were not as inclusive of these various sections as I would have liked or were too extensive (i.e. governmental proposals) for my students' projects and funding sources. These concerns regarding the location of appropriate sample proposals were echoed by Flowerdew (6). However, I plan on choosing a new text with full proposals for future courses (Roundtree).

Taking a Social Entrepreneurial Approach to Funding

As discussed previously, our text, in line with other sources (e.g., Lyons and Kickul; Weber and Spartz; Roundtree), encouraged a social entrepreneurial approach for obtaining funding in light of decreased governmental and foundational resources, especially as funders are increasingly seeking potential grantees with a variety of income streams (Karsh and Fox 293 – 294). As the authors specify, such an approach is vital for small-to-medium-sized nonprofits, which my students either worked for, had started, or were thinking of starting. Suggestions in the text included, for example, sub-leasing operational space and running small businesses that could be staffed by volunteers and/or paid employees. My stored knowledges of grant writing and donations as key to nonprofit funding did not signal attention to this engendering of market/corporate-based logics, and so, I did not emphasize such an approach in my class. Yet some students took up this advice from the text in ways that ranged from incorporating microenterprise efforts (like bake sales) into their proposals to completing a pharmaceutical company's application for discount pricing on medications. Ultimately, more direct encouragement of such an approach could be helpful for future classes. Even though an entrepreneurial approach might not address current access issues previously discussed (such as obtaining RFPs for current opportunities), this stance can help students cultivate a more realistic attitude about grant funding while also providing opportunities to take steps toward increasing signaling credibility with possible funders and subsequently obtaining access to their RFPs – and ultimately, their financial support.

Cultivating Multi-Actor and Institutional Relationships for Class Visits and Projects

Scholarship on grant writing instruction repeatedly brings up the idea of cultivating relationships with nonprofits and/or grant writing experts for class visits and projects. For example, both Natasha Jones and Kathy Mennen describe how students in their courses collaborated with nonprofits to write grant proposals. Wark also discusses a class visit to the campus library's nonprofit resource center (4). Yet, as these authors indicate, students gain access to elements of expertise across actors and orders through these interactions beyond pedagogical logics of the classroom. But significantly, as Jones points out, these partnerships (and the access to funding institutions they enhance) facilitate even greater awareness for students of contextual positionalities (including, as Diane Martinez also mentions, their own) – which, in turn, involves negotiating both inequities and privilege in terms of theirs and others' access to resources. Put another way; these interactions can heighten students' signaling of expertise and, in sum, sociopolitical and pragmatic legitimacies, as well as quality, in ways that can heighten ethical and tactical commitments to their grant writing efforts as they learn how to help earmarked communities from new perspectives.

However, I did not pursue any of these options for the course due to time constraints in course planning. These constraints were further complicated by stimuli and stored knowledges disrupting pedagogical, socially-oriented, and professional logic signaling environments involving the course, some of which have been mentioned previously: (1) my students' proposals predominantly focusing on serving their immediate geographical communities (as well as a significant number of students selecting funding sources centered on assisting those communities), alongside (2) teaching the course entirely online with students distributed across the southeastern United States at an institution located in a geographical area with which I was gaining familiarity. (I was also based in another region and time zone of the United States from both the institution and my students due to a remote work arrangement stemming from stimuli surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.) But I would certainly consider one or more of these options for future courses.

Conclusions and Future Directions

In this exploratory analysis, institutional logics and signal theory have been mobilized to locate enactments and disruptions of funding access in grant writing practices and pedagogies, concluding with pedagogical workarounds to facilitate embedded agencies for grant writing students as individual actors in navigating disruptions within field-level funding signaling environments.

Yet there surely remains room for further analysis, especially empirical studies involving data and qualitative perspectives from funders, and students, as well as grant writing professionals and instructors, among other actors and entities. I offer three possibilities here, but these are certainly only starting points. The first involves analysis of a subsequent grant writing class I taught after implementing one or more pedagogical strategies discussed in this article, this time incorporating student insights. Another line of inquiry could involve tracing impacts on signaling and logics stemming from organizational actors' efforts to increase funding access for smaller and otherwise less-established nonprofits. And finally, studies could focus on funding signaling environments centered outside the U.S. and/or among the U.S. and non-U.S. Ultimately, these and other analyses can facilitate necessary changes in funding logics, especially for the individual and organizational actors needing them most.

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