

Hacking the Curriculum, Disabling Composition Pedagogy: The Affordances of Writing Studio Design



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Abstract: This article argues that teachers and WPAs can “hack” standard curricular spaces and institute more inclusive writing pedagogies. One form of hacking can occur through the design of Writing Studio, a one-hour peer workshop that provides a necessary off-shoot from normative composition instruction. Writing Studio disables composition as standard practice and institutes an open-access curricular space that reconfigures practice as usual. Drawing upon key concepts from disability, this article shows how the studio approach promotes writers’ interdependence, out of which develops writer agency and confidence.

“I feel very good when I not only receive help but also when I can help others. I have never been good at writing. I didn’t expect anyone would want or take my advice”
(Chloe, Writing Studio Student)

“Composition is not always an accessible space”
(Jay Dolmage, “Mapping Composition” 14)

Over the past ten years, disability scholars in composition studies (Dolmage; Kerschbaum; Lewiecki-Wilson and Brueggemann; Price; Vidali; Wood; Yergeau) have urged writing program administrators and teachers to place disability in central dialogue with curricular design in order to re-shape rhetorical boundaries, conventions, and instructional practice. Such shape-shifting opens possibilities for more situated teaching and learning practices. Through local action such as curricular re-design, WPAs and teachers can push back against “academic ableism,” what Jay Dolmage and other disability studies scholars identify as the ever-present ideology of institutions that maintain a homogenous elite student body in terms of perceived mental, intellectual, and bodily ability (*Academic Ableism*). By restructuring academic spaces—physical and curricular—to include difference, teachers can design pedagogies that re-cast capability as full-bodied and variously capacious rather than lacking.

In this article, I argue that teachers and WPAs can work together to hack fixed, standard curricula and carve out pedagogical spaces that foreground access by creating a disability-infused curriculum. Bringing disability discourse to curricular design and teaching disrupts the structure (and authority) of disembodied learning. As a choreography of movements and inter-actions among different bodies, curricular design should be, after all, an invitation to share space and participate in knowledge-making for all members. A disability-infused curriculum shifts pedagogical focus from silent universals, such as standard SLOs that all students should meet or exceed, to relationships, support, and collaborative inclusion. Toward that end, I study a local scene of writing studio curricular design to demonstrate how the studio model may deliver a space conducive to disability and difference. Writing Studio is a one-hour elective peer-workshop course that aims to implement a one-on-one pedagogical approach. The studio model in particular disables composition pedagogy by inventing more inclusive spaces for student engagement and possibility.

Writing Studio can be understood as a “hack” of the traditional writing classroom. As described by Walls, Schopieray, and DeVoss, hacking is “a useful activity for reworking the spaces in which we teach” (“Hacking Spaces” 270). I contend that studio pedagogy enables us to hack—disrupt the infrastructures and ideologies—that sustain inaccessible learning. In the case of writing studio design, hacking enables new radical dimensions for classroom dynamics, operations, and interactions. Studio alters the traditional communication role between teacher and student and disrupts the typical linear mode of pedagogical delivery because students come to have power to assume leadership roles and set the agenda for their writing goals and session. The cross-curricular conversations that occur

in studio are also a kind of hack of the traditional separation of classes by discipline. Most different from traditional classroom spaces, studio hacks the liberal-humanist model of learning and employs a model of interdependency, a pedagogical relationship and ethos that enables deep collaboration. Similar to Walls, Schopieray, and DeVoss, I situate hacking as “positive,” regenerative work, albeit rooted in a historicity of rogue activism and anarchy (274-275). Hacking traditional, standard institutional and curricular space(s) literally disables operations as normal; hacking functions as a means for disabling composition and doing composition in the presence of disability.

Employing Amy Vidali’s definition, studio curricula “disables” composition pedagogies by “bringing the insights of disabled people and perspectives in order to innovate, include, and transgress expected and exclusionary norms” (33). Disabling, in the words of Vidali, constitutes “activist,” rhetorical work that foregrounds agency. Studio courses tend to bring together writers whom the academy has labeled as unfit, and studio pedagogies aim to make available writing and rhetorical knowledge(s) by engaging alternative modes and means of knowing (Grego and Thompson; Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson). A relationship based on hacking, disability, and studio disrupts composition’s “fetishization of the composed text,” and by extension, the composed body (Alexander and Rhodes “Interview”). Rather than *composed* bodies, studio convenes *composing* bodies and transforms the traditional classroom interface to make explicit the place of and intermingling of bodies in motion.

By design, writing studio “disables” composition as standard practice and institutes an open-access curricular space that reconfigures practice as usual. Writing Studio creates an inclusive curricular space that embraces the uncertainty of in-between arrangement; the creative chaos of (un)invented *topos*; and not-yet-deliverable, unfinished writing-in-process. In my synthesis of the studio approach, I draw upon key concepts from disability to promote writers’ interdependence, out of which develops writer agency and confidence.

Writing Studio Curricular Design: Hacking Open-Access & Fostering Difference

Composition is not always an accessible space, Jay Dolmage argues in “Mapping Composition.” Dolmage portrays the first-year requirement as a precarious assemblage of “steep steps,” a metaphor that captures how composition curricula “create exclusion” through steady inclines (16). For many students, composition too often tracks “how students fall off the stairs,” an ideology that preserves the university as “a place for the most able” (Dolmage 18-19). Hacking provides one way that WPAs and teachers can disable composition’s exclusionary practices; hacking, for example, can reconstruct and repurpose the stairs to become wider resting places, or plateaus that offer space for different types of mobility and embodiment. Refashioning space from the perspective of disability and difference enables teachers to study the classroom environment for obstacles and accommodations for those who do not “fit” the norm or standard student profile. Disabling the classroom can lead to a scrutiny of how teaching practices impede or enable non-normative students and students with intersectional identities.

Disability engages a multiplicity of difference, and as Stephanie Kerschbaum argues, difference is never static or “fixed in place” (6). Difference provokes new thoughts and experiences, and places writers in contact with disparate bodies, texts, and materials, situations from which new knowledge emerges (Jung; Garrett, Landrum-Geyer, and Palmeri). With difference as a lens, writers can engage in a recursive cycle of invention—coming to know and discover through multiple methods and embodiments, doing and doing over again, situating knowledge in time and place, and questioning standpoint and positionality—inquiries that inform from where knowledge comes and how we come to know. Such questions of difference and epistemology are critical to disability studies, and for composition pedagogies they offer a means to create curricular spaces that make use of multiple and non-normative ways of knowing and being (Lewiecki-Wilson and Brueggemann).

Regarding difference, Dolmage argues, academics often “react...instead of planning for it”—his definition of “the retrofit” (21). A retrofit consists of an add-on, or something constructed after-the-fact that attempts to accommodate difference. Dolmage’s classic example of the retrofit is a building wheelchair ramp, which suggests access but often requires users to enter buildings from the back or from a basement level. Studio pedagogies anticipate difference. Through an up-front emphasis on situated learning via intersectionality, interdependence, and embodied difference “as new terms of standards,” in studio, teachers can design space (or invent pedagogy) for participatory interaction, which re-centers ability on those bodies present (Dolmage 25). Writing Studio provides a framework for opening access because the structure and format of the course offer active, individualized learning through small-group workshops and student-led presentations. Disability Studies activist and curator of the Olimpias Performance Research Projects Petra Koppers defines access “as an action, an ethic, and a co-created interdependent agenda” (8). I use Koppers’ definition in classroom and administrative design to foreground access as a shared responsibility. In studio, a felt-sense of access as collective manifests through collaboration and on-the-spot production. Through these discursive acts, students explore new knowledges and pause to acknowledge points of disagreement or

uncertainty. In making the unknown an “overt” part of composing practice, studio makes writing more accessible (New London Group).

Rhetorical instruction does not always account for the dynamic ways in which bodies participate in writing activity or the numerous instances in which writing situations prevent certain bodies from participation (Crowley). Traditional school cultures—institutions that discipline writing—perpetuate the making of “composed bodies” (McRuer; Alexander and Rhodes). Composure entails ordered and tightly put-together texts (and bodies), and as McRuer argues, reproduces a “monolithic” identity of the composed student body (57-58). The effect of such a working ideology results in a generalization that students arrive to class already prepared to write polished essays and exercise advanced rhetorical knowledges. Or, by the time they exit first-year composition, they should be able to demonstrate such academic skills. This myth of composure results in curricular designs that anticipate commonality among student ability.

Although bodies are always felt and lived in varying degrees throughout the composing process, both writers and teachers neglect to analyze bodies, alongside technologies and modalities, as early, invention-stage considerations. Unless or *until* bodies “demand acknowledgement,” as Kristin Lindgren asserts, many writers and teachers of writing fail to recognize a body’s positionality in communication (146). The unconscious displacement of the body, having the freedom to place the body aside or simply forget or suspend the body’s existence, reveals socio-cultural privilege - a positionality that enables ease of movement and seamless access to participation. However, for many students, bodies remain in the foreground as constant signifiers of difference. Disability studies scholars such as Kristin Lindgren, Brenda Brueggemann, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Susan Wendell, Tobin Siebers, Margaret Price, Stephanie Kerschbaum, Melanie Yergeau, and others argue that a body is most recognized when difference becomes amplified and measured against representations of what is culturally constituted as normative embodiment. In her disability activist performance work, Petra Kuppers argues that an individual arrives at the idea of her own body through encounters with “significant difference” (Interview). A body is most accentuated when it makes uncontrollable noises; displays some disfigurement, a visible scar, disproportionate or unsymmetrical parts; becomes ill; or requires some accommodation to what appears as typical mobility, typical being, and typical communication—such as when a body uses a wheelchair, walks with a cane or a guide dog, uses a screen reader or needs an interpreter/signer, or when a spoken voice sounds significantly different than “the norm.”

The triangulation of hacking, disability, and studio re-configures a definition of writing as a material, bodied way of communicating, and as a result, such classroom spaces may strike students—and teachers—as curricular spaces that function quite differently than other courses. Studio curriculum can design space for bodily differences, understanding such positions of difference as “rhetorically generative” rather than “as deficiency and deviation” (Dolmage and Lewiecki-Wilson 28-29). As an elective peer-workshop capped at ten students, studio employs a one-on-one pedagogical approach that is almost impossible to foster in a traditional class dynamic. In studio, unlike traditional composition courses, teachers do not assign writing projects; rather, students arrive to class with collective goals based on writing projects from their other classes. Early in the semester, as part of community-building work, students establish a calendar for the course marked by a series of pre-arranged student-led presentations. Students determine course content and identify weekly goals and agenda items based on self- and group-identified writing needs. Despite the particular daily agenda, studio pedagogies make explicit the otherwise behind-the-scenes micro-practices that build content and knowledge, practices all too often neglected in traditional composition spaces that emphasize a universal student body and evade the material aspects of process.

Writing Studio: What It Is, How It Is Different, and Why Employ It

Writing Studio, a peer-driven workshop approach to the teaching of writing, provides a necessary off-shoot from normative composition instruction. Each workshop session focuses on a portion or section of writing rather than a complete text; and classes may focus on deciphering a project prompt, critically reading teacher or peer comments on a written project, or exploring writing resources such as how to conduct library research. Class sessions allocate at least 30 minutes out of the hour for collaborative discussion and hands-on workshoping for a piece of writing, and each class session devotes time for reflection and affords writers (and teachers) a place to take risks and explore vulnerability. Class size caps between 5-10 students to ensure the one-on-one approach, and the class agenda remains student-generated, prompted by students’ writings from their other classes.

In studio curricula, unlike traditional comp courses, teachers do not assign writing projects; rather, students arrive to class with writing tasks from their other classes. Foundational to studio’s emphasis on student agency, students determine course content based on self- and group-identified writing needs. In a given studio session, one or two students lead “artifact” or “works-in-progress” presentations, learning to talk through project context and name criteria or constraints, and/or delivering a portion of in-process work.^{1} Peers pose questions; point out confusion; and

brainstorm writing choices, rules, and conventions. In each class period, students might engage and analyze their own invention techniques, deciphering the most useful heuristics for discovering ideas. Or they may workshop drafts for particular revision goals such as adding secondary research, re-framing introductions, or shifting genre criteria to meet disciplinary conventions. Despite differences in discipline and genre, students adopt a common vocabulary to talk about writing (using terms such as genre, audience, purpose, and rhetorical frame, for example, in sophisticated ways). Conversation and collaboration serve as class methods, moves in which students use talk and small group exchange to discover meaning. In this sense, Writing studio resembles what Rhonda Grego and Nancy Thompson call “third-space.” As neither standard classroom nor tutoring consultation, Studio retains an edge of subversion—a genuine, open-access, self-directed space for writers.

Unlike traditional first-year composition curricula, which generally institute a model of learning based on the individual subject—an independent and “hyper-able” writer—studio emphasizes moments of intersectionality and in-between learning (Yergeau). The curriculum slows-down to accentuate one-on-one needs; however, different writings overlap and merge with one another, creating an inter-connection among the different bodies present. Although not completely free from pressures of due dates, grades, and error-free writing, studio meets writers where they are at the moment. In the way that McRuer, citing Eve Sedgwick, vividly speaks back to “straight composition,” studio works recursively from a bi-directional, middle-out approach that performs as an “open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances, and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning” (57). Each class session encourages deep grappling with a writing problem or issue, and through real-time collaboration, writers investigate how to make writing processes more transparent and trouble-shooting more tangible.

According to Grego and Thompson, studio unveils how academic writing works, and, at its core mission, shows students how they can become self-sponsors of their own writings. In studio, writers map local resources to learn from whom and where to seek help, they engage in dialogue with their own writing via discussing and analyzing teacher or other reader comments, they critically read and unpack assignment prompts from different courses, and they discover and explore drafting and revision choices. Studio pedagogies utilize “an interactive inquiry approach...to uncover the rhetorical situation, including the contextual constraints and determinants of particular writing assignments” (Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson 70). Teaching students how to navigate rhetorical situations via assignments offers them stepping-stones to traverse more complex communication endeavors. Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson explain, “By learning how to inquire into the rhetorical situation that every writing task comprises—inquiring into contexts more deeply than merely naming the audience and purpose for a paper—students become more skilled agents who can then decide how to use writing ‘skills’ for the ends they wish to achieve...” (70). Through studio’s interactive inquiry approach, students enact the *how* of writing and learn to interject the *why*: to question *why that writing move or action and why that particular reader comment? What difference does this move make? How does the text change/alter when I make that move?* Incorporating and integrating questions of why and how as patterns of practice embeds reflexivity in the writing process.

Studio engages a double practice of writing for the academy and for the self. Students write for academic audiences, working on projects assigned in a variety of courses. In this realm, studio adheres to traditional composition and functions as a vital part in the making of academic writers: teaching academic genres and style conventions; teaching essayistic writing; teaching students how to compose and edit sentences. However, unlike traditional, mainstream writing courses, studio functions according to a different sense of time and schedule. Class members can re-arrange aims, follow stream of consciousness and digressions, and study the different nuances of their own situated practices. Teachers can make creative use of the in-between moments by pulling from our reservoir of on-the-spot activities for invention, revision, editing, etc. Many times, too, studio affords writers a space to voice emotion, to remember writing stories and histories. In a standard Composition course, the schedule and the assignment due date may over-ride students’ learning needs or may dis-place important “grappling” work solely onto students - leaving arduous work for students to complete on their own time, usually outside of class time.

Although rooted in basic writing, the studio model does not function as a tool of remediation. Yet, studio empowers students who might otherwise feel marked according to a status of “basic.” Basic writing instruction, when employed as a mechanism of academic ableism, occurs in marginalized spaces that may not count toward college graduation and carries pass/fail evaluation rather than letter-grade status. Students may place into such courses through mandatory testing, entering such spaces with an array of emotions: resentment, self-doubt, and unspoken feelings of punishment. Identifying a student writer as *basic* inscribes onto that writing body a deficit (Dolmage). In “Mapping Composition,” Dolmage, citing Patricia Dunn, Mike Rose, and others, contends that institutions identify students as “basic” as a result of “surface-level errors” and sub-par performance (17). “Basic” signifies fault, unfitness, error, and dis-ability, or in/ability to perform, without accommodation, at a standard level. Students tend to find their way to studio through basic writing associations: perhaps their writing contains noticeable errors; they previously failed first-year Comp; they have lower than desired entrance exam scores; maybe they are learning English as a second language; maybe they have a disability. The aforementioned list applies to more and more students. Students often

find their way to studio classes through a path of struggle and doubt. Institutionally, studio may be a space to *fix* broken writing; but for students, studio develops writer agency.

Launching Writing Studio: Multiple Voices and Circuits of Interdependency

My work in this essay draws from a two-year pilot study of an experimental Writing Studio curriculum designed and implemented—and then re-designed—at a regional comprehensive public state university in the south. In a manner of disabling composition pedagogy, I designed a one-hour workshop space, Writing Studio, in which students experience a slowed-down, highly reflective engagement with writing process and practice. Curricular design efforts began fall 2012, and the first course sections were offered the following spring 2013 semester. The design of studio required a double folding of interdependency at the level of programmatic collaboration, or working with offices and individuals across campus, and within the classroom among students as a mode of learning and reflecting. By interdependency, I mean an intense reliance on others, or, as Dolmage defines, “a circuit of interchange” that extends beyond the self (“Mapping Composition” 15). Using a pilot study protocol, Justin McCoy, a faculty colleague, and I examined two different studio models to assess the benefits of each option. We offered 1) by-registration sections for one-hour elective credit (ENC 1990), which consisted of students from across the curriculum and at varying academic levels, and 2) a non-credit earning, scheduled weekly workshop reserved for TRIO students (classified by Student Success Services as supplemental education). TRIO is a federal outreach program often housed within Student Success Programs (SSP) that offers financial and tutorial assistance to students identified as at-risk: low income individuals, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities.^{2} Despite the different studio models, we wanted students to arrive to studio through self-directed rather than mandatory placement. Early design work, therefore, included making a case for studio to upper administration as much as to students.

In launching studio, I learned that hacking begins in language, in discursive restructuring. In 2012, as a brand new WPA, my college Dean announced a university charge to “reform writing culture.” My first plan of action was to circulate a rebranding of composition through curricular re-design. The same year, the university launched a new retention effort, focusing two-fold on first-to-second-year retention rates and graduation rates. University-wide attention on retention created prime opportunities for faculty to develop programs centered on improving student learning. I proposed Writing Studio, a one-hour elective that students could take concurrently with first-year composition, and named the class as “high-impact learning” that would increase first-to-second-year retention by improving students’ grades in Comp I and II. If students pass Comp, they would more likely remain at the university beyond the first year (Garrett, Bridgewater, and Feinstein; Chemishanova and Snead). They would also retain critical writing and rhetorical knowledge relevant to successful performance in subsequent courses. Research suggests that studio cultivates in students not only a sense of belonging but also an enhanced sense of agency (Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson; Grego and Thompson). Because studio pedagogy closely examines the rhetorical situation of assignments, writing processes, and local resources, students exit the course more informed about how to start and complete projects, and they know where to seek assistance.

When I proposed studio, I had to distinguish the curriculum from “remedial” instruction. As part of the State University System, my university does not allow “remediation” or basic-level courses. While studio, in general, has a parallel history with helping writers who may be marked as basic, ELL writers, writers with varying disabilities, first-time in college writers, and in general, writers who *struggle*, studio never has been a stand-alone basic-writing class or a site of remedial instruction. Instead, studio honors and promotes transparency and “open access,” which to some can give it the appearance of remediation (Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson). In conversations across campus, I positioned studio as an intense investigation of writing processes and rhetorical knowledges—areas of *new* knowledge for which students need an abundance of guidance, practice, and support.

Once studio launched, I collected data through programmatic assessment, employing person-based methods as instruments for curricular revision. In alignment with Price and Kerschbaum’s story-collection approach, the curricular design of writing studio grew from multiple voices and “non-linear,” reflexive motions. With a focus on collaboratively invented access, coupled with the goal of hacking curriculum to disable composition pedagogy, my project charts a “non-normative history” of rhetorical action and composition practice (Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric*). I weave a story of institutional curricular revision and reflective rhetorical analysis to show how studio delivered an environment of access and difference (Wilson & Lewiecki-Wilson; Lewiecki-Wilson and Bruggemann; Price; Dolmage; Kerschbaum; Vidali; Price and Kerschbaum). My particular methodological approach focuses on a rather small number of participants, which I mark as a strength rather than limitation of the study. By deeply listening to situated experience, I discover resonances, dissonances, and nuances as opposed to generalized, reductive analysis, an approach that, arguably, “crips methodology” by foregrounding difference (Price and Kerschbaum).^{3} Individual interviews and other methods that adhere to particular voices and ways of knowing, as opposed to what Dolmage and Lewiecki-

Wilson call averaged data, draw attention away from the universal student body and re-focus on situated embodiment and embodied ways of knowing.^{4}

Working closely with teachers and cross-institutional departments and programs, alongside students, multiple voices shape this particular institutional story (Price and Kerschbaum).^{5} Braiding together different bodies from different positionalities, stages of agency, and dispositions, including self-identified disabled bodies, allows the WPA (or, me) to re-invent access from a space of generative difference and multiplicity. I draw from local, institutional research and qualitative methods, including classroom observations, a group interview with two core-teachers, student focus groups, and analysis of students' written reflections. Students from three different studio sections, across three semesters, participated in this study—a total of 15 students.^{6} In line with ethical person-based research practices, students selected their own pseudonyms and reviewed all quoted materials prior to the writing of this article.

In addition to the collection of student experiences, two core studio instructors, Justin McCoy and Jasara Norton, contribute teacher perspectives to a methodology of disabling composition pedagogy. In a collective interview, Justin and Jasara testify to the transformative experience that teaching studio has on pedagogical design and teaching philosophy. In both cases, these teachers returned to traditional composition classes and re-infused the curriculum with studio practices that promote deep collaboration and student-led curricular design—a type of sustained hacking that disables standard composition practice.^{7}

Working from Price and Kerschbaum's grounded-theory approach, or what they define as "an open-coding process through which themes emerged," I generated data with my participants through continuous review of notes and transcripts, highlighting recurring phrases and details, listening for obscure actions, and placing activities and accounts in juxtaposition with composition pedagogy, more generally. Themes manifested from overlaps among collective voices, speaking back to and informing the design of pedagogical praxis—another instantiation of interdependence at play in the project. Through students' written reflections, focus group conversations, and a series of over 20 class observations, I extrapolated three recurring themes that characterize studio pedagogies:

- Studio is situated and embodied; learning takes place in real-time
- Studio adheres to a collaborative, social nature of writing: a model of interdependency
- Studio offers a safe, low-stakes place to practice risk-taking

The themes branch out from the nexus of "disability" and "studio," and reveal an interconnection of key concepts such as body, real time, interdependency, agency, and difference, concepts that help teachers hack standard teaching practice. Through hacking, WPAs can design programs that consist of more inclusive pedagogies.

In the next section, I exemplify theoretically and through classroom application and primary data results a pedagogical analysis of how situated embodiment and real-time ontology, collaboration and interdependency, and safe, low-stakes activities characterize Writing Studio curricular design. As thematic patterns that I discovered from a combination of programmatic and classroom research, stemming from multiple voices and primary methods of data collection, the themes turn back to and assist in curricular revision and pedagogical re-invention, methods of hacking that can help make writing instruction more accessible. Research methodology, in this way, functions as a cycle of renewal, or regeneration, and student and teacher voices participate as contributors and makers of knowledge. I begin with students' and teachers' accounts, pulling their voices together by explaining how, ultimately, studio affordances resemble embodied pedagogical praxis. I showcase poignant studio moments with the presence of textboxes, which contain articulations, stories, reflections, and artifacts consisting of "collaborative and singular" voices (Price and Kerschbaum). As intrusions in otherwise typical essayistic prose, the textboxes perform a hacking that celebrates multiplicity. Readers can learn about studio from two textual places, moving between data analysis and synthesis of practice.

Grounded Findings & Pilot Study Results

What Students and Teachers Have to Say

Studio offers active and *high-impact learning*, to use institutional language, but what does this mean from students' perspectives? Studio makes writing more accessible and more transparent. Studio creates community and helps with time-management. Studio hacks the ever-encroaching debilitation of writer's block. Studio "disrupts...procrastination," Sophie reflects. A first-year student, Sophie, who previously failed ENC 1101, retakes the course while concurrently enrolled in studio. The second time around she passes the class with a grade of A, and in a focus-group

conversation, she attests, “studio helped me immensely. I not only was able to more clearly understand the assignments, but also, I was able to work in drafts along the way. Studio very much disrupted my habit to procrastinate.” Sophie raises several points that are specific to studio pedagogy: attention on the rhetorical situation of assignments and how to enter an assignment more informed, having a clear understanding of one’s own writing process, and the critical importance of drafts and presenting work-in-progress in advance of due dates. Sophie’s statement also echoes an unstated claim that perhaps Sophie struggles with writer’s block, a common topic in studio sessions. Studio scaffolds the writing process in a way that significantly slows-down production stages so that a writer can build frame-by-frame, pause and reflect with peers, and, finally, focus on deep revision and particular actions—all before turning attention to editing and proofreading. Writers learn to work backwards from due dates. The first two days of class focus on identifying writing project due dates across the entire semester. Classes proceed with student-led presentations that ensure each student receives one-on-one attention on her selected writing project.

In a class observation with eight students present, when asking students about their motivation for enrolling in studio, three students specifically address “time management” and a search for “a block of time to focus on additional writing instruction.” Several students admit that teachers recommended the class, and one student simply “loves writing and found the course during registration.” Regardless of writing ability, studio affords students an enriched encounter with writing and rhetorical knowledges and a strikingly different pedagogical experience than traditional writing courses.

The one-on-one pedagogy representative of studio curricula adheres to individual student needs while simultaneously facilitating a small group, workshop environment. The one-on-one approach allows for students to embrace spontaneous learning in moments of active discovery. In a written reflection, a first-year student shared, “This class is beneficial because students receive immediate, respectful feedback from other students of different disciplines.” Supporting this focus, another student added, “I like that the class is small and personal. That gives time for us to get the attention we need on our writings.” Students are hungry for personal attention in the form of tailored written feedback from instructors and meaningful, “respectful” peer feedback. Studio reserves class time each course session for students to present and respond to one another’s work. And, studio teaches the art of interaction and response: *how are you able to respond?* Do we need to pause and sketch an idea, do we need to close our eyes and read aloud, or do we need to stop and write? The pedagogical dynamic results in a combination of a one-on-one approach interspersed with collaboration and engaged community, peer relationships.

The view of writing as a social transaction has been a commonplace in composition studies since the 1980s (James Berlin; Kenneth Bruffee; Susan Miller). Studio enhances and enacts collaboration with a central mission that revolves around bringing writers together in a close-knit workshop to hack the myth that writing and thinking happen in isolation. In a reflective writing, a first-year student, Chloe, testifies to the emotional growth she experiences from the social and collaborative nature of studio: she states, “I feel very good when I not only receive help but also when I can help others. I have never been good at writing. I didn’t expect anyone would want or take my advice.” Chloe names her dis-identification as a writer in the same breath that she registers, perhaps for the first time ever, positive feelings—confidence—about writing as a result of being able to give advice to others. When writers position themselves in the role of readers—someone with advice to give—they develop a sense of authority, a first move toward the building of agency.

In a focus group conversation, when asked to share a particular experience from studio that helped their writing, one student remarked, “I got one-on-one help on a particular project when working in peer workshop. My peer helped me realize that my paper didn’t flow. Talking through my ideas with my peer helped me add important missing details.” In studio, conversation pauses to unpack generic terms such as “flow.” What does this mean—and in the interactive inquiry approach—*how so and why?* In studio, class members de-code what flow looks like, or question what does writing without flow read like. Point to where, specifically, does the disruption of flow happen. What can we do, what writing moves, help with flow? One student remarks, “when flow is missing, that is the equivalent of missing logic.” Although seemingly simple and obvious, conversation and dialogue help writers to be more self-reflexive as readers, as listeners. The act of talking-through a piece of writing, describing one’s intent, naming points of confusion, and grappling with seemingly commonplace terms results in the development of student agency and the making of more audience-ready texts.

Writing Studio, as students attest, cultivates a safe, low-stakes place in which writers can process slowly and explore rhetorical choices. Emphasis remains on learning through risk-taking, on conversation, and on writer development. In her reflective writing, Emily explained, “The Writing Studio gave me an opportunity to showcase my work in a low-stakes setting, which allowed me to grow as a writer. I never felt like others were judging me for my work; it felt like the instructor and students were genuinely interested in helping me improve my work.” Ruby, a second student in the same focus group, added: “Yes! Writing Studio offers students a safe place to analyze their own writings....This class made me more comfortable writing papers. I am less afraid to start a writing project now.” The idea that writing

instruction feels unsafe or high-stakes may seem foreign to, or be forgotten by, many in higher education. However, we don't have to search too far to locate public cries of discontentment concerning student writing. High-stakes testing and school writing remove creative enterprise from writing to the point that many students arrive to first-year composition with grave disdain and dangerous apathy about writing, viewing the act more as a subset of skills, a performance metric. Many colleagues from across different disciplines fail to regard writing as a content area, which contributes to myths of skills-only instruction.

Justin McCoy and Jasara Norton, full-time Composition Instructors, taught the first pilot sections of Writing Studio. In a conversational two-hour interview, we talked at length about the difference between studio and composition instruction and what studio offers both teachers and students. The reflections from Justin and Jasara inform the implications section of this article. Placing teacher and student reflections in conversation further models core practices of studio pedagogy: engaged interdependency that breaks down artificial hierarchies and power dynamics between teacher and student and realigns traditional rhetorical concepts such as author and audience within an interdependent relationship that blurs divisions.

As a studio teacher, I participated in the conversation, asking follow-up questions, providing examples, and brainstorming with these two innovators about how to best serve our students. I had to balance the role of both teacher and researcher, and I allowed Justin and Jasara to drive the conversation as to avoid skewing the results. I share selected responses from Justin and Jasara and the core questions that guided our conversation in [the Appendix](#). It is worth mentioning that Justin and Jasara were both brand new to teaching studio and taught the course alongside teaching first-year Composition; therefore, their perspectives offer grounded experience derived from a space of juxtaposition and comparison.

The most explicit difference between studio and general composition classes revolves around the strong sense of community that studio fosters. Justin and Jasara emphasize the community aspect of studio, which works to build relationships, and the intimate environment, which establishes trust and a sense of belonging. To summarize this portion of the conversation, in asking how does teaching studio differ from teaching Composition, Jasara remarks, "I think the community aspect has been the biggest change for me," stressing, "I always want a community-mindset in all of my classes, but this is the first time I feel that we've been able to achieve it." Justin agrees, adding, "Studio is a much more intimate atmosphere." He elaborates, "Students learn to ask one another pertinent questions based on an intimate knowledge about one another's writing styles and tendencies." The conversation turns to relationships—between teacher and students and among students. Both Jasara and Justin independently bring up the one-on-one pedagogical focus of studio, as Justin notes, "You're able to give students more direct and individual attention because it really is an extensive investigation into the writing process," or "into a writer's process," Jasara clarifies.

Studio re-conceptualizes the writing process, a form of hacking, from a normative linear formula to situated, contextual practice. The topic of relationships surfaces again; teaching is so much about forming intimate relationships, loving students and "teaching with love," as bell hooks provocatively argues (*Teaching Critical Thinking* 160). The main difference between studio and composition is the ability to form "full-relationships with students and them having relationships with each other," Jasara concludes. A pedagogical inquiry arises, in which we contemplate, how do teachers form full relationships with students in more traditional curricular spaces; is this possible? What makes this dynamic possible in studio?

Studio reinforces a different dynamic among class members and a different expectation of all community members as collective participants—which echoes Kupper's definition of access as a shared ethic. Teachers share presentation time and space with students. Justin addresses the dramatic shift in the teacher-student and student-to-student dynamics that result in studio compared to FY Composition. He recalls the learning curve that he had to negotiate in studio as a facilitator rather than a teacher-figure, stating, "I must be completely comfortable with spontaneity as opposed to scheduled, planned lessons." Both Justin and Jasara use the terms extemporaneous, impromptu, and spontaneous to describe studio teaching and classroom action, referencing back to the thematic thread of situated learning in real-time that students also acknowledged.

Related to extemporaneous teaching, Jasara and Justin agree that one of the most rewarding and equally challenging parts of studio pedagogy is relinquishing control of content design and delivery to students. For example, students set the class agenda each class period by focusing on different writers' immediate needs. While the teacher must orchestrate the schedule of who presents and when, students name the subject area based on what naturally emerges from their different writings. Jasara recalls the difficulty, in terms of teacher personae and cultural training, of letting go of a tightly structured course schedule. She says, "students collaborate to determine the course content for each day. This completely changes the role and function of the teacher." Justin picks right up, claiming, "yes, I don't teach content; we actively do things, and the students teach me and one another." To quote a phrase from Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes, studio teachers must learn to embrace "rhetorical flexibility" (Interview). In studio, teachers must sporadically shift audiences, relocate genre conventions, situate texts within constraints, and

bend to different contexts, all at the same time. Perhaps the most difficult transition revolves around studio's hack of the role of teacher, and in turn, the pedagogical activity and delivery of how to direct class time and motion.

In a single fifty-minute Studio session, Astrid, who describes herself as an “anxious writer,” presents a writing project prompt from her class and questions how to start the project. The conversation unfolds questions about introductions—and drafting and arrangement—and “about getting words on the page,” as one student remarked. “The first words don’t have to be the first lines of the paper,” a peer comments. Everyone writes together to imagine ways of starting the assignment. Astrid leaves class with a plan and with clarity about how to begin the project “a whole month before the project due date.” Although a small, local moment, her progress exemplifies one example of how a student writer locates access. Another student finds purpose in giving feedback. Chloe confesses, “I didn’t expect anyone would want or take my advice.” “For the first time,” she experiences authorial confidence and pride in her rhetorical ability.

**Data from Studio class observation note, Spring 2014*

As you “talk back” to teacher comments (or the absence of teacher comments), I would like for you to get in the habit of doing three things: 1) frequently re-read your comments, 2) offer an analysis of the comments—so what does the speaker mean, and how do you speak back? In one instance you are the audience, listening to feedback, but through talking-back, you become the writer/speaker, and 3) offer a reading of the tone in your voice and body: what feelings or emotions are present, and how does the tone reflect your motive. In other words, why are you talking-back: to gain information, to make a demand or request, to earn a better grade, to clarify misunderstanding? Try to name your motive(s) as well as the potential motives in the statements to which you are talking back. You are talking back to a teacher comment—which was talking back to your writing—which was talking back to an assignment. Identify the complexity of the rhetorical situation: who/what uttered the first speech situation to which you are talking back? Try to sketch the evolution of speaker/audience: who gets the first word; the last word? How does this make you feel?

**Assignment description of “Taking-Back” Journal*

Embodied Pedagogical Praxis

In culmination, studio curricula hacks composition by re-embodiment writing and rhetoric instruction. Studio’s explicit focus on active production, multiple means and modes of knowing, and participatory curricular design can result in students’ development of deep, interactive relationships with themselves and peers as writers and readers. Studio can teach students to come to know their bodies as essential composing materials by differentiating writing acts as situated in time and place. In talking with a group of five Studio students, from two different class sections, many admit a “fear of writing” and prefer grade deductions and even failing grades rather than sharing work-in-process with peers and teachers—writing stages that make visible the incoherence and messiness of composing. One student, Mark, laughingly acknowledges that he actually skips his Composition class on peer response days. Studio can hack such fear by easing anxiety and making space for the emotional and sociological parts of writing instruction. The textboxes illuminate Astrid’s and Chole’s experiences in a single studio class and radiates what studio affords for students; after all, a traditional Composition class does not usually or often allow a whole-class discussion devoted to one writer’s needs.

Having a conversation about one’s own work, at early stages in the process, and taking risks to make process public, re-empowers student writers by shifting attention away from finished products. Studio hacks traditional curricular space by re-coding pedagogical aims and participant motivations; students root and plant, resting in moments of incompleteness, learning to feel vulnerable in order to regain mobility amidst constraint. I refer to this state of being and becoming as acquiring rhetorical presence, or an embodied positionality in which writers move between the liminal roles of author and audience and locate a sense of purpose and voice.

In teaching rhetorical presence, much studio work is devoted to developing writer agency. We use concepts repeatedly, such as *writer reflexivity*, to discuss and practice how to critically respond to writing in their own voices. The collaborative, intimate space of studio asks writers to publicly share their works-in-progress in order to receive feedback and to learn, in return, to give feedback, both written and orally, both on-the-spot and in more reflective

interchanges. Studio promotes what I call *talking-back*, a rhetorical move that prompts, over time, a subversive process of re-composure—writing over again one’s subjectivity as a writer. In class, we theorize the writing self as a palimpsest, a multi-textual, highly rewriteable material being that carries traces of memory and prior stories. Class time, a 50-minute session that meets once a week, centers on opening spaces for inventive production and revision—not only of texts but also of writer identities. Speaking about silenced, minority voices, bell hooks defines, “...talking back is...the expression of our movement from object to subject” (9). In Studio, I assign a semester-long “talking-back” journal, an assignment in which students learn to speak back to teacher comments on writing projects or other assignments. The journal builds cumulative and acute awareness to the sound and location of one’s own voice in a context of emerging agency. We read teacher comments as one part of a rhetorical situation, as responses in a larger context of writing. Across the semester, students engage in “talking-back” as a method of “interpretative paraphrase” through side-margin comments, double-entry notebooks, or placing teacher comments in a side-by-side relationship with student comments, and audio recording with transcriptions.

In an end of semester written reflection, Terry recognizes a different temporal structure at play in Studio. He writes, “This class is beneficial because students receive immediate, respectful feedback from other students of different disciplines.” He also celebrates receiving feedback from peers who have different disciplinary backgrounds. Jasara, Terry’s Studio instructor, reflects on how Studio alters time for, and simultaneously, the role of, teachers: “As a Studio teacher, or facilitator, rather, I must be completely comfortable with spontaneity as opposed to scheduled, planned lessons.”

**Student written reflection and teacher comment from interview*

Jamal is writing what’s called an Issue Brief. In naming weekly writing goals, students in the class identify projects from their classes: research essay is the most common among the 8 students, but other examples include a Literature Prompt (literary analysis of an assigned reading) and a Review Essay (of a physical space). Today is Jamal’s “artifact presentation,” and he presents on his Sociology essay assignment. Stemming from previous class discussion on *genre*, Jamal asks, “Is a “Brief” a genre? What an advanced place to begin rhetorical inquiry. At the beginning stages of the project, as Studio directs, Jamal starts with an analysis of the assignment prompt. He enters class without a topic, “no idea at all.” One of his main concerns and goals for the class session is topic selection. Jamal identifies two criteria: he needs definition and research. The topic must be a current issue in culture and society. Jamal shares a few possibilities, and after class discussion and some impromptu Google searching, he settles on the topic of “bride burning in India.” Whereas he thinks “this might be the most difficult topic,” he believes that this topic may be easier because of audience curiosity. He leaves class with a topic and preliminary research conducted.

**Data from Studio class observation note, Spring 2014*

Ann E. Berthoff identifies “interpretive paraphrase” as a complex act “at the heart of composing [where] a writer is in dialogue with his various selves and with his audience” (*The Making of Meaning* 72). In double-entry notebook posts, students get in touch with question-posing and memory, documenting confusion and illustrating experience with emotion, anecdote, or other associations. In “Why Are We Here,” John Tassoni refers to Writing Studio as an “odd school space” (1). What makes studio different from what is typical or expected? Rather than ask bodies to shift, adjust, alter, and change in order to fit tightly anchored curricular spaces and schedules, bodies-as-they-are-and-where-they-are take center stage through active grappling and doing, atypical rehearsals and impromptu interactions, and reconfigurations of time. *Studio bends time*. Structure and time center on spontaneous learning and extemporaneous teaching—acts that take place in real-time, learning how to adapt and act on the spot. Studio time operates in a way similar to what Koppers defines as “crip-time,” a time structured according to improvisation. Teachers and students, together, rearrange expectations, habits, and roles in order to participate as co-creators of knowledge and co-creators of curricular, pedagogical space. In the textbox reflection, both a student and teacher reflect on studio as a learning space in the moment, referencing metaphors of time: immediacy and spontaneity. For students, the ability to receive feedback on-the-spot provides practical, emotional, and social ramifications; but, for teachers, as Jasara notes, the entire structure of planning, scaffolding, and scheduling transforms to more of an embodied performance: what needs to happen now, why, and how? Teachers and administrators carry the responsibility to carve, or hack, pedagogical space to make room for student voices, creating safe yet productive spaces in which in-process production and “failure” function as “important part[s] of writing development” (Brooke and Carr 62). Students deliver ideas not yet complete and pages scribbled with not-yet-organized or fully analyzed prose;

students write missing parts based on feedback. Too often in standard classrooms and writing assignments, the available means seem limited or prescribed according to one mode of knowing and consequently “one kind of composing” (Alexander). Writing assignments, in this regard, are not invitations for how one is able to respond but rather partially planned out means, templates, that position writers as a class of systematic bodies, in which mode, medium, and writing technology are already, for the most part, determined, regardless of situated positionality or embodied learning.

Studio, however, is not completely free from standard structure or disciplinary convention. As Jamal’s account indicates, students often workshop genres assigned from classes across the curriculum. In these school writings, teachers remain the primary audience; grades remain intact, a real, material consequence of the writing act. However, studio’s active production and collaborative peer-driven workshop approach hacks traditional practice. As indicative of and unique to studio, student writing needs, what they’re doing in the moment, sets the tone and content for the class agenda. As a class observation exemplifies, one 50-minute session, stemming from, primarily, one student’s artifact presentation of an assignment, opens theoretical conversation about genre, convention, audience, and invention. Further, based on what other students are working on, there is more than enough content for proceeding classes, which will shift focus to other students’ writings. The class learns about Jamal’s progress at a future date when he delivers his work-in-progress presentation. Studio curricula, then, bends and re-shapes based on students’ writing goals and bodily interactions. Teachers as *facilitators*, to use Jasara’s phrasing, stage action and motions by offering expert analysis, posing questions, taking notes, channeling emotions, and reflecting on larger themes, purposes, and issues.

Disabling Composition by Re-embodiment Pedagogies

Making first-year Composition more accessible means re-embodiment the classroom to disable standard, exclusive systems. A consideration of difference and disability encourages a more inclusive curriculum. What I have described in the above pages offers a framework for hacking by implementing an embodied pedagogical praxis derived from a studio approach to the teaching of writing. Studio offers an invention-rich approach that makes use of multiple methods and adheres to embodied difference. Given how academia is typically structured, we need more pedagogical restructuring that empowers students: thus, the intersection of hacking and disabling.

Disabling entails blurring divisions and opening gates—flattening steps—to invite participation from students with significant difference such as students with intersectional identities, students of color, students from multi-literacies and multilingual backgrounds, students with disabilities, and first-time in college students. WPAs and teachers can hack composition to open space for more full-bodied pedagogies, pedagogies that tap into rich and uncharted bodily affordances. Full-bodied means incorporating both mind and body in an inexorable relationship, and braiding together the intersections among home, social, cultural, and bodily dimensions that construct subjectivities. Studio emphasizes the minute bodily actions and moves that a particular composer makes, what a body does, literally, to produce deliverable meaning. Different bodies read and write the world through variations of means: kinesthetic, visual, aural, and verbal modes of knowing and communicating. Bodies have different capacities for multimodal means of communication, and human communication in any form, speaking, writing, performing, happens by a particular body in a given time, location, and space, in complex interaction with technologies, materials, and additional bodies.

Working Within Constraints

The story I share lauds success in terms of student learning; nevertheless, I encountered numerous road-blocks in designing and implementing Writing Studio as a new, sustainable course. Unfortunately, the class is currently not offered due to enrollment and staffing difficulties, marking this curricular design effort as both a failure and a success. Hacking will continue, although hacking will have to change form and scope. Consequently, studio will have to travel and shape-shift to remain viable. Studio’s shaky survival is neither unique to my institution nor surprising in today’s academic landscape. As one colleague from another institution questions, “how could a studio model apply at an institution that is concerned with FTE’s. Also, how do you build a culture where people who want to take this class for little to no credit actually enroll?” These questions capture the challenges that studio likely faces on any campus. The first question addresses financial and bureaucratic values of education and student learning, and presses more than ever for the importance of creative hacking and hacking from the inside out. The second question centers on student stakeholders and the arduous labor of changing an entrenched writing culture that functions according to neo-liberal, for-profit, academic-ableist ideologies (Alexander; McRuer; Dolmage). The university very much operates according to what McRuer critiques as a corporate model of “measurement and marketability” (*Crip Theory* 148). A low-enrolled one-hour course does not bring capital to the university.

The largest hurdle studio faces is whether students enroll in the course—whether enough students enroll to save the course from cancellation. Student enrollment continues to be a point of tension, as upper administrators track course success by dollars and numbers. Studio, as a stand-alone, one-hour course that enrolls an average of five students costs the university too much with too little to show in return. A low-enrolled elective class that does not increase FTEs^[8] remains invisible and insignificant to the university. Although students praise studio's intentionally small and intimate class size to be one of the most rewarding aspects of the class, the "low enrollment" status proves difficult to overshadow. Studio is always under scrutiny for its value. What does this class do for the university in terms of cost analysis; for the department in terms of FTEs? Who will teach the course and under what conditions? Does the success of so few actually matter?

New course design is not always possible due to budget cuts, staff shortages, low student enrollment, or course cancellations from upper admin. Aside from administrative concerns, equally pressing is the question how do WPAs and teachers motivate students to take a one-hour credit elective? Students' already congested schedules tend to prevent them from taking additional courses beyond the trajectory of requirements. Academic culture does not always welcome learning for the sake of learning, or elective courses that students take simply to improve. Students who explore too much or take too long to graduate incur financial penalties in some states. In the state in which I teach, the State Legislature passed the Excess Hours Surcharge, which charges students an extra amount for every hour they take over the degree credit requirements for undergraduate graduation. This new implementation erects another "steep step" for many students, and makes cross-curricular learning almost impossible. This type of law "disproportionally impacts" students with disabilities, Dolmage argues. In "The Devos Effect," Dolmage explains that it takes a disabled student 25% longer to graduate than non-disabled counterparts," which leads to increased student debt" and, thus, further exclusion and marks as unfit by university culture.

In addition to the challenge of student enrollment, Writing Studio remains difficult to staff because it typically registers as a faculty overload since the one-hour course must be taught in addition to a teacher's full-time load (4-4 at my institution for full-time instructors). Alternatively, faculty recruitment falls to part-time teachers willing to pick up an extra course.

From a writing administration standpoint, training teachers to hack curricula to create more accessible writing pedagogies remains of the utmost value. Workshops and faculty development sessions on studio pedagogies, for all teachers, help hack the curriculum at large. If all teachers, through programmatic practice, embed studio pedagogies into the standard composition curriculum, together, we hack open access and make learning more available to all students.

When newly designed classes are not possible, hacking, curricular restructuring, and disabling must come from within. If a stand-alone, by registration studio class is not sustainable, I have learned that I must hack open access from the inside out by bringing disability and studio to mainstream classrooms—carving out deliberate space for varied and diverse learning styles. An *embedded* studio model infuses studio moments into general classes; embedding, in this way, serves as a method of hacking. The embedded model bypasses bureaucracy, the logistics of additional scheduling and staffing and the issue of student enrollment, and disables the standard pedagogical system. Studio pedagogies fold in to composition curricula, re-infusing an embodied praxis into standard curricular spaces. Teachers and WPAs, through the fusion of studio and disability, can do composition in the presence of disability through these additional methods of hacking:

- Hack composing process. Foreground invention as a recursive process that occurs throughout composing. Introduce the concept of "re-invention" as a form of revision that cycles back to invention as a vital part of any change. Explore composing as a series of micro-processes and make room for spontaneous, emergent invention.
- Hack the traditional separation of disciplines. Work on writing using the discourses of other disciplines and modes. Let students inform these discourses based on their home, social, and cultural literacies. For example, working with paragraphs in a "frame-by-frame" approach encourages writers to play with storyboarding and film composing as an invention or re-invention tool.
- Hack the linguistic-centric mode of writing. Invite bodily participation through a multitude of means. Employ and invent pedagogies that incorporate movement exercises, vocal play, improv speaking and writing. Create exercises that fuse together memory work, aural and vocal experimentation, breath work, and contact movement. During these activities, the perceiving, sensual body becomes a felt part of the thinking, mental body, which makes the writing body much more capacious. Use and invite multiple modes and technologies with the belief that bodies communicate with and through a range of modes and technologies and gestures.

Hack disembodied composing practices. Make space for embodied response and embodied analysis, and study how writers use their bodies to compose. A focus on bodies as physical composing and rhetorical materials re-directs attention to kinesthetic and spatial components of writing.

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Appendix: Interview Questions and Select Responses from Teachers

Question 1: How does teaching Studio differ from teaching Composition?

- “I always want a community-mindset in all of my classes, but teaching Studio is the first time I feel that we’ve been able to achieve it.”
- “The main difference between composition and Studio is having full relationships with students and them having relationships with each other.”
- “Students learn to ask one another pertinent questions based on an intimate knowledge about one another’s writing styles and tendencies.”
- “The thing I like about Writing Studio is that it affords us a space to talk about the rhetorical strategies that transcend the first-year writing classroom and the critical faculties to write in various genres, for various audiences, skills that I think will serve students in professional contexts.”
- “In Studio, you’re able to give students more direct and individual attention because it really is an extensive investigation into the writing process.”

Question 2: How does Studio shift the student-teacher dynamic and the student-peer dynamic?

- “Students focus more on engagement with one another because focus is not on me as the teacher.”
- “The students build trust with one another when they share their works so intimately.”
- “I love it when the students take ownership over the course curriculum and content.”
- “Students collaborate to determine the course content for each day. This completely changes the role and function of the teacher.”
- As a Studio teacher, or facilitator, rather, I must be completely comfortable with spontaneity as opposed to scheduled, planned lessons.”
- “I don’t teach content; we actively do things, and the students teach me and one another.”

Notes

1. The presentation pedagogies that I mention derive from John Paul Tassoni’s studio curriculum at Miami University. ([Return to text.](#))
2. In order to assess the first semester pilot sections and institute subsequent curricular re-design plans, with Justin’s assistance, I conducted programmatic research, accumulating statistics related to the grades Studio students earned in their corresponding, self-identified writing classes. The quantitative data draws from the first two sections offered, focusing solely on the TRIO and open enrollment sections. ([Return to text.](#))
3. While my findings may not speak to or extend to all populations or all curricular locations, responding to Peter Smagorinsky’s call to make explicit method choices, I detail from where knowledge derives, showing how my theoretical framework informs my methods of data collection and analysis and how my methods of analysis account for scenes of embodied composing and institutional curricular revision (393). ([Return to text.](#))
4. In “Refiguring Rhetorica,” Dolmage and Lewiecki-Wilson argue that disabled bodies are not average; therefore, large data collection that relies on averages will always overlook or dismiss the outliers where disability resides (27). ([Return to text.](#))

5. In "Stories of Methodology," Price and Kerschbaum posit that merging "collaborative and singular voices" results in a protocol that opens "collective access," or access built together from juxtapositions of difference, "not just for participants alone...but for all of us together." ([Return to text.](#))
6. National enrollment averages for Writing Studio promote caps at 5 students to ensure the one-on-one pedagogical approach. In the two-year pilot study, three sections of Studio enrollment consisted of 15 students (2 in one section, 5 in one section, and 8 in one section). ([Return to text.](#))
7. Justin's role extended beyond teaching the course; he assisted in the initial design and branding of Writing Studio (2012-2013), helping to market the course to stakeholders across campus and teaching the first course section to a target population of TRIO students. ([Return to text.](#))
8. FTE stands for "full-time equivalency," a status or metric that quantifies departments/colleges or other units by number of enrolled students. ([Return to text.](#))

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