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Developing a Learner-Centered Response to Writing through a Graduate Course in Writing-Across-the-Curriculum

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Abstract: Although writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) programs have been commonplace since the 1970s, the focus has largely been on the level of assessment and programmatic development and less on the instructors, particularly graduate teaching assistants (TAs), who adopt these practices. In this article, we describe a pilot WAC graduate-level course in writing pedagogy that our institution developed as part of our recent membership in the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL). We also share how one science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduate student revised her approach to assignment design, feedback, and assessment for a general education course and deepened her understanding of herself as an instructor as well as her students. We end by reflecting on how training in writing pedagogy can support graduate student identity development and improve student learning.

Keywords: writing-across-the-curriculum, graduate students, professional development, teaching, rubrics, reflection

On the first day of the first semester of our institution's new Teaching Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) course, the graduate students were asked to write down on a Google Jamboard what they thought a WAC teacher did. Because they were from disciplines as diverse as chemistry and educational psychology, we were interested to see what their preconceptions of a writing teacher were coming into the class. There were a few responses, such as "correct their grammar mistakes" and "teach the basics," but the discussion that followed revealed that what these teacher-learners really wanted was to better understand their students' needs and teach them to reflect on their learning. However, they just didn't see that as part of teaching writing.

For many graduate students across campus who have served as graders or teaching assistants (TAs) at the University of Arizona, facilitating writing instruction connotes deducting points on a rubric and correcting mistakes in the margins, mostly in the style of the writing instruction they might have received as undergraduates. To counter these views, we hoped the students would come to see that the role of a WAC teacher is not always about writing; sometimes, it is about learning to foster a community where assignments are authentic, feedback is meaningful, and student voices are heard. These goals are inextricably linked to our perceptions of ourselves as instructors. But how do we teach graduate TAs, who are often simply given a rubric designed by someone else, to teach writing this way?

As WAC graduate courses and fellows programs in teaching writing have become more common, there has been a shift away from practical skills development, which Barbara Walvoord popularized in the 1960s (Palmquist et al., 2020), toward more metacognitive approaches to how and why we write. This approach—which has informed programs such as Elizabeth Wardle's Faculty Writing Fellows Program (Miami University of Ohio, 2023), as well as our institution's WAC Faculty Fellows Program—specifically focuses on threshold concepts and disciplinary conventions of writing. This perspective teaches instructors to understand the rhetorical elements of writing (What am I writing? Who am I writing for? Why am

I writing it?) and the learner-centered nature of its instruction (Who are my learners? What do they know? What are their goals?). Theoretically, it stems from the idea that when students engage with writing that enables them to think like a member of their discipline, they will develop more facility in writing for various situations within it (DeWitt, 2009).

This also means that the writing instructor's goals should be to facilitate an awareness that genres exist within discourse communities and to ask students to participate in these communities with increased expertise. This attention to genre and disciplinarity, which draws from two of the five threshold concepts posited by Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2015), is now foundational to many WAC programs across the country (Anson, 2020). This evidence-based shift puts theory first and practice second, suggesting that TAs across the curriculum can benefit from conceptualizing themselves as writing instructors first and then learning the tips and strategies that will aid in their teaching.

In the past three years, our large public research institution in the Southwestern United States has made encouraging strides toward creating more widespread teaching professional development for faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate students. Since 2020, various groups on campus have formalized a program, redesigned General Education with a new writing attribute, and joined the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), a national teaching development network for STEM graduate students and postdocs. As part of our application for membership in CIRTL, the steering committee proposed creating a course for graduate students to improve writing instruction.

Because one of the core philosophies of WAC is to recognize and support the use of writing across all courses offered at a learning institution (Kiefer et al., 2021), Kristin, one of the authors of this article, helped pilot a faculty learning community (FLC) with Dr. Aimee Mapes, the new Director of WAC, in Spring and Fall 2021. Together, they gathered informal feedback via pre- and post-surveys. The following year, Kristin and Aimee proposed a new course as an elective in the Graduate

Interdisciplinary Program (GIDP) in College Teaching, a 10-credit certificate offered through the teaching center, that would honor the conceptual turn toward threshold concepts while also teaching practical skills. Kristin taught the first iteration of the course in Spring 2022, and Faqryza, the other author of this article, was one of the first graduate students to take the course.

In this piece, we briefly share the context and development of this course and Faqryza's experience adopting two key WAC response principles from the course—rubrics and reflection—into her general education course on human development. Faqryza's own reflection in the second half of the paper demonstrates how incorporating WAC principles into the classroom and listening to students' voices reflecting on what they learned about writing can enhance student learning and instructor identity development. We end by sharing ideas for developing WAC courses and workshops for graduate student TAs across disciplines to support their identity development and help them effectively reflect on and improve how they conceptualize and respond to student writing.

Context for WAC Course

As part of the new WAC and General Education programs, both of which focus on disciplinary thinking and "ways of knowing," the FLC that Aimee and Kristin facilitated focused on writing in the disciplines. The course Faqryza took (see the syllabus here or in Appendix A) is based largely on what we learned from informal pre- and post-survey data from the FLC participants, who were graduate students as well as faculty. What we learned, overall, is that participants ($n = 8$) connected most with threshold concepts, disciplinary writing, and knowledge transfer (Wardle et al., 2020) but reported being unsure how to use those ideas to improve feedback, create effective rubrics, or assign meaningful reflection prompts.

To learn more about how to tailor the course to TAs, Aimee and Kristin met and talked with Dr. Elizabeth Wardle and Dr. Chris Anson about their experiences with graduate students and faculty; using their

insights, we developed the course around four major projects we hoped would give TAs deeper insight into the genres their students were writing in and how to give feedback to improve student writing and still be manageable for them as graders. The course involved an annotated journal article, an assignment prompt, a "best practices" guide, and a final change-making project (such as a workshop for new TAs, a podcast episode about writing in their discipline, or revised materials for a course they were teaching, etc.).

As we continue to grow WAC at our institution, we have seen several shifts in the right direction. We are offering the WAC graduate course each spring as an elective in the GIDP. In the two years since the inception of this course, we have hired one new faculty member in the teaching center, Dr. Emily Jo Schwaller, who is devoted almost exclusively to WAC. We have offered a range of graduate student/postdoc learning communities specifically focused on writing pedagogy and are currently piloting a one-unit version of the course for TAs across campus.

Faqryza's Reflection

As a doctoral student in Educational Psychology, I primarily gained knowledge about writing for academic purposes from my courses and my research internships. Still, I didn't know how to translate this expertise to students. In this section, I describe the process of redesigning a signature writing assignment and creating a new rubric for the assignment in a general education course I taught asynchronously online. This was a lower-division course on human development for students majoring in psychology or nursing, with an enrollment size of 36; I was the instructor of record. I describe the insights I gained from implementing my new approach to the signature assignment and how I taught it in my Fall 2022 course. Signature assignments are the emphasis of a particular course; they are most representative of students' learning, allowing them to show what an authentic and meaningful learning experience would look like. For an assignment of this nature, it is important that the rubric reflects

the process-based nature of learning that emphasizes consistent effort and revision (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015).

The signature assignment for this course was a term paper, and the goal of the paper was for students to apply prominent theories of development in the design of math lesson plans for an elementary school and then critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the theories. This goal was consistent with two of the learning outcomes for the course, which were to a) describe and apply prominent theories of development in a real-world setting and b) analyze and critique theories of development. TAs were given the assignment sheet and rubric.

Seeing the value of the original assignment, I redesigned it for the WAC course and for my own iteration of the human development course so that students had to adopt the perspective of an educational advisor and present revisions to the curriculum to parents and guardians at a parent-teacher association meeting (see an excerpt of my revised assignment sheet in Appendix B). In this redesigned assignment sheet, the writing context was made explicit and realistic (National Writing Project, 2020). Another major change was adding an incentive for students to incorporate and reflect on feedback; I created a criterion in the rubric for how well students utilized feedback in order to highlight the importance of revision and emphasize writing as process-based. Students would complete the assignment in stages, submitting each for feedback.

Next, I revised the rubric to better align with the values and goals of the assignment. When redesigning the rubric, I frequently referred to our WAC course. For example, when assessing the organization and formatting of a draft, I thought about how I should assess it based on a scale of growing progression from "emerging" to "developing" and "mastering" rather than correctness (Athon, 2019).

I also thought about advocating for language diversity in my rubric. Having a rubric that acknowledges students' diverse language backgrounds is important in ensuring that students who are less proficient in academic English are not at a disadvantage (Athon, 2019). For example, rather than

deducting points for "incorrect" grammar, which is contrary to the spirit of language diversity and works under the assumption that grammar and spelling are indicators of good writing (Athon, 2019), I instead considered how the syntax and overall style may or may not be communicatively effective for a given genre. In the consideration of genres, it is important to know one's audience. To help students with this, I emphasized that the audiences for whom the students are writing are the parents and guardians of students in elementary school. Hence, when revising the criteria for effective communication and "grammar and spelling," I included assessments on whether students had considered the needs of their audience and used syntax and style that were appropriate for this audience.

I also used the rubric for formative feedback, rather than simply to grade the project, and used it to draft my feedback to the students. In other words, I supplemented the information in the rubric with comments that went deeper into the specific rationale behind the grading. For example, if a student received a score of 2 out of 3 for the "Audience Awareness" component, I would supplement this with comments such as, "Target terms such as 'assimilation' were not defined. Please keep in mind who your audience is!" I found that this process was helpful for me as the grader because it made my rationale clearer to the student, thus lessening the likelihood that the student would be confused or frustrated by their score. It was helpful for the student because it pinpointed an area they would need to focus on when revising their draft.

The revised rubric also reflected a consideration of the genre that students were tasked with. For example, the assignment prompted students to communicate with a non-specialized audience, and the rubric stipulated how this could be done. Thus, the way I responded to students' writing did not stray from the genre delineated in the rubric. Simply put, the revised rubric acted as a guide for me (the grader) and the students.

At the end of the unit, I asked students to write a reflection to accompany their project after they submitted their final drafts. I prompted students to reflect on what they had learned about themselves as writers

and about the writing process. For the first time, I was able to peek into their thinking and writing processes; information from these processes was integral to my understanding of what students had learned and what had worked or not for the revised assignment. Two themes stood out from their reflections: a) students' understanding of the audience's needs grew tremendously, and b) students deeply appreciated the chance for revision. By teaching them about the rubric criterion for audience awareness and targeting my feedback to the rubric, they became more perceptive to the differences between their style of writing and their audience's needs. As one student wrote:

> The assignment gave me an opportunity to improve my audience awareness. My first draft of activities was written as it was going to be read by an audience familiar with the theories. I had to adjust and clearly define both theories to cater to an audience that would be hearing of the theories for the first time for the subsequent drafts.

In a slight contrast, another student wrote how they had a difficult time adjusting their language to fit the needs of a non-specialized audience. The student wrote:

> Having to act as the "educational staff member" was quite difficult. Even having to write down everything more concisely, simpler, and clearly, and at a universal level so everyone could understand was difficult . . . I learned all of these things about myself as a writer.

While this student admitted that it was difficult to write in a way that translates difficult concepts to be more "universal," they also showed an emerging awareness of their audience's needs. In essence, students showed an understanding of the importance of the rhetorical situation and how they needed to adjust their writing according to different genres, which was one of the major learning outcomes I accomplished in the WAC course. This exemplifies how the transfer of knowledge transpired

between the WAC course and my own course in the form of improved student learning outcomes.

The second theme is the appreciation for revision. From the students' reflections, they seemed to have learned about the process-based nature of writing and the importance of revision from the way the assignment was structured. Students had to turn in their notes (which I call the "brain dump sheets") and write two drafts (which I call the activities rough draft and the comparison rough draft) before the final paper. Additionally, a criterion for revision was included in the final paper rubric that assessed students' engagement with the feedback on their notes and rough drafts. One student wrote:

> I learned just how vital outlining (or the brain dump sheet) is in the writing process . . . typically I regard outlining as something that is not necessary and a waste of time. However, with the brain dump sheets, I felt like my writing was a lot more organized and flowed much better together. I put in a good amount of detail in my brain dump, making my rough draft easier to write because all the information was already together.

Another student wrote:

> Receiving feedback on both the brain dump sheets and the rough drafts set me up for success on the final draft. I found the feedback very useful to ensure that I am on the right track. I revised my activities and comparison rough drafts before combining them to produce my final draft. While writing this paper I learned how important revisions are. When revising I appreciated feedback to get a second eye on my paper. I learned how useful feedback can be.

Students also noted how my response to their writing had impacted the way that they approached the assignment itself. For example, a student wrote that having an instructor who engaged with their work and left feedback helped fuel their motivation during the revision process:

> The assumptions I had about my writing that were challenged based on feedback was on the perspective of how my professors read my work. I have been particularly

appreciative of the specific feedback I have received on assignments in my writing in this class. All the notes I have read on my work have been spot on and motivational to know that my work is being read and supported by my professor . . . The support makes a meaningful impression and is motivational when working on other assignments.

Here, I realized that revision was crucial to the students' writing process and helpful in encouraging them to cross the threshold of seeing writing as a process. My students also seemed to approach the task with a more positive mindset than in previous semesters, which was exciting to me as an instructor. Furthermore, I learned that leaving constructive, individualized feedback that students could use for future assignments can be a source of motivation for the students. While I uniformly used the revised rubric for all students, I also learned how to write comments tailored to each student's performance without taking too much time to do so. Moreover, I learned how meaningful instructors' responses can be for students when they approach revision. As the student said, it made them feel "supported," knowing their work is being read closely.

In previous semesters, when I had used the original assignment rubric, a few students were not always keen on completing this assignment. While many excelled, a few experienced confusion surrounding the assignment. There was no assigned reflection, which meant I did not have much insight into students' thinking; however, a couple of students left comments in the Student Course Surveys regarding the signature assignment. One semester, a student wrote, "The assignment was laid out very confusing. It was not very well explained thus is why I probably did not get scored very well on papers as I thought. I did everything but then I would be missing something." Another student wrote, "The way this TA graded was very harsh." These past comments indicated that some students felt frustrated with how I graded and explained the assignment. I had never considered myself to be a "harsh" grader, but upon reflection of the way I graded (e.g., penalizing grammatical mistakes), it may have been difficult to avoid being regarded as a harsh, non-learner-centered grader. The

student responses I received when I implemented the revised assignment sheet and rubric are, therefore, in stark contrast with the ones I had received in the past.

Initially, I was concerned about how leaving individualized comments might be time-consuming; however, having the revised rubric to guide the comments actually saved time and streamlined the grading process. Moreover, with the rubric focusing more on the idea of writing-as-a-process, the feedback that I gave students also leaned towards actionable steps that students could take during the revision process rather than plain criticism. For example, when using the original rubric, I left comments like "There are instances of incorrect spelling." While this comment explained why points were deducted, it was simply a piece of criticism that did not explain *how* the student could revise their work. With the revised rubric, though, I left comments such as "There are instances where you did not follow the citation style specified for this assignment (e.g., last paragraph on page 3). When revising, please refer to the assignment sheet for examples and instructions on how to use this citation style." With this type of feedback, I hoped to at least provide clearer guidance on how students could revise their work.

This experience of creating a process-based rubric based on the foundational ideas of WAC and of reading students' reflections boosted my confidence as an instructor. Importantly, it has given me more clarity on who I *want* to be as an instructor. This experience has facilitated my process of becoming a learner-centered instructor who supports students in their writing and learning in several ways. Essentially, students' needs are closely intertwined with my instructor identity. First, creating a new rubric that reflects my students' diverse languages and backgrounds, as well as the process-based nature of learning, has allowed students to revise and improve their work over time. By emphasizing the threshold concept that "all writers have more to learn" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 59), students learned how to incorporate the feedback that was given to them,

and in return, I learned how to give feedback that students could feasibly implement.

Second, reading the students' reflections taught me about the strengths and weaknesses of the assignment and assessment design. By listening to their voices, I learned that including low-stakes assessments where students could still get feedback on their writing was essential to their investment in the project as well as their learning. Through the low-stakes assignments (e.g., the "brain dump sheets"), I responded to students' writing with clear, constructive feedback, which students then used to adjust their performance on the subsequent bigger assignments (e.g., the rough drafts). This type of back-and-forth between the students and me facilitated engagement with writing and feedback. When students know that their instructor is engaging with their writing deeply and meaningfully, they are more likely to also engage deeply and meaningfully with the instructor's feedback, ultimately encouraging students to apply strategies to improve their work and reflect on their learning. With this process, I also hope to support students in developing self-regulation and meta-cognitive skills (Ambrose et al., 2010). I want to be an instructor who considers students' voices by prompting them to share a reflection of their thinking and learning processes, enabling me to not only learn about the strengths and weaknesses of a pedagogical design but also to sharpen students' ability to monitor their progress.

Reflecting on this experience, my perception of response and assessment has also changed. It became clear to me that responding to students' writing can hone me into a learner-centered instructor if I place importance on implementing writing assessments and providing feedback that emphasizes progress and process. Learning to develop this type of response and assessment also made me critically engage with the ways that assessments can be used to foster positive relationships with writing and how writing can be framed to students as a valuable tool for learning. In the same vein, it allowed me to critically analyze how certain assessment designs and rubrics can evoke negative outlooks on writing and

perpetuate practices that are contradictory to the values of language diversity and writing as a process.

Further Considerations

A few key themes surfaced as we reflected on what Faqryza learned about herself and her students by adopting WAC principles and adapting her approach to assignment design, feedback, and assessment. First, because so many TAs are asked to grade writing without much instruction in giving feedback and assessing writing, many struggle with knowing when and how much feedback to give students, or they take too much time correcting spelling or filling out a rubric. This tendency often leads to dissatisfaction with teaching writing because it is not seen as an integral part of the learning process. With Faqryza's experience in mind, it seems clear that graduate student instructors benefit from training in WAC's fundamental principles, particularly regarding instructor identity, feedback, and assessment. If graduate student TAs are not trained to think critically about their role as writing teachers across disciplines or what they are assigning, giving feedback on, and grading, there is little chance that they will develop the rhetorical and metacognitive skills needed to become a learner-centered teacher, much less a WAC practitioner.

As a co-teaching team this year, Emily Jo and Kristin made a few key changes to the WAC course, primarily in response to student interest around response and assessment. The feedback we received via an informal post-course survey from Faqryza's class told us they particularly liked applying threshold concepts to practical tips and the learner-centered activities we did on peer review, grading, and assessment. Conversely, they struggled with understanding the rhetorical situation and discourse communities. When asked how the course contributed to outcomes in the GIDP, it helped them "identify and interpret characteristics of effective learner-centered teaching" and "make instructional decisions grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning." As one wrote, the course "explained how to teach methods of writing, which can help learners [graduate

students in the program] demonstrate excellence in learner-centered college teaching."

In revising the course, we flipped the assignment sequence so that the students would do a rhetorical analysis of a piece of writing in their field first and then redesign (or design) a writing assignment in their discipline. We knew from student feedback that they struggled to redesign a writing assignment based solely on principles in teaching and learning theory; as such, we started by introducing them to the idea that writing is context-specific and based on a community's shared values and needs (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). Because of the interest in assessment and a recent campus-wide WAC commitment to diversity and inclusion, we condensed the amount of time we spent on learning theories. Instead, we substituted two weeks exclusively devoted to assessment, during which students created a tool to accompany their (re)designed assignment. To accommodate the new unit, we condensed the third and fourth projects into one project, giving students the option to do the third project (a guide for writing in a discipline) as the final. This year, we also piloted a 1-credit version of the course for graduate student TAs in writing-intensive courses who do not have time in their schedules to take a full 3-unit course. As part of our work with CIRTL, we are also considering ways for students to disseminate what they have learned after taking the course. This article is one of those ways.

Continuing to focus on improving the experience of teaching and assessing writing for graduate TAs remains a focus of our work. We have come to realize that teaching TAs the importance of designing effective prompts, giving meaningful feedback and requiring revision, and assessing using more ethical practices is not just about teaching pedagogy in writing. It is about teaching them to become more learner-centered practitioners who know how to listen to and learn from their students. As Faqryza's story demonstrates, teaching TAs to think about how they teach and assign writing can positively influence their own development as instructors and strengthen the bond between WAC pedagogy and student learning.

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Appendix A
Excerpt from Graduate Course Syllabus & Assignments
Course Title: Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum

Course Description

This course takes inspiration from the belief that all writers have more to learn—and that we are *all* teachers of writing. In this project-based seminar, we will explore writing and learn strategies for making writing a more integrated, fundamental part of our teaching practice and disciplines, also known as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). Students will explore key concepts and theories, translate these ideas into classroom activities, assessment, and assignment prompts; research writing conventions in their disciplines; and propose a project of their choice at the end of the course. Writing expertise is not required! Appropriate for anyone with an interest in learning more about teaching writing at the college level.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, we will:
- Become familiar with key theories in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), including writing tolearn (WTL), writing in the disciplines (WID), threshold concepts, and transfer
- Develop an appreciation for how the rhetorical situation impacts disciplinary understandings of audience, purpose, and context
- Learn strategies for teaching common types of writing in your discipline

Expected Learning Outcomes

- Define context, purpose, audience, and genre as key terms in your field
- Identify principles of WAC instructional design as they apply to specific disciplines
- Analyze writing in the disciplines to understand how conventions differ across contexts
- Develop a set of best practices for teaching and assessing writing in future courses
- Apply best practices in WAC/WID to real-life contexts at our institution

Required Texts & Supplies

Computer with reliable internet connection and webcam/microphone
Adobe Acrobat (or another program to download/annotate readings)
All course readings will be provided as PDFs or as online links through the campus library.

Course Assessments

Weekly Participation

During the weeks we meet in person, you should come prepared with your draft and ready to engage, contribute, and participate in discussions and activities. On weeks we do not meet in person, you will engage in asynchronous activities to help you learn the material and continue to interact with your peers. These activities include a weekly reading journal (graded for completion) and a weekly discussion on D2L (graded using the rubric on D2L). Please reach out to us if you should experience any barriers to full participation. If you miss a week's requirements or a class session, please let us know as soon as you are able so that we can work with you.

Writing Features Assignment

In this assignment, you will select a piece of writing (article, book chapter, public genre) that you have taught, plan to teach, or hope to teach in a future class. The piece you select should exemplify some key features of writing in your field, but it also might point toward emerging models of writing in the field (visual design, blend of scholarly/popular voice, public audience, etc.). You'll annotate your piece *like a writer* and come to some conclusions about how writing works and how knowledge is communicated in your discipline.

Re/Designed Writing Assignment

For this assignment, you will redesign a writing assignment from a class you have taken or taught or design a new writing assignment for an existing or "dream" course in your field. Your prompt should have a clear purpose (why are you assigning it?), incorporate key terms, tie directly back to an outcome in the course (backwards design, always!), and reflect an understanding of our initial discussions about how writers learn.

Writing Assessment Project

For this assignment, you will create an assessment plan for your writing assignment, such as a rubric, sample feedback, and/or grading contract. You will draw on specific readings and WAC principles to outline your assessment plan and connect it to your writing assignment's learning outcomes. This project is designed to connect to your re/designed writing assignment, backwards design, and your teaching philosophy.

You will pick one of the following for your final project:

Best Practices Guide

For this option, you will synthesize your ideas about writing into a concise guide for students or instructors in your discipline. These best practices will include topics such as a) what the values and goals of writing in the discipline are; b) what genres are typically used and why; c) what

writers struggle with and what effective writers do; d) what "good writing" (i.e., we mean "effective writing!") looks like; and e) creative ideas for teaching. Your guide should identify key challenges involved in writing in your field (including issues of audience, structure, style/tone, citation format, or research) and consider ways to highlight these for readers. Your guide can take any form (a video, webpage, pdf, etc.) that best suits your audience's needs.

"Sites of Writing" Project

For this assignment, you will research a "site" of writing on campus and, based on your best practices guide, propose a project (such as a revised syllabus, a signature assignment, a capstone project in a major, etc.) designed to improve the way undergraduate writing is taught here on campus. You will prepare a mini presentation to your imagined audience justifying why your revised assignment is more useful *or* how you are addressing a writing challenge with sample assignments/assessments and a justification about *why* your approach works (connecting back to theories in writing across the curriculum).

Reflective Practice

Each assignment will include a reflective component—either a video, cover letter, or modality of your choice—in order to establish a reflective practice. A reflection is a useful tool for both students and instructors to create dialogue about assignments, thinking processes, and writing choices. These reflections will also include details about how you might utilize these ideas in your own future contexts.

Grading

Weekly Participation	20%
Writing Features Assignment	15%
Re/Designed Writing Assignment	15%
Writing Assessment Project	20%
Final Project	30%

Appendix B
Excerpts from Revised Assignment and Rubrics

Revised Assignment Sheet

Imagine that you are assuming the role of an educational advisor who is tasked to reform an elementary school's curriculum on basic math. The current curriculum uses lesson plans that are based only on Vygotsky's theory, which is why you will need to compare your recommended theoretical perspective to Vygotsky's theory (i.e., provide the pros and cons of your recommended theory in direct comparison to Vygotsky's). As the advisor, you will present your proposed activities and critical comparison to the students' parents/guardians and the local community during a parent-teacher conference night, which means that your target audience will consist mainly of people who are not familiar with any of the theories.

As stipulated in the syllabus, this paper is worth 35% of your overall course grade. You will complete the paper in a series of four phases:

Activities rough draft (20% of paper grade; due February 3 at 11:59 pm)

Comparison rough draft (20% of paper grade; due February 17 at 11:59 pm)

Final paper (50% of paper grade; due February 24 at 11:59 pm).

Reflection (10% of paper grade; due March 3 at 11:59 pm)

Essentially, you are writing pieces of the final paper in the first and second phases. Specifically, the activities rough draft phase will provide you with the opportunity to conceptualize your two distinct activities (the first half of your final paper) and receive my feedback. Similarly, the comparison rough draft phase will provide you with the opportunity to critically compare your chosen theoretical perspective with Vygotsky's theory (the second half of your final paper) and receive my feedback. The third phase (final paper) is where you will combine your activities rough draft and comparison rough draft after revising them to form one paper.

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Please take the rough drafts seriously, as they are opportunities for you to receive my feedback. I encourage you to then use the feedback to revise your work before submitting the final paper. For the rough drafts, provide detailed responses that are supported by internal citations. Assume zero knowledge on the part of the reader (remember that you are hypothetically presenting your paper to the students' guardians and the local community!).

The fourth phase, which is the reflection, is for you to look back on your writing and learning experience and share what you've gained from it.

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Activities Rough Draft Rubric (Total points: 12)

Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Formatting	The draft has a cover page that includes the name of the author and the names of the two assigned theories; the draft meets all of these requirements: no longer than 4 pages (including the cover page) and is double-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins	The draft has a cover page that includes the name of the author and the names of the two assigned theories; the draft meets most of these requirements: no longer than 4 pages (including the cover page) and is double-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins	The draft has a cover page but is missing either the name of the author or the names of the two assigned theories *or* the draft is missing a cover page; the draft meets some of these requirements: no longer than 4 pages (including the cover page) and is double-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins

Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Source use and citations	The two required sources (lecture and articles) are used; course readings, ideas, and theoretical frameworks are deeply connected to and effectively inform the draft; the writing shows a deep reflection or analysis of the course content and its importance to real-world application; sources are cited in a way to support claims and provide evidence; internal citations follow the conventions specified for the assignment	The two required sources (lecture and articles) are used; course readings, ideas, and theoretical frameworks are connected to the draft; the writing shows reflection or analysis of the course content and its importance to real-world application; sources are mostly cited in a way to support claims and provide evidence; internal citations mostly follow the conventions specified for the assignment	Only one of the required sources is used, or none is used; course readings, ideas, and theoretical frameworks are missing or not well explained; the writing shows some reflection or analysis of the course content and its importance to real-world application; sources are either not cited or cited in an inappropriate way (e.g., no citations when others' ideas are used); internal citations do not follow the conventions specified for the assignment
Audience awareness	The level of explanation reflects the author's consideration and awareness of the intended audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community) and their needs; the level of explanation, tone, style, and grammatical choices reflect knowledge of translating and communicating complex theoretical information to an external audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community) who may not be familiar with the theories	The level of explanation mostly reflects the author's consideration and awareness of the intended audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community) and their needs; the level of explanation, tone, style, and grammatical choices are mostly appropriate for intended audience with some deviations (e.g., target terms from the theories are not explained in a sufficiently thorough manner)	The level of explanation might be lacking or not be suitable for the intended audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community); tone and style not always appropriate given the context; writer still needs to more fully consider audience's needs

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Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Application of course content to the learning activities	The two learning activities clearly utilize the fundamental components or principles of the assigned theoretical perspectives; the learning activities are aimed at teaching simple math for elementary school students; the writing makes a clear connection between specific aspects of the activities and specific components of the theories; the writing shows a deep understanding of the theories and how they can be applied in a classroom setting	The two learning activities mostly utilize the fundamental components or principles of the assigned theoretical perspectives; the learning activities seem to be aimed at teaching simple math for elementary school students; the writing makes a somewhat clear connection between specific aspects of the activities and specific components of the theories; the writing shows an acceptable understanding of the theories and how they can be applied in a classroom setting	The learning activities vaguely utilize the fundamental components or principles of the assigned theoretical perspectives; *or* the learning activities are not aimed at teaching simple math for elementary school students; the writing makes a vague connection between the activities and components of the theories; the writing shows a surface-level understanding or does not show an understanding of the theories and how they can be applied in a classroom setting; OR only one activity is present

Final Paper Rubric (Total points: 18)

Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Format-ting	The paper has a cover page that includes the name of the author and the names of the two assigned theories; the paper meets all of these requirements: no longer than 7 pages (including the cover page) and is dou-ble-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" mar-gins; the structure of the paper is coher-ent and follows the sequence stipulated in the assignment sheet	The paper has a cover page that includes the name of the author and the names of the two assigned theories; the paper meets most of these requirements: no longer than 7 pages (including the cover page) and is dou-ble-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" mar-gins; the structure of the paper is mostly co-herent and follows the sequence stipulated in the assignment sheet	The paper has a cover page but is missing either the name of the author or the names of the two assigned theories *or* the paper is missing a cover page; the paper meets some of these require-ments: no longer than 7 pages (including the cover page) and is dou-ble-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins; the structure of the paper is hard to follow, impacting readability or understanding
Source use and citations	The two required sources (lecture and articles) are used; course readings, ideas, and theoreti-cal frameworks are deeply connected to and effectively inform the paper; the writing shows a deep reflection or analysis of the course content and its importance to real-world application; sources are cited in a way to support claims and provide evidence; internal citations follow the conven-tions specified for the assignment	The paper has a cover page that includes the name of the author and the names of the two assigned theories; the paper meets most of these requirements: no longer than 7 pages (including the cover page) and is dou-ble-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" mar-gins; the structure of the paper is mostly co-herent and follows the sequence stipulated in the assignment sheet	The paper has a cover page but is missing either the name of the author or the names of the two assigned theories *or* the paper is missing a cover page; the paper meets some of these require-ments: no longer than 7 pages (including the cover page) and is dou-ble-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins; the structure of the paper is hard to follow, impacting readability or understanding

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Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Audience awareness	The level of explanation reflects the author's consideration and awareness of the intended audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community) and their needs; the level of explanation, tone, style, and grammatical choices reflect knowledge of translating and communicating complex theoretical information to an external audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community) who may not be familiar with the theories	The level of explanation mostly reflects the author's consideration and awareness of the intended audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community) and their needs; the level of explanation, tone, style, and grammatical choices are mostly appropriate for intended audience with some deviations (e.g., target terms from the theories are not explained in a sufficiently thorough manner)	The level of explanation might be lacking or not be suitable for the intended audience (i.e., parents and guardians of students and the local community); tone and style not always appropriate given the context; writer still needs to more fully consider audience's needs
Application of course content to the learning activities	The two learning activities clearly utilize the fundamental components or principles of the assigned theoretical perspectives; the learning activities are aimed at teaching simple math for elementary school students; the writing makes a clear connection between specific aspects of the activities and specific components of the theories; the writing shows a deep understanding of the theories and how they can be applied in a classroom setting	The two learning activities mostly utilize the fundamental components or principles of the assigned theoretical perspectives; the learning activities seem to be aimed at teaching simple math for elementary school students; the writing makes a somewhat clear connection between specific aspects of the activities and specific components of the theories; the writing shows an acceptable understanding of the theories and how they can be applied in a classroom setting	The learning activities vaguely utilize the fundamental components or principles of the assigned theoretical perspectives; *or* the learning activities are not aimed at teaching simple math for elementary school students; the writing makes a vague connection between the activities and components of the theories; the writing shows a surface-level understanding or does not show an understanding of the theories and how they can be applied in a classroom setting; *or* only one activity is present

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Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Critical analysis of recommended theorist and Vygotsky	Author chooses one of the two assigned theoretical perspectives to recommend; two distinct strengths of the recommended theory are provided and clearly explained; there is a clear comparison of how Vygotsky's theory differs from the provided strengths and a clear synthesis of why those differences make the recommended theory stronger; two distinct weaknesses of the recommended theory are provided and clearly explained; there is a clear comparison of how Vygotsky's theory differs from the provided weaknesses and clear synthesis of why those differences make the recommended theory weaker.	Author chooses one of the two assigned theoretical perspectives to recommend; two strengths of the recommended theory are provided but could use more clarity; there is a comparison of how Vygotsky's theory differs from the provided strengths and a synthesis of why those differences make the recommended theory stronger but more clarity is needed; two weaknesses of the recommended theory are provided but could use more clarity; there is comparison of how Vygotsky's theory differs from the provided weaknesses and a synthesis of why those differences make the recommended theory weaker but more clarity is needed.	Author does not make a recommendation or chooses a half-hearted stance; two strengths of the recommended theory are provided, but they are vague or inconsistent with the theory, *or* only one strength is provided; there is a vague comparison of how Vygotsky's theory differs in those regards, *or* a comparison is missing; two weaknesses of the recommended theory are provided, but they are vague or inconsistent with the theory *or* only one weakness is provided; there is a vague comparison of how Vygotsky's theory differs in those regards, *or* a comparison is missing.
Engagement with feedback and revision	Revisions are not just surface-level but deeply relevant to the learning goals; feedback from the rough drafts is clearly addressed	Revisions show a good understanding of the learning goals; feedback from the rough drafts is mostly addressed	Revisions are mostly surface-level and don't always show relevance to learning goals, or there are no revisions made; feedback from the rough drafts is ignored or not addressed

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Phase 4: Reflection (10% of paper grade; due March 3 at 11:59 pm)

This portion of the paper provides you with an opportunity to reflect on your writing and learning process after having submitted the rough drafts and final paper.

In the reflection, you should adhere to the following structure in paragraph form:

- Explain how you approached the assignment (e.g., Did you read the assignment sheet and rubrics closely? Did you take notes as you read the primary articles? How did you address the graded rubrics and the feedback you received? Etc.)
- Justify how your final paper synthesizes what you've learned from this course and from this assignment
- Reflect on what you've learned about yourself as a writer (e.g., Did you learn something new about the process of revision? Did this assignment challenge any existing assumptions you had about writing? Etc.)
- Reflect more broadly on the course by considering these questions (**choose selectively—don't try to answer them all!**):
    - What were your initial expectations coming into this course? What surprised you? Which readings, lectures, or assignments resonated with or challenged you most, and why? Which assignments did you enjoy doing, and why? Where did you see your learning happen the most? How will you apply what you've learned in this class to your future learning or professional contexts? What advice would you give to future students who take this course?

Mostly, I am interested to see if you learned something meaningful during our time together, and I hope that you will take your learning with you wherever your journey leads!

Reflection Rubric (Total points: 6)

Criteria	Meets All Criteria (Mastering) 3	Meets Most Criteria (Developing) 2	Meets Some Criteria (Emerging) 1
Formatting	The reflection meets all of these requirements: no longer than 3 pages and is double-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins; the structure of the reflection is coherent	The reflection meets most of these requirements: no longer than 3 pages and is double-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins; the structure of the reflection is mostly coherent	The reflection meets some of these requirements: no longer than 3 pages and is double-spaced, is in Times New Roman 12-point font, and has 1" margins; the structure of the reflection is hard to follow, impacting readability or understanding
Level of reflection & insight into process	Reflection provides excellent insight into the author's process during the paper assignment; reflects on and synthesizes prior and new knowledge (e.g., what the author learned from writing the paper); challenges previous assumptions about writing or using writing as a tool for learning; relates the course/coursework to future learning contexts (e.g., future courses)	Reflection provides insight into the author's process during the paper assignment and reflects on and synthesizes prior and/or new knowledge; might challenge previous assumptions about writing or using writing as a tool for learning but focuses mainly on the assignment itself; might mention how the course/coursework will inform future learning contexts	Reflection is surface-level and mostly summary; provides some insight into the author's process but might not look back/look forward; could benefit from some deeper reflection or deeper connections between course materials, coursework, and understanding of how writing works to support learning

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