PRACTICING CHANGE: CURRICULAR INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN WRITING PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

While much research in composition calls for—and offers advice for carrying out—curriculum change, the social processes through which such change occurs in writing programs have been under-researched. Additionally, composition scholars have tended to undertheorize curriculum and have relied on commonsense understandings. Theorizing curriculum and researching curriculum change can help administrators and teachers to carry out curricular innovations and change of their own and can improve how writing programs serve their populations, especially their teachers and students. This dissertation (1) unpacks implicit and explicit theories of curriculum in composition; (2) draws on theory of communities of practice to articulate an analytical framework for describing curriculum and curriculum change; and (3) presents a qualitative case study of curricular innovation and change in the writing program of large private non-profit university in the Northeastern United States. Research for this case study included semi-structured interviews with three writing teachers and three writing program administrators; semester-long ethnographic observations of a writing class; and document collection and analysis. Based on an analysis of case-study data, this dissertation argues that curriculum and curriculum change should be understood as plural and emergent. It also argues that theory of communities of practice offers a productive framework for understanding locally situated social processes that produce curriculum change. This study concludes by recommending that research on curriculum and curriculum change move beyond providing accounts of policy change and curriculum planning, in order to attend more closely to students’ experiences of curriculum, patterns in those experiences, changes in those patterns, and the social processes that structure curriculum and lead to curriculum change.
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INTRODUCTION: CURRICULA IN FIRST-YEAR WRITING PROGRAMS: MUCH CHANGE, LITTLE RESEARCH\textsuperscript{1}

Summary

This dissertation is premised on the claim that composition studies needs more fully developed theories of, and frameworks for researching, curriculum and curriculum change. Composition still needs to answer basic questions about curriculum such as “What is curriculum? How can it be studied? Why does it change? How does it change? How do we know when it has changed? How can change be achieved?” This dissertation offers answers to these questions by presenting a case study of curriculum change in a first-year writing (FYW) program. This case study suggests that research on curriculum change in writing programs should account not only for academic plans, but also for changes in teachers’ practices, students’ practices, and students’ educational experiences. It is not enough to know, for example, that official curricular documents (course catalogs, learning goals, and syllabi) have changed; it is necessary also to know if and in what ways teachers’ and students’ activities and learning have changed. Building on this dissertation’s case study, I theorize curriculum as an emergent network of things, people, and practices that “structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49).\textsuperscript{2} This theory allows us to attend to the curricular consequences of a variety practices: from the local practices in which students and teachers engage together to distant practices occurring outside the university’s walls—practices occurring, for example, in the

\textsuperscript{1} This title is a twist on the title of Richard Larson’s study “Curricula in Writing Programs: Much Diversity, Little Assessment.”

\textsuperscript{2} I explain this theory of curriculum later in this introduction. In addition to borrowing from Wayne Au’s definition of curriculum in \textit{Critical Curriculum Studies}, this theory borrows from work in composition that draws on theories of networks, complexity, and ecology to articulate an ontology of writing as emergent (Cooper, “Ecology”; Cooper, “Rhetorical”; Hawk; Rivers and Weber; Syverson). Drawing on these approaches to the ontology of writing, I understand curriculum also to be emergent, as taking shape through complex interactions of people and things, the agency to create and change curriculum not residing in a single thing or person (e.g., an administrator or administrative body). This theory also borrows from Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory, especially in that I am theorizing curriculum in a way that ascribes agency to both people and things.
offices of a textbook publisher or government agency. This theory of curriculum also allow us to recognize that curriculum does not reside in one place and is never completely under the control of a single agent. It allows us to study the ways that practices, near and far, and broad social transformations shape—and are shaped by—local curriculum.

Based on this understanding of what curriculum is, this dissertation takes a sociological approach to studying curriculum change. Specifically, it studies the social processes through which curriculum change occurred in the writing program of a large private, non-profit university in the Northeastern United States, Global East Coast University (GECU). To study these processes, this dissertation uses qualitative research methods: document collection and analysis; ethnographic observations; and semi-structured interviews with administrators and instructors (more on methods later in this introduction). This dissertation also draws on Etienne Wenger’s theory of communities of practice; it offers an analytical lens that I have adapted to, and revised in light of, the data on the researched social processes of curriculum change.

Adapting and revising this theory, I argue, first, that a writing program can be analyzed as “constellation of communities practice” (Wenger 126-131), a cluster of closely related but distinct communities. Second, I argue that curriculum change across a writing program can occur through administrative practices that produce what I am calling “curricular realignment”: a redirection of a constellation’s “energies, actions, and practices” (Wenger 179) toward a new or revised enterprise. In the researched writing program, realignment occurred mainly through the administrative practices of (1) negotiation of perspectives and (2) boundary practices (i.e., the translation of new meanings and practices across borders between communities within the constellation). These two practices are the main focus of chapter three.

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3 The name of the university and all research participants are pseudonyms.
Chapter four zooms in on the interplay between administrative and teaching practices during a process of curricular innovation and experimentation. This chapter complicates the findings of chapter three by attending to, and explaining, influences on three teachers’ practices as they piloted a version of a first-year writing (FYW) course at the research site. This chapter suggests that curricular realignment is not a uniform or linear process. Instead, curricular realignment is refracted through a framework of meaning constructed throughout teachers’ and students’ mutual engagement in a writing course: While all three teachers taught the same course that was “on the books,” so to speak, they taught the course differently for different reasons. Most significantly, these teachers’ practices were influenced by teachers’ understandings of transformations affecting the university (in particular, an increase in international student enrollment), by their alignments with social-justice and disciplinary movements, and by their engagement with students.

This dissertation, then, operates on two theoretical levels. On the one hand, it is concerned with offering a theory of what curriculum is: an emergent network of things, people, and practices that “structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49). On the other, it adapts and revises theory of communities of practice to explain the social processes through which curriculum change occurs and curriculum emerges. This second theoretical level helps us to understand how things, people, and practices structure the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form. In other words, the first theoretical level answers what curriculum is, while the second level answers how and why curriculum comes to be in a particular way. These two theories—what curriculum is and how its emergence and change

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4 From this point forward, when I use this definition of curriculum, I will sometimes be dropping the reference to Au’s Critical Curriculum Studies. However, readers should bear in mind that Au’s work deeply informs my approach to curriculum and that this definition borrows his language.
can be studied sociologically—should be understood as informed by the empirical data analyzed and represented in this dissertation.

This dissertation proposes, first and foremost, that composition scholars devote more attention to researching locally situated curriculum change and how local changes participate in broader social transformations affecting universities, colleges, and writing programs. Research in this vein can help us to better understand how micro-practices—such as course design and unplanned, ephemeral lessons that appear fleetingly during student-teacher and student-student interactions—link with macro-movements, such as nation-wide changes in the purposes of higher education (e.g., globalization, vocationalism, and accountability) and disciplinary developments (e.g., the ascendancy of writing-about-writing pedagogy and translingualism). Studies that enable us to understand these linkages can help us to construct models that explain how macro educational movements translate into changes in teaching and learning and vice versa. Such locally situated studies can also build knowledge on the conditions that shape curricula in writing programs in particular, as opposed to the conditions that shape curricula in other units in colleges and universities—curricula, for instance, in departments of physics, sociology, or marketing. Curricula in writing programs, especially when they take on a service role, seem to be susceptible to influences different from those that affect curricula in other locations in institutions of higher education (e.g., Brodkey; Crowley). Furthermore, curricula in writing programs face unique political and ideological issues related to language and literacy. Such factors make studying composition curricula a unique area of inquiry.

In the remainder of this introduction, I explain, first, the exigency for this research project by reviewing relevant literature in composition. Second, I explain the definition of curriculum that I work with throughout this dissertation. Third, I describe the research site and the
qualitative research methods used to conduct this dissertation’s case study. And finally, I give a chapter overview that describes this dissertation’s argumentative arc.

Exigency for the Current Study

As I noted at the beginning of this introduction, composition scholars have yet to build a body of literature that explicitly researches what undergraduate writing curriculum is and does. When we use the term “curriculum,” we tend to use it commonsensically. This dissertation’s first chapter addresses ways that composition scholars have used the word “curriculum” and the consequences of these usages, but here, I establish reasons why we should explicitly articulate what we mean by the word curriculum and why we should research curriculum and curriculum change more deliberately. In this section I review a few exigencies for studying curriculum and curriculum change: (1) Composition scholars have succeeded at tracing changes in undergraduate writing education on a large, national scale and at describing local curriculum change. However, studies of how large-scale transformations link up with micro-level practices are needed in order to help us understand, anticipate, and (when necessary or desirable) intervene in these transformations. We can better understand the connection between macro- and micro-levels by researching and theorizing curriculum, which, I argue, occupies a medial place between large-scale transformations in higher education and micro-level practices involved in teaching and learning. (2) Current public movements toward accountability and standardization promote what curriculum scholar Herbert Kliebard calls a “production model” of curriculum (“Persistent” 45), in which the objectives of education are determined prior to the entrance of teachers and students and their evolving interactions. I argue that we need to develop understandings of curriculum and curricular work that make spaces in institutions of higher education for teachers and students to be able to co-develop what, drawing on philosophy of pragmatism, Chris
Gallagher calls “ends-in-view” (‘Trouble’ 47). Toward this end, this dissertation’s case study offers a model of curriculum and curricular work that makes room for evolving ends-in-view but that still allows writing programs to address “institutional demands for the assessment of student learning and achieving some measure of programmatic coherence” (Gallagher, ‘Trouble’ 43-44). And (3) composition scholars often call for particular curricular changes, but the field could benefit from developing models and theories of curriculum and curriculum change that could provide empirically informed guidance for carrying out the curricular transformations for which we advocate.

In arguing that curriculum occupies a medial place between large-scale movements and local teaching and learning practices, I follow in part James Berlin, who observes that curriculum “serves as a mediator” and “represents a negotiation among forces both outside and inside the institution” (18). In a common move in historical work on curriculum, after making this observation, Berlin does not theorize curriculum further, instead moving on to trace transformations “within the larger society […] that radically altered the nature of higher education in the United States” (Rhetorics 18). Historians in composition have succeeded at tracing such radical alterations: they have traced the broad disappearance of publically oriented rhetorical traditions from college education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Halloran); the effects of increasing disciplinary and professional specialization on the rise of writing-across-the-curriculum programs (Russell); and a variety of other historical movements in the teaching of composition, such as the rise of modes-based textbooks, personal writing, and a focus in writing instruction on grammatical correctness (Connors). This is not to mention Berlin’s own tripartite story of composition’s evolution from current-traditional to expressionistic to social-epistemic rhetoric (“Rhetoric”). Such historical and other accounts of large-scale change tend not to
examine the local social processes through which such changes take place. How exactly, for instance, do changes in composition as a discipline translate into changes in students’ experiences? What role do curriculum and curriculum change play in this process of translation? In asking these questions, I do not mean to imply that such processes of translation are only one-way, from the discipline or from the broader “society” to the classroom, but these questions get at the main concern of this dissertation. How do local processes of curriculum change link up with broader transformations affecting and stemming from institutions of higher education in the U.S.?

In writing program administration and composition, scholars have observed that curriculum change can stem from many causes: technological change (Diogenes and Lunsford); legislation and public advocacy performed by educational-reform foundations (McDonald 145); job markets (Pifer); pressure from the extracurriculum (Gere); public opinion (Lovitt); the economy of textbook publishing (Miles, *Building*; “Constructing”); statements endorsed by CWPA, CCCC, or NCTE (Behm et al.; Harrington et al.); and recent accountability movements in education (Adler-Kassner and Harrington, especially 81-86; Gallagher, “Trouble”; Moore, O’Neill, and Huot). Composition scholars have also recognized that multiple stakeholders—in addition to composition scholars, administrators, and teachers—have tended to shape composition curricula to suit their own interests (Berlin, *Rhetorics*; Crowley; Dew). Those studies have tended to identify large scale movements, often at the organizational level of the nation, as causes of curriculum change.

Other studies have narrated curriculum change at local levels. Such studies have addressed the introduction of interactive TV in a composition course in a community college (Bodner); the prevention a new curriculum due to public pressure (Brodkey); the use of a
campus-wide survey to inform curriculum development (Harris and Hult); the elimination of a high-stakes, state-mandated writing exam required for undergraduates to graduate (Fox); a change from a two-semester, six-credit-hour writing requirement to a single-semester, four-credit writing requirement (Weiser); and the use of the CWPA “Outcomes Statement” to revise curricula at a number of institutions of various types (Bowden; Grettano, Ingalls, and Morse; Hokanson; Jacobsen, Miller-Cochran, and Rodrigo; McClure; Roen and Glau).

This literature on curriculum change has tended either to describe large-scale social, political, and economic movements or to share stories about local changes. For the most part, these studies have overlooked the processes by which large-scale movements translate into local changes or vice versa. There are some exceptions: some stories about local curriculum change have drawn links between local change and broader movements, but they have tended not to theorize the relation between local change and “global” movements. For example, as already mentioned, many studies have shared stories about local changes that illustrate how specific writing programs have used the Council of Writing Program Administrator’s “Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition” (OS) to help them to change curricula in local contexts (e.g., Roen and Glau; McClure), but these studies have tended not to draw out theoretical implications. An exception to this is an article by Patricia Freitag Ericsson, which theorizes the OS as a technology that programs have instrumentalized: writing programs have used the OS such that it is “integrated with the natural, technical, and social environments that support its functioning” (Feenberg qtd. in Ericsson 105). More studies need to follow Ericsson’s led to theorize how social, political, and economic movements cause, deflect, prevent, are caused by, or otherwise “link up with” local curriculum change. Studies that build such explanations could help scholars in composition and writing program administration to understand better the
processes by which large-scale developments affect and are affected by writing curricula. By understanding these processes, writing programs might better anticipate and intervene to promote empirically and theoretically supported composition curricula and pedagogy.

In its concern with how locally situated processes of change participate in broader social, political, and economic movements, this dissertation follows in a line of composition scholarship on institutional change. It especially responds to James Porter and coauthors call for “institutional critique”: “Somewhere between the macro-level national critiques and the micro-level practices on individual campuses is space for an action plan informed by critique yet responsive to local conditions” (616). By researching curriculum change, I argue, we can better understand the two-way mediation between macro-level transformations and micro-level practices. However, unlike Porter et al., I argue that we must look precisely at the level of micro-level practices to better understand and enact institutional change. If we are to understand institutional change, especially insofar as it affects teaching (and teachers) and learning (and students), we need to understand better the micro practices through which institutional change is achieved. I also hope to revise Porter et al.’s argument that “dramatic and far-reaching social and institutional change cannot occur […] through curricular or departmental adjustments […]” (632). In contrast to Porter et al., I propose that curriculum change does have the potential to produce “dramatic and far-reaching social change.” Curriculum change can produce the types of change that Porter et al. seek, changes that “improve the conditions of those affected by and served by institutions: especially within our own field, writers, students, part-time composition teachers, workers, local communities, and those not traditionally served by the university” (611). Curriculum change and the understanding of curriculum that prevails in a particular location can affect the nature and quality of teachers’ work, the freedom of teachers and students to engage in
meaningful writing experiences, the identification and tracking of students (e.g., as “remedial,” “basic,” or “ESL”), and communities not traditionally served by the university (e.g., a curriculum may or may not make room for service-learning in a writing program [Feldman]).

In chapters three and four, I show that three large-scale transformations seemed to have affected curriculum change in the Writing Program of GECU: (1) the rise of a writing-about-writing approach to FYW and concomitant disciplinary movements (for example, the broad recognition that writing is a socially situated rhetorical activity that requires knowledge of genres as a form of social action), (2) translingualism, and (3) internationalization. Each of these broader transformations—the first two being disciplinary transformations, the third being a transformation both in composition and, more broadly, in higher-education in the U.S.—affected curriculum change in GECU’s Writing Program both subtly and obviously. At the most subtle moments, these movements appeared as discourses on which research participants implicitly drew, and more obviously, participants sometimes explicitly mentioned one of these movements during interviews. Yet, as these movements affected curriculum and curriculum change at GECU, their effects were shaped by local culture, values, and practices.

In addition to examining how curriculum and curriculum change mediates between large scale developments and teaching and learning, this dissertation also responds to current trends in public educational discourse and policy. Literature on assessment in composition has demonstrated that public discourse and policy has been recently trending toward “accountability” and “standardization” in both K-12 and higher education in the U.S. (Adler-Kassner and Harrington; Gallagher, “Being”; Moore, O’Neill and Huot). This literature expresses concern that trends toward accountability and standardization threaten, as Gallagher observes, “to tighten controls: script instruction, package curriculum, standardize tests” (“Being” 463). This tightening
of controls can be seen in calls for a “skills” or “competency” based education intended to produce “career readiness” (Adler-Kassner, “Liberal”). For example, examining the relation between Common Core State Standards and competency-based education (CBE), Linda Adler-Kassner notes that the Common Core—which she cites as a model of transformations working their way into colleges and universities—has given rise to an approach to teaching writing that centers on modes and that is divorced from social context, in particular disciplinary context (442). For Adler-Kassner, standardization and CBE threaten to reduce writing education to instruction in discrete skills divorced from meaningful communicative interactions.

These conversations about standardization and writing education are integrally tied to how we theorize curriculum. For example, CBE depends on an understanding of curriculum that sees it as a means to produce students who exhibit particular behaviors and who can demonstrate knowledge on well-defined, testable domains. In short, in this model, curriculum is imagined as an instrument to bring about testable behaviors, predetermined as desirable by curriculum makers and educational policymakers prior to the entrance of students. Desired behaviors can be articulated without consulting students or working with them to determine their educational interests, desires, and needs. Curriculum-studies scholar Herbert Kliebard has labeled this approach as “a production model” of curriculum:

In applying the model, we are asked in effect to state certain design specifications for how we want the learner to behave, and then we attempt to arrive at the most efficient methods for producing that product quickly and, I suppose, cheaply.

(“Persistent” 45-46)

Indeed, the U.S. Department of Education describes CBE as able to “achieve greater efficiency” by offering “opportunities to target interventions” to individual students (“Competency-Based”).
The model of curriculum, however, offers little freedom for teachers and students to determine their own educational purposes—aside, perhaps, from the decision to select prepackaged lessons. Because such trends toward accountability, standardization, and CBE are on the move, I argue that we need theories of curriculum and models of curricular work that offer viable alternatives and produce more desirable consequences for teaching and learning. Specifically, we need theories of curriculum that see it as something other than merely an instrument for bringing about predetermined behavioral objectives or outcomes.

This dissertation should be understood as working toward developing understandings of curriculum that take such critiques into account. I am especially concerned with making space in our understanding of curriculum for what, drawing on John Dewey, Gallagher calls “ends-in-view,” which “are always emergent within educational experiences; they cannot be fixed beyond or outside those experiences” (“Trouble” 47). Gallagher argues for substituting a discourse centered on “outcomes” with one oriented toward “consequences,” in a Pragmatic sense:

… there is a practical difference in the tendencies to which the terms outcomes and consequences lead. Focusing on outcomes tends to limit and compromise the educational experiences of teachers and students, while attention to consequences tends to enhance those experiences. (original emphasis 43)

Critiquing a focus on outcomes, Gallagher writes that a language of outcomes results in “diversion of attention away from the existing conditions for teaching and learning; narrow fixation on singular results rather than openness to emergent consequences” (45). Throughout this dissertation, building on Gallagher’s criticism of outcomes, I work toward an understanding of curriculum that acknowledges the way that it overflows stated outcomes—the curriculum that students experience is never reducible to the outcomes or objectives we articulate, even in the
most constricted learning environments, such as online CBE—and that teachers’ and students’ always have agency in shaping curriculum, even if sometimes only in small ways. Not only do I approach curriculum as always affected by agentive teachers and students, I intend to build an understanding of curriculum that makes more room for such agency, by, for instance, resisting production models of curriculum.

A Definition of Curriculum

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that curriculum should be understood as emergent, as something which ultimately is constructed during student-teacher interactions and which students experience—and co-construct—rather than something that is merely designed. With this understanding in mind, I define curriculum as the emergent network of things, people, and practices that “structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49). This definition allows us to account for (1) that students’ “experienced curriculum” (Yancey, Reflection; Yancey, Teaching) exceeds, overflows, and differs from official representations of curriculum and curricular policies; (2) that experienced curriculum does not change just because official curricular documents or policy change; (3) that teachers and students always have some degree of agency in shaping experienced curriculum; (4) that local curriculum affects, is affected by, and otherwise links up with broader social movements, including disciplinary movements; and (5) that curriculum has political and social consequences. This definition borrows from theories of complexity and ecology in composition, from Wayne Au’s Critical Curriculum Studies, and from theory of curriculum in curriculum studies (a subfield of education).

Borrowing from theories of complexity and ecology, I intend for my definition of curriculum to draw attention to the distributed nature of agency in constructing curriculum and to curriculum’s plurality and fluidity. I find Margaret Syverson’s definition of emergence especially
useful: “Emergence refers to the self-organization arising globally in networks of simple components connected to each other and operating locally…. Yet, this order is not created or determined by a single, central master ‘executive’ or ‘brain’” (11). Applied to a definition of curriculum, this sense of emergence highlights that curriculum is a form of self-organization among networked, locally connected components. It also highlights that curriculum transforms fluidly as connections break off, new connections form, and the quality of connections changes. Such a definition encourages us to attend to the components and the linkages among components that participate in shaping a given curriculum, especially “experienced curriculum” (Yancey, Reflection; Yancey Teaching). For example, rather than seeing curriculum as its representation in a course catalog, we might consider how that course catalog does or does not affect the educational environments that students encounter: Are teachers aware of the course descriptions in the course catalog? Do they consider these course descriptions as they design their own courses? Do they find the course descriptions meaningful or do they ignore them? Such questions and the concept of emergence might call on us to look at how a document—like a course catalog, a syllabus, or a textbook—shapes the curriculum that students experience. In other words, this approach asks us to consider whether and how such documents link up with the educational environments that students encounter. Drawing on ecological and complexity theory, especially on the concepts of networks and emergence, this definition allows us to account for experienced curriculum and changes in experienced curriculum better than does an approach that sees curriculum as, for example, policy or design. This definition especially allows us to see that multiple agents—rather than just a “central master ‘executive’” (Syverson 11)—participate in constructing a given local curriculum.

5 I explore Yancey’s concept of experienced curriculum in chapter one, but for now, it might help to keep in mind that Yancey uses the term to distinguish between the designed or “delivered curriculum” and the curriculum that students experience in individually different ways.
My definition also borrows from Au’s in *Critical Curriculum Studies*. Au defines curriculum “as the tool that structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (49). Because I understand curriculum as emergent, I have decided to drop Au’s theorization of curriculum as a “tool,” a word which implies a centralized control over curriculum that strikes me as inaccurate. I have decided to borrow the phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form,” which needs some explanation. I use the phrase, first, because it accounts for political aspects of curriculum. Au writes:

… “accessibility” is a relative and power-laden term, one that raises three interrelated questions: (1) What knowledge is made accessible in the curriculum? (2) Who is allowed access to that knowledge? and (3) Who has the power to define the answers to these two questions? (38)

Au’s definition, then, attends to what curriculum studies scholars sometimes call “the differential distribution of knowledge”: the making and not making accessible of knowledge to different populations, especially through assessment and tracking mechanisms that sort students, often in ways that produce discriminatory effects on the basis of gender, class, or race.

Second, the phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” identifies curriculum as an intervention in educational environments. This phrase does not mean that knowledge is something that merely exists out there in the environment, waiting only to be accessed. Rather, it means that one component of the accessibility knowledge is environment. For Au, the second component is consciousness: knowledge emerges through an interaction between consciousness and environment throughout the course of activity. Curriculum then, for Au, structures what knowledge is made accessible by structuring educational environments. One way to explain how Au understands the phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental
form” is to turn to John Dewey’s *The Child and the Curriculum*, where Dewey writes: “the value of the formulated wealth of knowledge that makes up the course of study is that it may enable the educator to determine the environment of the child, and thus by indirection to direct” (39). The phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” signals that curriculum intervenes in the environment and “thus by indirection … direct[s]” (Dewey, *Child* 39).

Readers might find it useful to substitute Au’s phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” with “environment.” Rewritten with this substitution, the definition of curriculum with which this dissertation works is, more simply, *the emergent network that structures the educational environment*. This rewriting will work, but it should be kept in mind that this rewriting does not as accurately represent the theories of politics, knowledge, and consciousness on which Au’s original phrasing is based.6

Finally, I have defined curriculum in a way that accounts for what curriculum-studies scholars often call “hidden curriculum.” Roughly defined, hidden curriculum is a tacit curriculum that goes unplanned but that is systemic and that contributes to social reproduction.7 For example, in an early ethnographic study of hidden curriculum in public schools, Phillip Jackson found that children were taught about “crowds, praise, and power” (35) throughout the course of mundane, day-to-day interactions in school. According to Jackson, students learned to live among crowds, for example, by learning to wait in lines and to suppress the desire to talk to classmates during tests or other periods of quiet, solo work. Studies of hidden curriculum have informed my thinking about curriculum and my definition here by expanding what I consider to be curriculum to include unplanned learning, especially when that unplanned learning is

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6 Also, my summary of Au’s approach has been reductive for the sake of brevity, and I encourage readers to refer to Au’s text for a more comprehensive understanding of the theoretical argument underlying my definition of curriculum.

7 For a good overview of hidden curriculum see Henry Giroux and David Purpel’s edited collection *Hidden Curriculum*. 
systemic and has political, economic, social, and cultural consequences. By representing curriculum as emergent in the interactions among students and educational environments, the definition of curriculum that I have offered allows us to account for both overt and hidden curriculum.

**Description of Research Site**

This dissertation presents findings from a case study of a first-year writing program at Global East Coast University (GECU)—a pseudonym. GECU is a selective large highly residential urban private non-profit research university (*Carnegie*). It has a total student population of over 27,000 students, including both graduate and undergraduate students (*Carnegie*). In the 2012-2013 academic year, GECU reported a total undergraduate enrollment of nearly 22,000, and a total fulltime undergraduate enrollment of approximately 18,000 (*Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* [IPEDS]).

Another piece of institutional data important for this study is the number and percentage of international undergraduate students. The undergraduate student population underwent a dramatic changes from 2004 to 2012. In 2004 GECU reported that approximately 5 percent of all undergraduate students (part-time and fulltime) were “nonresident aliens” to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a part of the U.S. Department of Education (*IPEDS*). By 2012 GECU reported that that percentage had grown to roughly 18 percent.

The writing program at GECU is housed by the English department. The writing program is responsible for offering two sets of required writing courses: first-year writing and advanced writing in the disciplines. It is also responsible for a writing center that offers tutoring to all

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8 I have provided approximations for student enrollment numbers to obscure the identity of GECU and protect participants’ anonymity.

9 Percentages based on calculations performed on data available through NCES’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
constituents of the university (including graduate students and faculty) and that is staffed by graduate and undergraduate students. The first set of required writing courses consists of three different FYW courses: ENGW1102, a FYW course for self-identified multilingual students; ENGW1110, an introductory FYW course; and ENGW1111, the “mainstream” FYW course. Students can take either ENGW1102 or ENGW1111 to fulfill the FYW requirement, but students who take ENGW1110 must also later take ENGW1111 or ENGW1102. Students can also test out of FYW by earning a 4 or 5 on the AP English Literature or Composition exams. The second set of courses offered by the writing program consists of advanced writing courses in the disciplines. In these courses, students are expected to learn to write for scholarly, professional, and public audiences in genres that they might be expected to encounter in their careers. Students are encouraged to enroll in a section of the advanced writing course that is specifically designed for their discipline. The writing program’s website currently indicates that it offers 11 discipline specific advanced writing courses (e.g., advanced writing in education and advanced writing in business administration), and one interdisciplinary advanced writing course. To graduate, students must fulfill both their FYW and advanced writing requirements, both part of GECU’s general education curriculum.

To sketch the size of the writing program, I have chosen to gather quantitative data on the program for the fall-2014 semester. During that semester, the writing program as a whole employed 87 instructors, including graduate teaching assistants, part-time lecturers, fulltime lecturers, and three tenured or tenure-track professors. It offered 75 sections of FYW and 70 sections of advanced writing—for a total of 145 sections of writing courses. 1191 students were enrolled in FYW and 1157 in advanced writing. If it is assumed that no students enrolled in both FYW and advanced writing (FYW is a prerequisite for AWD; the number of students enrolled in
both course would likely be small or zero), then 2348 students were enrolled in writing program courses in the fall of 2014. It should be noted that writing courses for multilingual writers are capped at 15 students, while all other writing courses are capped at 19 students.

There are six administrative positions within the writing program, including two graduate student administrative positions that each last for a year. The administrative positions are Writing Program Director, Director of Writing in the Disciplines, FYW Director, Writing Center Director, and two graduate-student assistant directors—Assistant Writing Program Director and Assistant Writing Center Director. The writing program is also governed, in part, by the Writing Program Committee (WPC), which consists of all of the listed program administrators, one elected representative from any rank, and one elected representative from each rank with the program. The program has the following ranks: graduate students, part-time instructors, fulltime instructors, and tenured or tenure-track faculty. An internal document titled “Committee System of the English Department” states:

The [Writing Program] Committee is responsible for Writing Program policies, including personnel policies related to lecturers teaching writing courses; faculty development; curriculum development; assessment; and other substantive pedagogical issues for all required writing courses and for the Writing Center.

According to the official description of the Writing Program Committee, then, it is responsible for the Program’s curriculum development. However, the Committee must report its recommendations to the Chair of the English Department, who then may either approve them or pass them on to the whole department for approval. According to research participants, in some cases, the Committee’s recommendations might also be subject to approval by the registrar or the
university’s Faculty Senate, which has authority over what is called the GECU “Core”—a set of required general-education courses.

The Writing Program also has a subcommittee, called the Writing Program Assessment Committee, which has been charged with conducting programmatic assessment. Over the years, various temporary subcommittees and taskforces have also formed to address different issues: for example, a subcommittee on multilingual writers, a subcommittee on service learning and community engagement, and a taskforce on FYW curriculum. Each of these has committees might be understood as have administrative and curricular roles. However, their recommendations must pass through the Writing Program Committee before proceeding further.

**General Description of Studied Curriculum Changes**

In the writing program studied in this dissertation, curriculum change—the basic object of study in this dissertation—did not occur at a single moment and is better understood as incremental and ongoing. The incremental and ongoing nature of curriculum change in this writing program is an important characteristic; it is a characteristic that informs the theoretical and analytical insights of later chapters. Although curriculum change in the studied writing program has been incremental and ongoing, two significant curricular-change events can be identified, each spanning multiple years.

The first curriculum-change event was, and has been, a program-wide curriculum change in FYW. The major features of this curriculum change were that a textbook ceased to be required—all administrators interviewed for this dissertation expressed differing degrees of dissatisfaction with the previously required textbook and the curriculum and pedagogy that they understood to have accompanied it—and that existing curricular documents (in particular, a set of grading criteria for FYW courses and a statement of philosophy and aims for FYW) were
replaced by a set of 11 learning goals for the writing program. These learning goals were highly publicized within the writing program and guided professional development activities soon after their publication. During the years following the publication of the new learning goals, professional development workshops have focused on, among other things, writing syllabi and assignments that incorporate the learning goals in their design and language. These learning goals continue to influence discourse among teachers and administrators in the writing program.

The second curriculum change was a piloted version of the FYW course that was invented, in part, as a response to increased enrollment of international students at GECU. This piloted version was listed on the website of the Writing Program as “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE), although multiple research participants also referred to it more simply as “the World-Englishes course” in interviews, and on the syllabus provided by one instructor, the course was titled “World Englishes.”

IWWE arose from a confluence of factors that were shaping FYW writing courses and the Writing Program at GECU—factors that will be explored in more depth chapter 4 (see below). For this reason, it is difficult to locate an exact cause for its invention and piloting. Still, the most influential factor seems to have been that the enrollment of international students had increased greatly during the academic year preceding the invention of IWWE in the spring of 2012, as the description of the research site (above) indicates. IWWE was first piloted in the fall of 2012 and then again in the fall of 2013. During that time, the Writing Program’s website contained a description of IWWE as a special, themed version of ENGW1111. Sometime between the fall of 2013 and spring of 2015, this description was removed from the writing program’s website.
As will be seen later, each instructor had different motivations and goals for teaching IWWE, but the three instructors who piloted the course, in coordination with writing program administrators, determined that IWWE would deliberately enroll international students and students from the U.S. and ask students to study language and language difference, both the language differences that students brought to the class as well as those that course readings discuss (such as Rosina Lippi-Green’s *English With an Accent* and Suresh Canagarajah’s “The Place of World Englishes”) or represent through multilingual writing strategies (such as essays by Gloria Anzaldúa and John Edgar Wideman). Instructors and administrators intended for the course to be made of half international students and half students from the U.S. The actual proportions of international and U.S. students did not always meet this expectation for the course.

Although the piloted sections of IWWE all fell under the same course title and were motivated in part by a common set of goals, it is important to note that the designed curriculum of IWWE differed from instructor to instructor and section to section; the syllabi, writing assignments, and readings that each instructor used were significantly different in terms of purpose, content, and sequencing. These differences matter for the current discussion because they suggest that, in the case study here, curriculum change was not a simple linear process in which instructors’ curricular actions were precisely coordinated and synchronized but, instead, followed multiple paths, individualized by each of the piloting instructors. It would perhaps, then, be more accurate to refer to IWWE not as a singular change, but as multiple changes that were initiated simultaneously. The multifaceted quality of this curriculum change ultimately makes describing it adequately through generalizations difficult. What will be more important is the closer examination of each instructor’s approach to curriculum design that will be discussed
in later chapter 4. For now, I hope that readers will keep the following aspects of the curriculum change indexed by IWWE in mind: (1) it was initiated in response to an increased enrollment among international students at GECU; (2) it was motivated in part by an attempt to improve how the university treated its multilingual international studies; (3) it was designed to mix students from different national origins and to make language difference “an object of study” (Course Description); (4) IWWE was piloted for two semesters, once during the fall of 2012 and again in the fall of 2013; and (5) a description IWWE has been removed from the Writing Program’s website.

**Methods and Methodology**

This research project was approved by Northeastern University’s Internal Review Board⁹ and was conducted using qualitative research methods. These methods were ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews, and document collection and analysis.

Ethnographic observations were conducted over the course of a semester in the fall of 2013. These observations were performed at least once per week. All observations were made of a single section of IWWE. The teacher of the observed section of IWWE was Nathan (for description of participants, see Appendix B). Observations were recorded using methods for writing fieldnotes described by Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Interviews were conducted during two separate periods of time with slightly different purposes. The first period when interviews were conducted was the fall of 2013 over the course of a semester. During this period, Nathan was interviewed three times, once at the beginning of the semester, once near the middle, and once at the semester’s conclusion. Interviews with Nathan were intended to solicit descriptions of his motivations for teaching the course; the

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⁹ The Northeastern University IRB approval number is 13-08-15.
The second set of interviews occurred over the course of a semester during the fall of 2014. These interviews were conducted with the other two instructors who taught IWWE (Hugh and Anna) and with three writing program administrators. The interviews with administrators were designed to gather data about both IWWE and about a program-wide curriculum change that happened in GECU’s FYW Program. The administrators who I interviewed were George, a former Director of the Writing Program who oversaw the invention and piloting of IWWE and oversaw broader changes to the FYW Program’s curriculum; Louis, who was and currently is Director of the Writing Program; and Barbara, who was the Director of the First-Year Writing Program when I interviewed her and who oversaw some changes to the FYW Program’s curriculum. Interviews with instructors Hugh and Anna were intended to gather data similar to that which was gathered through interviews with Nathan: instructors’ motivations for teaching IWWE, their narratives of how IWWE was created and implemented, and their understandings of their experiences in IWWE—how students performed in the course, their evaluations of the course, and why the course ceased to be offered.

These interviews were qualitative and semi-structured. These types of interviews are described by Robert Weiss in *Learning from Strangers* as following an interview guide that contains prompts for areas of questioning, rather than fully articulated questions. Such an interview guide allows the interview to proceed somewhat informally. It also always for a wider breadth of conversation to occur. The interviewer operates within the framework established by
the interview guide, but can also follow lines of questioning if they pertain to the goals of the interview. A typical line of questioning might begin with “Walk me through a time when….”

The interviews were conducted at locations chosen by research participants, for their convenience and comfort. All but two interviews took place in instructors’ and administrators’ offices on the campus where they worked. The other two interviews occurred at reserved, private study rooms in the main library on campus.

Before this research project began, I had professional relationships with all of participants in this study. All research participants were compensated for their participation with gift cards to a large online retailer.

Coding of both interview transcripts and ethnographic fieldnotes began with an open-coding method. Thomas Lindlof and Brian Taylor describe open-coding this way:

*Open coding* is the initial, unrestricted coding of data…. The analyst usually goes through the texts … line by line and marks those chunks of text that suggest a category. In fact, it is through the process of open coding that categories are built, are named, and have attributes ascribed to them. (emphasis in original 219)

Open coding thus provided categories that later served as the basis for generating themes across the data. A second round of coding was conducted using the newly generated themes. This second round of coding was intended to achieve about “integration and dimensionalization” of data (Lindlof and Taylor 220, emphasis in original). In integration, codes were developed to group excerpts according to theoretical concepts that emerged during open coding. In dimensionalization, codes were developed to name specific characteristics of specific instances of more general theoretical concepts that were identified in integration. This process of coding—moving from open coding, to integration, to dimensionalization—falls under a grounded theory
of coding, in which an attempt is made to develop theoretical concepts form the data itself, opposed to, for instance, an analysis of data formed through the imposition of theoretical concepts from the researcher’s discipline.

Since this dissertation is a case study of a single writing program, its results are non-generalizable. This case study is intended mainly to develop a theoretical framework and themes for future inquiry on curriculum in composition. A second limitation—but also a strength—of this study is that I had been teaching for the researched writing program for six years when data collection began. During that time I developed professional relationships with research participants. These relationships and my membership in the writing program likely affected participants’ responses during interviews. Another possible influence on participants’ responses was the knowledge that I would be writing up this case study. Despite efforts to protect anonymity (such as using pseudonyms and not mentioning the state and city where the university is located), participants might have been interested in shaping the dissertation’s representation of the writing program. For these reasons, participants’ responses during interviews should be understood as themselves being rhetorical acts, intended, possibly, to shape my understanding and this dissertation’s representation of the writing program being studied as well as participants’ actions and motivations.

**Research Participants**

**Instructor-Participants: Teachers of IWWE**

Anna has worked as a teacher for 30 years and is a part-time lecturer, with a Master’s in Teaching and a Ph.D. in English.
Hugh is a full-time lecturer who has taught for GECU’s Writing Program since 2011. Before teaching at GECU, Hugh taught English composition in Taiwan, from the early 1990s to 2011, with an intermission as he returned to the United States to complete his Ph.D.

Nathan is a full-time lecturer who earned his Ed.D. in 2011 and has taught at GECU since 1991.

Administrator-Participants

Barbara was a full-time lecturer at GECU and was First-Year Writing (FYW) Program Director from 2012 to 2015. Before teaching at GECU, Barbara earned her MFA in creative writing. Barbara led the First-Year Writing Curricular Task Force at GECU. The task force wrote new course descriptions for FYW at GECU in the fall of 2013.

George is a Professor in the English Department at GECU and was its Writing Program Director from 2009 to 2014. He has a Ph.D. in English and is an active scholar in rhetoric and composition. During his time as Director, George oversaw the curricular events on which this dissertation focuses.

Louis has an Ed.D. and was hired by the GECU English Department as an Associate Professor in 2011. Also an active scholar in rhetoric and composition, with a focus on writing centers, Louis was Writing Center Director and then Director of Advanced Writing from until 2014, when he became Writing Program Director, a position he has occupied since then. Louis participated in early conversations about IWWE and was able to provide an administrator’s perspective on curriculum in GECU’s Writing Program.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1: Theories of Curriculum in Composition, Explicit and Implied
This chapter argues that curriculum has gone undertheorized in composition. Throughout the chapter, I unpack definitions of “curriculum” and review four explicitly articulated theories of curriculum in composition. This chapter finds that composition scholars tend to write about curriculum and curricular work as stating objectives, determining knowledge to be delivered, and purposively designing courses or sequences of courses. Explicit theories of curriculum have stated that a writing curriculum is constituted by assignments and the support that students receive (Larson); that curriculum can be divided into designed curriculum, lived curriculum, and experienced curriculum (Yancey, Reflection; Yancey, Teaching); that curriculum is an institutional strategy within which instructors tactically operate, sometimes against restrictions imposed by standards (Juzwick); and that curriculum emerges from the work that teachers and students do together, that curriculum can be a site for disciplinary knowledge making, and that doing curricular work requires “institutional literacy” (Gallagher, Radical). This chapter makes explicit what composition scholars understand curriculum to be, and it explores consequences of our current understandings. This chapter also explicates some of the reasoning behind the approach to curriculum taken in this dissertation.

Chapter 2: Communities of Practice in the Study of Curriculum in Writing Programs: An Overview

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework used to analyze the case study of curriculum change. Drawing on Etienne Wenger’s theory of communities of practice, this chapter argues that the Writing Program at GECU can be analyzed as what Wenger calls a “constellation of communities of practice.” This section explains terminology and concepts used in chapters three and four and demonstrates their usefulness for studying curriculum and curriculum change. In this section I make a distinction between “administrative practices”
(practices that coordinate the activities of communities within a writing program) and “teaching and learning practices” (practices that occur during teachers’ engagement with students). This distinction between two layers of practice informs chapters three and four.

Chapter 3: Process of Curriculum Change in Large Writing Programs: Making New Practices Meaningful

This chapter discusses a program-wide curriculum change that affected the FYW Program at GECU. It focuses on data related to curriculum change at the level of administrative practices. It argues that at the level of administration, curriculum change can be understood as the realignment of the constellation of communities of practice that make up a writing program. This chapter explores the main administrative practices through which the Writing Program at GECU achieved realignment. These practices were negotiating perspectives, translating practices and meanings, and the distribution of boundary objects. This chapter locates these administrative practices within a local culture in GECU’s Writing Program. Elements of that culture that were relevant were a respect for instructor autonomy, expertise, and pedagogical diversity. These values shaped what administrative practices were used to carry out realignment.

Chapter 4: Straddling Boundaries: Teaching Practices as Brokering Between Administrative and Classroom Communities

While chapter three looks at administrative practices that realigned the Writing Program at GECU, chapter four examines the interaction between administrative practices and teaching practices in processes of curricular experimentation and change. Specifically, this chapter looks at administrative and teaching practices associated with “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE), a piloted version of a FYW course at GECU. The chapter discusses differences in how three instructors taught IWWE and explores factors that affected these
differences. Such factors included teachers’ alignment with disciplinary movements (especially translingualism), their socially constructed roles within the Writing Program, and their negotiation of multiple “regimes of accountability” (Wenger 80-82). This chapter helps to demonstrate the complex influences of disciplines, administrative practices, teaching practices, and students’ learning practices on the construction of curriculum.

Conclusion

The conclusion addresses limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research. In its discussion of implications, the conclusion addresses how this dissertation might affect composition studies’ approaches to assessment, pedagogy, student agency, and knowledge-making in writing education. It recommends that future research attend to a broader range of perspectives than this dissertation has, especially to a broader range of teacher and student perspectives before, during, and after processes of curriculum change; that future research study the role that writing curricula play in social and cultural reproduction; and that future research attend more carefully to intersections between curriculum and race, gender, sexuality, and class.
CHAPTER 1: THEORIES OF CURRICULUM IN COMPOSITION, EXPLICIT AND IMPLIED

Little has been published in composition on what curriculum is and how it changes. Often, scholars proceed as if readers already shared an unspoken understanding of curriculum, even when it is the professed subject. In a few rare instances, scholars have explicitly defined “curriculum,” but more often than not, the word either goes undefined or is defined implicitly. In the absence of definitions and of a coherent body of literature about curriculum, this chapter seeks to clarify what curriculum means in composition. This chapter, then, reviews and unpacks the implications of composition’s implied and explicit theories of curriculum.

Throughout this chapter, I critique theories of curriculum that understand it as constituted primarily by objectives or outcomes. Such theories tend to reduce curriculum to what Kathleen Blake Yancey, writing in a chapter of The Outcomes Book, calls “the what of education”: “what is it that we want students to know, to understand, and to do at the conclusion of a course, a program, a major” (21). Understanding curriculum in this way supports an approach to education that treats it as a means to produce predetermined ends. In contrast, I argue that we need a theory of curriculum that better enables us to recognize and to work with the goals or objectives that students and teachers build together as they interact in classrooms, whether brick-and-mortar or virtual. We might better recognize what, borrowing from John Dewey (Democracy) and Shari Stenberg and Darby Arant Whealy, Chris Gallagher names as teachers and students’ “consequences, [or] ends-in-view” (47). Consequences or ends-in-view, Gallagher writes, “are always emergent within educational experiences; and they cannot be fixed beyond or outside those experiences” (47). A theory of curriculum, I argue, should account for—and encourage us to recognize and to work with—the ends-in-view that emerge and develop throughout the work
that teachers and students do together. A theory of curriculum that does not account for emergent ends-in-view risks rigidly imposing objectives, lessons, and assignments that fail to attend to students’ preparation, needs, and desires and to what students find meaningful. Working toward such a theory, this chapter is especially urgent within the context of recent movements toward outcomes-based education, standardization, and accountability (see, e.g., Adler-Kassner; Adler-Kassner and Harrington, “Responsibility”; Gallagher, “Trouble”; Johnson).

Furthermore, a theory of curriculum should also be able to attend to unplanned and emergent learning. There are curricula that nobody plans but that occur nonetheless. Yancey’s notion of “experienced curriculum” (Teaching) informs my thinking here, as does what curriculum theorists have termed “hidden curriculum” (Apple; Giroux and Purpel). A theory of curriculum needs to be able to attend not only to curricular designs and policies, but to curriculum as experienced.

In the first half of this chapter, I discuss implied theories of curriculum in composition. As might be expected, the word “curriculum” is ubiquitous and appears in far more studies than I can review here. Given that the word appears so often, I have limited the scope of this discussion to texts in composition that make curricular arguments, such as that first-year writing curriculum should teach content about writing studies (Downs and Wardle) or that processes of curriculum development should include teachers (Heard). Although such texts might theorize why they advocate for a specific curriculum or approach to curriculum development, I categorize them as containing “implied theories” because they do not explicitly state what curriculum is. They do make arguments about how we should do curricular work, how curricula should be structured or
designed, and what composition curricula should do, but these texts offer “implied theories” in the sense that they work with an assumed understandings of what curriculum is.\(^{11}\)

In the second half of this chapter, I address explicit theories. As far as I am aware, only four composition scholars have explicitly theorized what curriculum is—Kathleen Blake Yancey (Teaching), Mary Juzwick, Richard Larson, and Chris Gallagher (Radical). Of these four scholars, Yancey has written about curriculum most extensively, devoting a book to the subject. These explicit theories tend to recognize that curriculum is more than just curricular policies, course designs, outcomes, or syllabi. They tend to locate curriculum in students’ experiences and activities, rather than in predetermined academic plans.

Finally, in the conclusion, I explore the consequences of the approaches to curriculum that have been advanced in composition and suggest revisions and additions to our current theories, especially so that our theories can become more attentive to local material contexts and to the politics of curriculum.

Implied Theories

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\(^{11}\) In this chapter, I have attempted to draw on a broad range of sources to determine what composition scholars mean when they use the word “curriculum,” but this chapter does omit possibly relevant bodies of scholarship. This chapter does not address scholarship on writing across the curriculum, writing in the disciplines, or service learning. Scholarship on WAC, WID, and service learning have been useful for rethinking the location of writing curriculum, away from the FYC class toward sites within disciplines or within organizations outside the university. Still, it is not clear that WAC, WID, and service learning have theorized curriculum in ways significantly different from the texts reviewed in this chapter.

For example, in an introductory chapter to WAC for the New Millenium, Susan H. McLoed and Eric Miraglia argue that “the WAC movement has been at heart more of an attempt to reform pedagogy than curriculum” (3). McLoed and Miraglia make their point even more clearly: “WAC is uniquely defined by its pedagogy” (5). While I do not think that McLoed and Miraglia speak for the whole of scholarship on WAC, I suspect that WAC scholarship (and WID and service learning scholarship) will exhibit the same trends that I identify throughout this chapter: a lack of explicit theorizing about curriculum and a focus, instead, on theorizing pedagogy. Furthermore, like much of the scholarship on curriculum reviewed in this chapter, much of WAC literature focuses on offering practical, how-to advice on building WAC programs; sharing stories of program development; theorizing WAC pedagogy; theorizing disciplinary rhetorics; or reviewing historical transformations in disciplines, disciplinary writing, and writing instruction (Bazerman and Russell; Fulwiler and Young; McLoed and Soven; McLoed, Miraglia, Soven, and Thaiss). Such scholarship, like the scholarship reviewed here, seems to have also undertheorized curriculum.
My reading of implied theories suggests a few trends in how composition scholars understand curriculum; not every implied theory of curriculum exhibits each of these features, and these features do not necessarily add up to a singular, coherent theory:

- Curriculum is a form of design, which can be used to achieve diverse purposes, either related to individual students’ education or to broader social and political goals.
- A curriculum can be either a single course or a coherent sequence of courses.
- Composition curricula are constituted by sequences of reading and writing assignments.
- Curriculum is deliverable—a thing which can be delivered to students through various media and in various contexts—and is shaped by the material, cultural, technological, and economic spaces where it is delivered.
- Curriculum is constituted by the outcomes or objectives (goals related to knowledge, skills, and activities) that each student should reach by the conclusion of a course of study.
- Curriculum affects and is affected by disciplinary and institutional structures, including the sometimes contentious and territorial relations among disciplines, colleges, departments, and programs.
- How we engage in curricular practices is political—some of the implied theories addressed here have highlighted that it matters who participates and is invited to participate in curriculum design and, in a different line of studies, that FYC curricula can be used as sites for carrying out social justice.
As suggested by this bulleted list, a major feature of composition’s theories of curriculum is a focus on writing curricular objectives and creating curricular designs, such as the selection and sequencing of courses, course readings, and writing assignments. This focus, I will argue, tends toward an erasure of materially embodied teachers and students: teachers and students need not participate in curriculum development (curriculum can be designed without their contributions), and when understood as objectives and deliverable content, curriculum, as an already wholly made thing, precedes the entrance of teachers and students, rather than being fundamentally constituted by what teachers and students do together. Again, not everyone in composition writes about curriculum in this way, but this approach to curriculum is prevalent enough to deserve remark.

*Curriculum as purposive action*

Composition scholars often call for curriculum change in order to accomplish specific goals intrinsic to a writing course, such as that students should learn to write in multiple genres and for multiple audiences, or goals extrinsic writing and writing practices. A salient example of this latter trend is Derek Owens’ *Composition and Sustainability*, which unequivocally calls for redesigning curriculum in an effort to avert environmental disaster, or at least to mitigate its impact. Owens’ book demonstrates a common rhetorical tactic in the literature: first, the writer identifies a problem (social, political, economic, administrative, disciplinary, pedagogical, etc.) and, second, proposes that readers can address this problem through a curricular intervention. Linda Alder-Kassner and Susanmarie Harrington have noted this same argumentative strategy at work in debates over basic-writing curricula: first, the writer identifies problems defined as unique to the basic writer and “then moves to curricular strategies designed to alleviate these identified problems” (14). In this way, composition scholars often theorize curriculum as a tool,
either for accomplishing learning about writing, or for something else, such as pursuing environmental or ecological activism.

An essay by Matthew Pifer about Ph.D. curricula in English studies demonstrates such a problem-solution structure in which curriculum functions as a tool for purposive action, specifically for preparing students for their professional lives. Pifer begins by recognizing that most English Ph.D. students will not be able to gain employment as researchers, instead most likely working as teachers at colleges and universities (cf. North). However, Pifer points out, current Ph.D. programs offer curricula that tend to focus on preparation for research, not for teaching. This leads Pifer to argue that English Ph.D. curricula should change to better prepare students to become “generalists,” who, following graduation, will be better able to work both outside the academy and inside it—but primarily as teachers rather than as researchers. This proposal that PhD.’s train as generalists “connects discussions about curriculum or structural changes to the development of educational aims, or what John Dewey refers to as a purpose” (179). Pifer quotes Dewey to explain that the readers might beneficially approach curricular purpose by seeing that it

… involves (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past, a knowledge obtained partly by recollection and partly form the information, advice, and warning of those who have had a wider experience; and (3) judgment which puts together what is observed and what is recalled to see what they signify. (Dewey qtd. in Pifer 179-180)

Drawing from Dewey, Pifer offers a reflective method for developing educational purposes, which then would drive curriculum development. The main thrust of his argument is that
Curriculum developers must consider current conditions (e.g., career prospects for Ph.D.’s), reflect on knowledge and information relevant to this problem (e.g., how Ph.D. programs have prepared students for careers outside the traditional research track), and then develop curricular purposes and a curriculum. Though Pifer writes about Ph.D. rather than undergraduate curricula, his essay illustrates how writers in English studies have approached curriculum development as purposive action, and furthermore, Pifer offers a method for developing curricular purposes.

In composition studies proper, similar arguments are frequently made, especially about how to create curricula that prepare students for writing at work. For example, over the last year (2015), Sarah Read and Michael J. Michaud have argued that applying a writing-about-writing approach to business writing curricula can help students to write successfully in the workplace. Such an approach works against a trend in business writing in which students are asked to write in genres disconnected from context. Similarly, Madelyn Flammia has recently argued that writing courses should provide students with “intercultural education” in order to prepare them to “face [the] many challenges both in the workplace and in their personal lives as concerned global citizens” (701). And Doug Brent has studied students’ experiences in their first co-op to understand how they transfer knowledge about writing from courses to workplaces, concluding with the suggestion that writing curricula might encourage transfer to workplaces by teaching students “how to extract genre features from models, how to analyze an audience, and how to use genre knowledge to interpret information” (590).

The problem-solution structure of argumentation, in which curriculum works as a problem-solving tool, has also been applied by compositionists who explicit state that one of their a purposes in proposing curriculum change is to improve the status of composition as a discipline and a profession. Compositionists who have written about curriculum as a tool for
shoring up composition’s professional and disciplinary status have tended to follow Sharon Crowley in observing that “[t]he precarious professional position of its [composition’s] faculty has had much to do with the status and curriculum of the first-year course” (5). Crowley’s argument goes on to propose that disciplinary and professional status can be elevated by turning the first-year course into an introduction to composition, which “would serve the same functions for composition studies that Biology 101 and Philosophy 101 serve for those fields” (9-10). Similarly, Douglass Downs and Elizabeth Wardle argue that “public misconceptions of writing and our discipline” can be corrected by “moving first-year composition from teaching ‘how to write in college’ to teaching about writing” (original emphasis 553). Although Crowley and Downs and Wardle propose that treating FYC as an introduction to writing studies will help the profession, the discipline, and students, I want to emphasize that these writers have proposed that curriculum change can directly benefit the profession and the discipline. Curriculum in this argument is not only a tool for education, but a tool for garnering disciplinary and professional status.12

As these examples make clear, composition scholars have implicitly recognized that curriculum can be used to accomplish a wide variety of social actions, from encouraging students to live sustainably to improving composition’s disciplinary status. But this still does not clarify what curriculum is, only that it can be used to accomplish various purposes.

Curriculum as deliverable

As the title of Delivering College Composition: The Fifth Canon suggests, composition scholars often understand curriculum as the knowledge that writing courses “deliver” to students

12 It is not my purpose here to weigh in on debates about the merits of WAW and Downs and Wardle’s significant impact on the current landscape of composition. Rather I am highlighting one way in which composition scholars have deployed arguments about curriculum and curriculum change in order to address problems different from (although related to) the learning of writing. I am highlighting that composition scholars have understood the FYC curriculum as a tool or fulcrum for bringing about change in disciplinary and professional status.
about writing and writing processes. This understanding especially underlies some—but certainly not all—writing about the CWPA “Outcomes Statement” (OS), in which the OS is understood as articulating the knowledge students should have by the time that they leave FYC courses. In the theory of curriculum that underlies such scholarship, it is assumed that there exists some knowledge about writing and writing processes that can be delivered at multiple sites (at different colleges and universities, at different locations within a college or university), through multiple media (face-to-face interactions, live interactive video, or asynchronous online platforms), and by different people (graduate students in literature studies, composition specialists, or teachers from other disciplines). Such theories carry the understanding that curriculum can be separated from local material contexts, media, teachers, and students. In this theory, it is not the case that material contexts, media, teachers, and students do not affect curriculum, but that curriculum can precede, follow, and be isolated from context. Although composition scholars have rich rhetorical theories for describing the formative influence of delivery on the production of discourse, they have tended to take a more reductive conception of delivery, when applied curriculum, as the following discussion suggests.\(^{13}\)

Kathleen Blake Yancey stands out in composition as a prominent adherent to this theory, which recurs in many of her publications, including in a slightly revised form in *Teaching Literature as Reflective Practice* (addressed in second section of this chapter). Yancey’s theory

\(^{13}\) Rhetoric and composition scholars have theorized delivery in more nuanced ways than they have theorized curriculum as delivery. James Porter, for example, has argued that, especially in the context of digital writing and its circulation, delivery needs to be theorized to accounts for “how the range of digital delivery choices influences the production, design, and reception of writing” (208). Similarly, Collin Gifford Brooke has argued that theory delivery needs to move away from the transitive sense of “to deliver” something and toward the recognition that the “practice of delivery” has an “appreciable impact on what is being delivered” (170). Implied theories of curriculum that have approached curriculum as a deliverable have tended not to theorize well the relation between delivery and the production of curriculum; the implied theories reviewed in this section tend to treat curriculum delivery as linear: curriculum is first produced and then delivered through various media and sites. The implied theories reviewed in this section might benefit from a closer engagement with rhetorical theory of delivery in order to account better for how delivery would shape the production of curriculum.
of curriculum can be seen most clearly in her afterward to *The Outcomes Book*, where she argues that the OS itself contains a curriculum. Foreshadowing Downs and Wardle’s argument for first-year composition as writing about writing, Yancey writes, “In reviewing the language of the WPA outcomes… I have to wonder if what is articulated there isn’t already a curriculum. Genre and language and rhetorical situation: they *are* the curriculum” (“Bowling Together” emphasis in original 221). Endorsing the OS, Yancey proposes that genre, language, and rhetorical situation should be “the content of [first-year] composition” (org. emphasis 221), and with these subjects as the content, composition scholars can solve, she argues, a problem that “has vexed [them] since the modern iteration of composition” (221): the treatment of first-year composition as “an almost empty vessel, eager to be filled with any number of studies” (221). Here Yancey uses “curriculum” as a synonym for the content knowledge to be delivered in writing courses.

In another essay published in the same collection, *The Outcomes Book*, Yancey approaches curriculum from a slightly, but significantly, different angle as she articulates the relation between the OS and curriculum. She writes:

> *Outcomes* provide another way of talking about and understanding curricular work…. [O]utcomes focus on what we might call the *what* of education. Through thinking about what it is that we want students *to know, to understand, and to do* at the conclusion of a course, a program, a major, we begin to articulate our expectations: or, *outcomes*. (“Standards” original emphasis 21)

Yancey writes this in the context of an argument in which she takes pains to differentiate “outcomes” from “objectives,” the latter term, for her, corresponding with “standards” and with narrowly specific goals, such as that students will be able to perform “the correction of
The shift that occurs here—from “curriculum” as content knowledge to “curricular work” as that which focuses on the what of education—still contains the meaning of curriculum as content but expands it to include activities that we expect students to do. Here a curriculum is defined as “our expectations” (my emphasis, Yancey, “Standards” 21) for students: the knowledge that students should possess, the ideas that they should understand, and the activities that they should perform.

Yancey’s implied theory to curriculum, here, can be critiqued from a couple angles. First, when curriculum is defined as content knowledge, we risk teaching from the discipline, rather than for students—which is not to say that it is impossible to do both. This is not to say that students cannot benefit from learning content knowledge drawn from the discipline of composition, or that the teaching of such knowledge cannot be done “for students.” However, when we understand curriculum to be content, we risk creating courses of study that derive solely or primarily from the structures of disciplinary knowledge rather than from a consideration of both disciplinary knowledge and student learning, students’ interests and needs, or students’ active participation in (re)making disciplinary knowledge—a critique that Gallagher makes in *Radical Departures* and which I turn to later in this chapter. In other words, a curriculum based on content risks giving rise to courses constructed around disciplinary topics.

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14 Other articles in *The Outcomes Book* make a similar argument. For instance, Mark Wiley—whose chapter title, “Outcomes Are Not Mandates for Standardization,” says a lot—argues that outcomes and standards are different and that outcomes should not be understood as a movement toward standardization. Standards, Wiley writes, place “[s]evere constraints on what is taught … [and] how one teaches” (25). In contrast, he understands an “outcome” as “the knowledge, skills, and understanding students have actually achieved as the result of their educational experiences” (29). Arguments like Wiley’s seem a little disingenuous to me. Although “standards” seems to lend itself to being read more easily as specific benchmarks to be reached, such as that students will answer a kind of exam question correctly seven out of ten times, both standards and outcomes place constraints on teaching by specifying goals, however vague or specific, to be achieved. Outcomes do constrain what is taught and how it is taught, even if not as stringently as standards. A more generous reading of Wiley’s argument and Yancey’s might understand them as persuasive efforts to prevent undesired uses of the Outcomes Statement, specifically its use to support national standards that would supersede local control over writing programs.
rather than around a careful consideration of actual students’ knowledge, preparation, interests, attitudes, values, expectations, and contributions. A course based on disciplinary content would look something like this: Unit 1—Genre; Unit 2—Rhetorical Situation; Unit 3—Discourse Communities, and so on. This is the typical curricular structure for many introductory courses across the curriculum (Biology 101; Physics 101; Chemistry 101) that Yancey, Crowley, and Downs and Wardle have held up as models for refiguring first-year writing as an introduction to composition or writing studies.

Second, when we understand curriculum to be embodied in lists of outcomes, we risk focusing too narrowly on what we expect to happen, what we expect prior to the entrance of students—and potentially even teachers—into the scene of education. Below, I elaborate on why this focus on preformed expectations poses a special problem for composition—and education more generally—but for now, in brief, two reasons can be given: (1) in this model, curriculum does not have to involve the participation of students and teachers, two populations who can easily be positioned as recipients, rather than agents, of curriculum development; and (2) this model does not help us to explain the curricula that students actually experience, as opposed to the curricula that are planned or are represented in discourse. This version of curriculum might best be characterized as student-evacuated and, more importantly, like the OS itself, portable. That is, when curriculum is defined as content knowledge or expectations, divorced from specific contexts, a curriculum becomes a thing that can be imported and exported to and from diverse institutions and courses. With such a definition, it is easy to imagine that curriculum

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15 Designing curriculum around disciplinary concepts is an issue identified in many curriculum design manuals (e.g., Fink; Lattuca and Stark). These manuals discourage curriculum developers from starting curriculum design by considering disciplinary content. Instead, these manuals urge faculty to begin by considering learning and learners first: their interests, backgrounds, preparation, needs; what students can be reasonably expected to know, understand, or be able to do at the end of the course of study.

16 My thinking here is informed by studies of the “hidden curriculum” and by Yancey’s notion of the “experienced curriculum,” which she differentiates from the curriculum that teachers design or “delivery,” in her terminology “the delivered curriculum.”
development is something that can happen elsewhere, in disciplinary journals and conferences or in the world of textbook production. To push this criticism further, this definition of curriculum might be said to be consistent with the commodification of curriculum, especially in the potential for its reification—its transformation into a thing such that its processes of production, and all the political consequences that this production involves, have been made, to an extent, invisible.

In the introduction to *Delivering College Composition*, Yancey again writes about curriculum in a way that clarifies the implications of the curricular theory implied in her comments on the OS. Elaborating how the metaphor of delivery, explicitly borrowed from canonical rhetoric, applies to composition, she proposes that the metaphor leads us to ask, “What kind of curriculum is this, and how is it best delivered?” (12). She goes on to write:

> Another way to think about this metaphorical use is to see it as a verbal mapping that permits us to read across various institutional sites as we ask, What is composing? How should it be delivered? The hope is that this vocabulary, and this verbal map, will enable us to calculate the value of our current paradigm of delivery, with an eye toward being intentional about what college composing is, how it is best learned, and what that might mean for a curricular space that is affected and shaped by—indeed in dialogue with—a corresponding physical space. (12)

Yancey treats curriculum and composing as objects or content that can be delivered—“What is composing? And how can it be delivered”—even as that content and delivery are affected by context. In using the metaphor of delivery, Yancey is offering one way to understand a central concern of the book that she introduces: how to evaluate the use of different locations and technologies to deliver composition curricula; how to evaluate, for instance, the use of
interactive television to teach composition in multiple physical sites simultaneously (Bodner), or
the teaching of composition online (Courage). An assumption here is that composition curricula
and composing are transportable objects that are shaped by the spaces, including physical spaces,
in which they are delivered; still, despite these objects being shaped by space, “college
composing” precedes the spaces that it enters into, rather than being fundamentally constituted
by and in those spaces. Yancey refers here to a “curricular space” that is “in dialogue with …
physical space,” but she does not take up the opportunity to theorize “curricular space” further.
But what Yancey seems to have in mind is the theory that a curriculum affects and is affected by
the material things that make up the spaces where teaching and learning occur.

This reading, which sees Yancey as articulating a relation between materiality and
curriculum, is supported by other chapters in Delivering College Composition. Marvin Diogenes
and Andrea A. Lunsford describe a curriculum change in which the Stanford University writing
program added a course focused on multimodal and multimedia composition. This curriculum
change is notable because, as Diogenes and Lunsford write, it required them to find “the most
appropriate site for delivering the courses” (original emphasis 149). They found it necessary to
create new sites: “… we designed three technology-enhanced classrooms. These classrooms are
meant to encourage and foster writing, research, and, above all, collaboration…” (149). The
classrooms were designed to be different from other instructional spaces, such as lecture halls,
classrooms with individual desks, and conference rooms. These classrooms contained multiple
tables, around each of which were placed a small number of chairs, and at each table was a
computer and a large monitor visible to everyone at the table. This design was intended to
facilitate multimodal, multimedia team projects. The classrooms were not oriented toward a
central point, such as a blackboard at the front of a class, but instead toward multiple points, the
tables themselves where students collaborated on projects.

Diogenes and Lunsford’s account helps to explain and support Yancey’s claim that
physical spaces (or materiality) and “curricular spaces” shape one another. While it is still not
clear what Yancey means by “curricular space,” we can at least see that curriculum and
materiality, especially the materials present and their spatial relations in instructional spaces,
affect one another. By attending to physical instructional sites, Diogenes and Lunsford also hint
at a larger “curricular network,” so to speak, a phrase which I use with the intention of calling up
an image of sprawling linkages and nodes that affect the curriculum at a given site. In designing
and creating new “technology-enhanced classrooms,” Diogenes and Lunsford encountered “the
economic issue of providing enough sufficiently equipped classroom space for this ambitious
course” (150). Changing classroom spaces required capital and labor, access to which was in part
determined by the economy at Stanford University at the time. Diogenes and Lunsford’s chapter
suggests that a curriculum necessarily “links up” with economy and supports the following
generalization: the economy at work in a given space and time can cause curriculum change, can
make curriculum change difficult (by, for instance, limiting available capital for instructional
spaces), or make curriculum change easy.

However, like Yancey, Diogenes and Lunsford maintain a distinction between a
curriculum and its delivery. In their account, they first invented the curriculum and then sought
“the most appropriate site for delivering the courses” (original emphasis 149).17 Even though
Diogenes and Lunsford and Yancey lead us to recognize that physical classrooms and economy
play a role in shaping curriculum (and vice versa), they maintain the distinction between a

17 It might also be noted that curriculum here is equated with courses—an assumption that underlies much of the
discussion about curriculum in composition.
curriculum and its delivery, and this distinction lends itself to the view that curriculum can be made elsewhere and delivered through instruction at various sites and through various media. The essays in *Delivering College Composition* tend to treat delivery as “a transitive process” (Brooke 170): to deliver a thing. That curriculum has tended to be treated as a deliverable object is what I have tried to highlight. It might be possible to turn to rhetorical theory of delivery to articulate a more nuanced and richer understanding of curriculum. For instance, alternately, following Collin Gifford Brooke’s argument about delivery in new media, we might argue for a different approach to delivery: “in terms of an intransitive, constitutive performance, rather than transitive or transactional delivery” (170-171). We might argue that curricula could be theorized not “as static products … [but as] on-going performances” (171). Such a theory of delivery might better represent curriculum as emergent and fluid, rather than as a thing that one designs and then delivers at an “appropriate site” (Diogenes and Lunsford 149).

Since much of the discussion in this section has addressed how Yancey theorized the relation between the OS and curriculum, I want to clarify that not all scholars have approached the OS this way. Patricia Freitag Ericsson, for example, offers a better understanding of the relation between the OS and curriculum. For Ericsson, the OS can be understood as a “technology” that undergoes what she calls, borrowing from Andrew Feenberg, “secondary instrumentalization,” Ericsson describes secondary instrumentalization as what happens when a technology is “integrated with the natural, technical, and social environments that support its functioning” (Feenberg qtd. in Ericsson 105). Ericsson demonstrates that secondary instrumentalization of the OS has been widespread. When Ericsson’s essay was published in 2005, she had recorded that 59 educational institutions (including high schools, community colleges, and universities) had used the OS for curricular or programmatic development. Indeed,
the writing program on which this dissertation’s case study was conducted (see chapter 3 and 4) also consulted the OS as it wrote up new program-wide learning goals. Ericsson’s approach to the relation between the OS and curriculum accounts for how local educational institutions and writing programs use technologies, or curricular technologies, to develop curricula. Also, Ericsson’s work offers a way to describe the “curricular networks” that I hinted at above: it does not seem to be the case that the OS has tended to be integrated wholesale into writing programs, but that the OS has functioned as a powerful discourse that has entered into writing programs and that teachers and administrators have renegotiated so that it integrates meaningfully with local curricular practice. This signals the presence of a curricular network in the sense that the OS appears as one curricular object or discourse among the many that affect curriculum at a given site. In this way, as theorized by Ericsson, the OS does not contain a curriculum; instead, it affects curriculum when local actors instrumentalize it. Ericsson offers a different way to understand the relation between the OS and local curriculum. The OS does not offer a curriculum or is not itself a curriculum—a deliverable list of “what’s”—but instead is instrumentalized in local contexts to shape local curriculum.

**Curriculum as design**

In the scholarship reviewed so far, curriculum has been depicted, at various moments, as purposive action, as deliverable, and as shaped by locally situated material contexts, especially classroom spaces. In addition to these approaches, curriculum has often been theorized as design. This approach is common both inside composition (e.g., Butler; Heard; Owens; Taylor) and outside it (e.g., Diamond; Tyler; Wiggins and McTighe). Approaching curriculum in this way has the advantage of exploiting the productive potential of the double meaning of “design” as both a thing (“a design”) and an action (“to design”). Moreover, compositionists have already
begun to engage the complexities of design concepts and theory (Marback; Newcomb; Purdy), a body of scholarship that could be brought to bear on the study of composition curricula more systematically than is possible here. Theorizing curriculum as design also draws attention to curriculum, again, as purposive action—curricula are designed to achieve a purpose—and, at its best, makes room for the creativity of “users.” At its worst, curriculum as design can be figured such that teachers’ and students’ roles are reduced to mechanical processes of implementation.

Compositionists who approach curriculum as design often argue that design thinking encourages attention to students’ interests and needs in ways that other methods do not. Todd Taylor argues, for instance, that design thinking in curriculum development can help compositionists to attend to the “the material lives of our students”: “… if we begin to discuss more openly issues like student alcohol abuse, sexuality, media saturation, and sleep deprivation, we are likely to become much more effective in the designs we create for delivering college composition” (139). Taylor provocatively claims that curriculum designers should, among other things, design courses that prevent or work against “classroom narcolepsy … since one of the things that student bodies sometimes do is fall asleep in class, literally” (128). While Taylor sometimes falls into the common trap of viewing a curriculum as a kind of delivery system, he deploys design thinking to highlight that a good curricular design would take into account students’ material lives and, so, would take composition further, in his opinion, in the direction of student-centeredness. Taylor runs into problems when he begins to approach design in terms

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18 Indeed, design theory emphasizes that design is purpose. For example, Richard Marback writes, “In its richest sense design thinking is a nonreductive approach to wicked problems of inventing purposeful artifacts when intentions, circumstances, and outcomes are all ambiguous at best because the designer is immersed in a world of artifacts” (W405).
that smack of teacher- and student-proofing: “… a good design is transparent in the sense that almost anyone can apprehend at first glance how it works and what they are to do” (131).

Derek Owens has written about curriculum and course design perhaps more extensively and in more depth than any other compositionist, but he does so in such diverse ways that it’s hard to pin his ideas down definitively. Despite the complexity of Owens’ approach, it can be said that he calls for a form of curriculum design that anticipates a curriculum’s future consequences and is interdisciplinary, attentive to local contexts, and activist in spirit. To get a sense of how wide-ranging Owens approach to curriculum design is, it helps to read the language that he himself has used. At one point, Owens proposes that curriculum designers should borrow language from Paul Hawken’s *The Ecology of Commerce* and “apply it to a new theory of curriculum,” the goal of which would be “to imagine a prosperous academic culture that is so intelligently designed and constructed that it mimics the local bioregion at every step, a symbiosis of institution and student and ecology” (90). Later Owens argues for what he calls “reconstructivist design” (129-163). To develop this approach to design, Owens first borrows and then revises the phrase “reconstructionist” from Theodore Brameld, a philosopher of education writing in the 1950s: “The reconstructionist [educator] ‘would build a new order of civilization, under genuinely public control, dedicated to the fulfillment of the natural values for which humanity has been struggling, consciously or unconsciously, for many centuries’” (original emphasis internal quotes Brameld 156). Owens alters this definition, claiming that “reconstructivism … concern[s] itself with choreographing immediate future conditions but through an ecologically informed awareness of sustainability and ecological economics” (my emphasis 156). Owens argues that this approach would have to be “cross-disciplinary” (146), in this context meaning that it would entail both co-designing curricula with faculty from
disciplines outside composition and “mining the work of scholars in a range of fields … for theories and design solutions” (132). Owens elaborates on this approach to design with a series of colorful, and useful, terms: curriculum design should be “an architectural endeavor,” meaning that it should borrow from ecologically enlightened architectural design theories (151); it should follow a “mosaic theory,” an approach to interdisciplinarity which involves “train[ing] the eye toward one’s chosen realms of study while not losing sight of the degree to which one is embedded within informational flows” (140); also, it should take “a butterfly approach: a delicate choreography of intellectual cross-pollination … [that attends to] those seemingly insignificant ripples destined to have far-reaching effects” (161).

Despite this extensive and rich discussion of curriculum design, it is notable that Owens takes for granted that curriculum is a designed thing.19 Also, running throughout Composition and Sustainability is a focus on the curricular work of specifically course design, which Owens understands to take place in a course’s sequence of assignments and readings, a “… choreographing [again] [of] writing opportunities … ” (xii-xiii). Like Taylor, Owens bases his approach to design on the assumption that it serves students’ interests, in contrast to an approach, it can be imagined, narrowly concerned with the efficient passing on of disciplinary knowledge. Whereas Taylor calls for designs that account for students’ immediate material and bodily conditions, Owens focuses on curriculum design and curricular designing that are intended to produce the public good of sustainability and to be based on principles of sustainability. The assumption here is that sustainability is a pressing social issue—or in Owens’ stronger language, a matter of “intergenerational justice” (23)—that necessarily involves students’ interests,

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19 This is not to say that Owens is not concerned with “design” as an action or process, but that he treats curriculum as the design that results from these actions and processes.
concerns, needs, and desires. For Owens, sustainability as an educational principle requires education to be “interventionist” (29).

A third writer, Matthew Heard, has approached curriculum design by focusing on the social processes that it entails, in an effort to make, particularly, course design a more participatory processes than it might otherwise be. Like Owens, Heard jumps into his discussion of design without considering that curriculum might be approached from a different theoretical vantage point. His approach to design, he writes, offers a response to what he considers to be a special problem that curriculum designers currently need to forestall: curricular restrictions posed by “accountability measures and outcomes-based expectations” (315). Drawing on the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Heard argues that curriculum-design processes should be conducted with the same “habits of mind” that the Framework calls for: “creativity, openness, and responsibility” (315). He calls his approach “[i]nventive design [which] offers a point of contact for students, tenure-track faculty, and non-tenure-track faculty to engage together in pursuing basic questions of how and why writing matters” (316).

Inventive design, as described by Heard, is intended to bring more segments of the populations that are in contact with writing programs into disciplinary conversations about writing. It especially encourages teachers, including non-tenure-track faculty and graduate teaching assistants, to participate in theorizing and researching questions central to composition. In this way, inventive design works against an approach to curriculum design in which instructors, particularly new instructors, are expected to align their courses with accepted disciplinary knowledge. Heard notes that in “publications aimed directly at new instructors” can be found “a tone of mastery that our field has sponsored … [in which] we recognize the positioning of design as a mechanism for aligning instructors’ perspectives with disciplinary
expectations” (318). In other words, for Heard, such publications “encourage passivity and deference” toward disciplinary authority, especially in new instructors, and they promote the understanding of design as something which “affects instructors, but is not in turn affected by instructors’ thoughts or actions” (319).

In order to work against this trend, Heard proposes “five basic principles” (325) for inventive design (for a full articulation of these principles, see Heard 325-29). These principles of inventive design focus on actions that can be taken to invite instructors to participate in questioning and revising disciplinary knowledge, values, and ways of thinking. These principles also address assessment, which, however, Heard argues, should be secondary to “the primary responsibility of encouraging inquiry and exploration” (328). These principles address the material embodiment of design as well. Heard acknowledges that instructors’ bodies and position in physical spaces affect their acts of knowing, as well as the opportunities that are available for inventive design as he has theorized it. Attending to material embodiment “remind[s] us that design is a material act, constrained by our different material privileges in the spaces we occupy. Not all instructors enjoy the freedom to practice design inventively” (Heard 331).

It is significant that Heard describes inventive design not just as a practice for constructing curricula and courses, but at times, as a method for preparing instructors. In two of his five principles of inventive design, he writes that it “prepares instructors to take an active role” (327) and “prepares designers to revise and reshape [disciplinary] logics” (328). To illustrate what inventive design looks like in practice, Heard describes the experience of a graduate student in a pedagogy course that he taught (330-32). While the student was in Heard’s course, she was adjuncting at a local two-year community college and was required to use a standard syllabus and textbook, which nonetheless allowed for some freedom for instructors to
incorporate novel themes and outside readings. For Heard’s course, the student submitted a project in which she designed a syllabus for the course she was teaching at the community college. The student, Heard writes, “centered her course on questions of how revising prepares writers to ‘make others’ condition [their] own’” (330). Heard argues that the graduate student’s course, constructed with the benefit of his method of inventive design, made room for questioning disciplinary concepts such as genre and form, which were at the center of the textbook that Heard’s student was required to use at the community college. Heard argues that given the constraints imposed by the standard syllabus and textbook, the instructor was nevertheless able to identify and exploit the possibilities for curricular invention, with the effect that, in the course, opportunities were created for both instructor and student to engage in a form of disciplinary inquiry.

The three texts on curriculum design in composition reviewed here suggest that “design,” like “curriculum” itself, is a capacious term into which various meanings can be injected. It is perhaps telling that compositionists and literacy scholars often affix an adjective to design to give the term more specificity: here, inventive design and reconstructivist design and, elsewhere, sustainable design (Newcomb). These texts suggest that curriculum designs are purposive and that the kind of design processes that one uses are consequential. It especially matters who has been invited to participate in the design process—instructors, students, faculty from disciplines outside composition—and what factors are accounted for in the design—students’ material lives, the far-reaching future effects of a curriculum, disciplinary knowledge.

It seems that composition has yet to elaborate exactly what we mean when we talk about “curriculum design.” Yet, an unspoken assumption is that curriculum design occurs through the writing of syllabi and assignments, the sequencing of assignments, and the selection of readings.
This appears to be especially true in Owens’ and Heard’s approaches to curriculum design, while Taylor is silent on the matter. As the chapters by Yancey and Diogenes and Lunsford in *Delivering College Composition* suggest, curriculum design should also account for other curricular factors such as classroom spaces and the materials that are made available in those spaces.

Heard’s study stands out among those on curriculum design for observing that assessment can play a major role in shaping curricula, an observation that is often made in passing by scholars of writing assessment (Gallagher, “Being There” fn. 7, 471; Gallagher, “Trouble” 43; Moore, O’Neill, and Huot W108). Yet, Heard argues that assessment should be secondary to the primary work of designing curricula for inquiry and invention. While I agree with Heard in valuing the kinds of inquiry that he calls for, a clear separation between assessment and curriculum design, however, might not be practicable, and positioning assessment as secondary in curriculum design might make writing programs susceptible precisely to the kinds of undesired external, standardized control over teaching and learning, under the banner of accountability and outcomes, that Heard hopes to avoid. It may be more useful to incorporate assessment integrally into curriculum design, as many curriculum design manuals already suggest (Diamond; Fink; Lattuca and Stark; Wiggins and McTighe). As I hope has been made clear in the critiques that I have offered above, especially in the discussion of curriculum as something that can be delivered, I do not understand curriculum to be only that which can be or is designed or represented in discourse. Still, writing programs do engage in practices of curriculum design (they plan course sequences, writing assignments, and readings; design and select sites for teaching and learning; and so on), and these practices affect curriculum as it is experienced by students. Insofar as teachers and writing program administrators engage in design
practices, literature on assessment and curriculum-design manuals suggest that writing programs would do well to consider the importance of assessment as point of leverage, at most colleges and universities, for shaping curriculum. For this reason, Heard’s prioritization of curriculum design over assessment seems to overlook the centrality of assessment: planning and creating tools for assessment are, I would argue, essential—and perhaps primary—practices of curriculum design.

Finally, the approaches to curriculum design reviewed here seem, on the whole, to be mostly silent about institutional context. Owens seems hyper-cognizant of the local and organizes his writing courses around issues that students at his institution tend to face, especially in neighborhoods where they grew up or live. He goes so far as to lament that, at most institutions, “curriculum … is ethereal, abstract, and detached from the local universe of surrounding neighborhoods, from the students’ and employees’ neighborhoods, and from the campus itself” (72). Still, there is little attention to how institutional factors such as department and program structure, hiring practices and labor relations, and the labelling of students (e.g., “basic,” “remedial,” and “ESL”) affect curriculum and to how these factors can be accounted for in a curriculum design and processes of curriculum design. Accounting for these factors seems necessary given that the labelling of students and the politics of remediation have been shown in particular to be consequential for composition curricula (Gleason; Ritter). To be fair to Owens, he does attend to the restrictions that traditional disciplinary divisions place on the possibilities for curricula based on sustainability; teaching for sustainability requires, he argues, that teachers and scholars work across disciplines, an activity not supported well by the departmental structures in place at most universities and colleges. Still, calls for specific approaches to curriculum design in composition would benefit from increased attention to institutional context.
Approaches to curriculum design could better account for how composition curricula arise from, respond to, fit within, and revise local institutional conditions.

**Explicit Definitions and Theories of Curriculum in Composition and English Studies**

As I wrote at the beginning of this chapter, at least four composition scholars have explicitly theorized curriculum—Larson, Juzwick, Yancey, and Gallagher—and each has done so with varying degrees of depth and comprehensiveness. Like the reviewed scholarship that addresses curriculum without explicitly theorizing it, the work of these four scholars does not have a common genealogy. This lack of commonality may be a consequence of the fact that these scholars address different audiences—Juzwick is writing for writing program administrators (WPAs), Larson for the Ford Foundation, Yancey for teachers of literature in general education programs, and Gallagher for composition scholars—but it also suggests that composition and its related fields have yet to develop a “canonical” body of research on the study of composition curriculum. Even though they are not directly in conversation, each of the four scholars addressed here, however, do offer theories and methods to conceptualize, analyze, and research curriculum. I hesitate to make generalizations about the theories and methods reviewed in this section because the four texts are so different. Still, all four scholars observe—in significantly different ways, which I discuss—that designed curricula do not necessarily correspond to the curricula that students experience.

**Composition curricula as sequenced writing activities (Larson)**

The Ford Foundation commissioned Larson’s report on writing program curricula in 1986 with the initial intention of eventually funding the development of writing programs across the U.S. (Larson 3). The report was finished eight years later in 1994. Larson began his research by randomly selecting 575 colleges and universities to be studied and, to this list, added
additional historically black colleges and universities, in which the Ford Foundation was particularly interested. Larson sent surveys to department chairs and WPAs at these institutions and also requested a wide range of documents: “policy statements about the program, memoranda …, and sample syllabi showing … the sequence of assignments and activities” (6). Larson received “240 usable responses containing substantially all the information requested” (7). Before Larson completed the report, the Ford Foundation had decided that it would not pursue its plan to fund changes in writing programs. Larson describes this decision as “wise,” since “[t]he evidence I have located suggests that there is wide disagreement on what a college writing program should be or should teach” (40). Larson’s repeats this conclusion elsewhere in his report, writing that in his research “the Ford program officers’ inability to find a ‘center of gravity’ in our field is amply sustained” (18). Some generalizations that Larson makes about his study’s findings include that a modes-based “formalism” (18) predominates in most writing curricula, that programs exhibit an “indifference to the discovery of data and of ideas based on data” (18), that programs attend little to the “quality of [students’] thought” (19), that writing assignments failed to attend to rhetorical situation and the rhetorical effects of writing, and that, most significantly in Larson’s opinion, programs were not adequately evaluating themselves (18-21).

As this brief summary suggests, Larson’s report displays multiple assumptions about writing programs and curricula, many of them assumptions that many in composition still hold. For instance, he assumes that composition curricula should require students to write rhetorically effective texts rather than to write texts that reproduce formalist modes. The most significant assumption, however, is that writing programs across the nation should be teaching curricula that are somehow nationally unified in purpose and tasks. Larson implies that a failure of
composition, at the time in which he was writing at least, was that it did not have a “center of
gravity” that brought curricula across the United States into an acceptably tight orbit. Here,
Larson, and apparently the Ford Foundation, believe that composition should come to a
consensus and agree on some form of standardization of curriculum across institutions (cf. Graff
and Birkenstein, “Progressive”; Graff and Birkenstein-Graff, “Immodest”).

Larson’s report, however, is most relevant to this dissertation for what it explicitly says
about what curriculum is and what constitutes it. Most significantly, Larson writes that a
composition curriculum should be viewed, at least for research purposes, as “successive
assignments for writing” and the “support given to students”:

I found it on the whole useful to view curricula in writing as constituted by the
successive assignments for writing, and useful to describe those curricula in terms
of the succession of writing assignments and the support given to students as they
attempted each assignment. Such a view recognizes that, as in many other
activities, students learn to do the activity by in fact doing it, with appropriate
feedback from an observer experienced in doing the activity and in "coaching" it.
It also recognizes that the varied assignments given, and how they are arranged,
communicate to students a sense of what writing entails, of what it means to
"write." That sense may affect how students approach later writing tasks and later
courses that require writing. (42-43)

A few aspects of Larson’s approach in this passage are particularly important. First, Larson
locates curriculum in the writing activities that students are asked to do. At times, even as his
research depends on syllabi and programmatic documents such as memoranda and policy
statements, he demonstrates a distrust of such official representations of curricula. For instance,
Larson notes, “Some 35 percent of the curricula we [Larson and research assistants] looked at are ‘textbook-driven’: the instructor is expected, *at least on the printed syllabus*, to take the student almost chapter by chapter through the textbook” (my emphasis 22-23). He argues that the act of taking students through textbooks in this way “[implies] to the students that whatever partitioning of the act of writing [made by the textbook] … is the one the students should learn and adopt” (23). Second, as this last quotation suggests, Larson finds it useful to approach writing curricula not just as writing activities, but as the *sequence* of writing activities. For Larson, the sequence of writing activities especially conveys messages about processes of writing, in this case, the partitioning of writing processes and genres. Third, a curriculum is made up of not only writing assignments, but the “support” and “coaching” that a student receives. Here, Larson implicitly works against the theory that composition curricula should be understood as lessons, content knowledge, or even as outcomes. Curriculum here is what students do throughout a course, even though Larson admits that his data is limited to documents that represent what students do.

Finally, Larson highlights that a sequence of writing assignments can be expected to affect how students approach writing in the future and find meaning in writing. This understanding of the future consequences of curriculum also appears in Wayne Au’s theory of curriculum, on which I draw. Au argues, “Teachers use the curriculum … to make particular knowledge and ways of understanding the world (epistemologies) accessible for student understanding, engagement, and potential action” (Au 40). Larson might be understood, then, as arguing that composition curricula as they are constituted by sequenced writing assignments make particular epistemologies of writing accessible—and inaccessible—to students in ways that shape how students will use writing and what they will use it for. Larson writes, “Almost any
curriculum is grounded in one theory [of writing] or another …” (20). One can find the theory underlying a curriculum, in Larson’s model, in the sequenced assignments of composition courses. In other words, it is the sequence of writing assignments that communicates to students a theory of, as Larson phrases it above, “what writing entails, [and] of what it means to ‘write’” (43), and this theory has consequences for what knowledge about writing (as a thing and as an activity) and ways of knowing about writing are, in Au’s language, “accessible” to students, both in the present and future.

This report matters in the current discussion not because Larson criticizes composition for not agreeing on a standard curriculum for all post-secondary writing programs—a suspect criticism, to say the least—or because he argues that writing programs should require more data-based writing. His report matters here because he offers a methodology for studying curriculum: Larson offers a theory of what curriculum is and how it can be known. This report suggests that, to understand a given writing curriculum, we should look beyond curricular representations, such as syllabi and course descriptions. We should know, at the least, what students are writing, how they are taught to sequence and categorize (or not) their writing, and what support they receive as they write. Larson’s report especially points out the methodological issues that attended his large-scale study of curriculum: curriculum cannot be known through curricular representations and surveys of administrators alone because these data sources are not reliable for studying the what students and teachers are actually doing. Instead, these data sources, when considered only by themselves, provide data on how curriculum is represented. Larson’s report suggests that, to move beyond these representations, researchers should attend to what students do, the order in which they do it, and the support that they receive. By attending to these factors, the researcher can better grasp what, at a given curricular site, students are learning about writing and for what
purposes they are learning to use it. In other words, by attending to students’ writing activities and the support students receive, researchers can better understand what “particular knowledge and ways of understanding the world (epistemologies) [are made] accessible” to students in both the present and the future (Au 40). In these ways, Larson’s report makes explicit a methodology for studying curriculum.

Again, my purpose is not to critique the merits of Larson’s curricular proposals (e.g., that writing programs need to assign less modes-based writing); however, I do want to note one way that I disagree with Larson on what curriculum is and how it can be studied. Larson focuses curriculum too narrowly on the writing that students do. Curriculum in writing courses comprises more than the assignments that students complete and the order in which they complete them, however relevant these assignments might be. In short, a more expansive understanding of curriculum is needed. For example, curriculum also encompasses what students learn as they interact with teachers and, importantly, other students—and these interactions are not merely, as Larson might phrase it, “support” for writing. Through such interactions, not only do students learn about writing, including how and why writing should be valued or not; students also learn about, among other things, language and language difference, social roles, and surviving (or thriving) within institutions. By focusing on sequences of writing assignments, Larson’s approach to curriculum fails to attend to such learning, especially when that learning appears unrelated or tangentially related to writing. This learning, unrecognizable or unimportant in Larson’s model, indicates that in writing courses, or in another mode of writing education, there are curricula not reducible to writing assignments. Larson’s theory of curriculum and methodology for researching it have the advantage of moving beyond programmatic representations to consider what students are actually doing in writing courses. However, we
could better understand curricula by getting closer to the classroom, so to speak, collecting data on more than just writing assignments and “support,” and by opening attention to the other forms of learning—planned or unplanned, desired or not desired—that appear in writing education.

**Curricular strategies and tactics (Juzwick)**

While Larson directs attention to writing assignments and support, Juzwick has researched the interaction between a standard writing curriculum and teachers’ practices in class. Writing about a case study of the curricular practices of two graduate teaching assistants in a writing program in which a new curriculum had been instated, Mary Juzwick proposes that a curriculum should be understood as bifurcated into what Michel de Certeau calls “strategies” and “tactics.” Juzwick’s approach to curriculum focuses on the activities performed by instructors rather than students. She is particularly concerned with “what college writing instructors take from a ‘standard’ curriculum, and what they make of these official, unifying texts and teaching tools as they translate them into the particularities of their own practices of teaching writing” (40). Juzwick’s de Certeauian approach to curriculum could be generalized beyond composition curricula, but her case studies suggest that this approach to curriculum might be especially useful within the context of writing programs, especially those that require teachers to use a standard curriculum—a standard syllabus, textbook, assignments, and grading rubrics. Juzwick finds de Certeau’s terminology and theory useful because “it accounts for the institutional demand for standardization that teachers must work within, while also accounting for individual creativity and the change that can flow from individual teachers to the program level” (41). She uses de Certeau’s theory to research what she calls “tactical appropriation”:

In de Certeau’s terms, if the writing curriculum on paper and in theory—the documentation of the will of the program for those who must work within it—
offers a kind of strategic mandate, then teachers’ ‘ways of using’ it can usefully be understood as tactical appropriation. (41)

At a basic level, Juzwick’s approach to writing curriculum recognizes that power operates through a standard—or, more generally, official—curriculum and the administrative apparatuses that accompany it, while also recognizing that teachers are not merely “unthinking dupes who are ‘disciplined’ by such systems” (40). Teachers can engage in “everyday rhetorical practices of ‘creative resistance’” (41).

In Larson’s study, even though he argues that composition curriculum is best understood by the sequence of writing that students do and the support that they receive, his project of documenting national trends in the curricula of writing programs limits his ability to go beyond official representations in order to research the teaching and learning practices in the curricula that he studied. In contrast, Juzwick’s approach to curriculum underscores the importance of gathering data about what teachers do with an official curriculum.

An important finding of Juzwick’s study was that her research participants’ tactical appropriations were influenced by the conflict between their own “cultural model[s]” of writing and the cultural model of the standard syllabus (see especially, Juzwick 51, 53, and 54). Also, the case study suggests that there are limits to the resistance that teachers can perform through tactical appropriation. Juzwick notes that one of the instructor’s “tactical appropriation of the model syllabus led her to abandon it altogether, a high level of resistance that resulted in her not teaching in … program after that semester” (51). These findings lead Juzwick to two main recommendations for program administrators: (1) that teacher training should explain “the ‘why’ behind the curriculum” (55) and that it should “invite teachers to identify [and to reflect critically on] their own cultural models of writing” (56); and (2) that curriculum development should occur
through “dialogue” with teachers that encourages their tactical appropriations to be shared more broadly and to influence the curriculum.

Juzwick’s theory does a good job of explaining the interaction between teaching practices and the curriculum—between what I would call the tactical and strategic curriculum. Instead, for her, the main contrast is between “the strategic curriculum and the tactics of teachers” (54). It is potentially powerful to name instructors’ tactical appropriations as producing a “tactical curriculum” because this phrasing acknowledges that tactical appropriations of a curriculum necessarily (re)constructs curriculum, forming a curriculum different from the strategic. Although Juzwick’s theory accounts well for what instructors (can) creatively do with even standard curricula, working around power, to an extent, she does not account for the interaction among strategic curricula, tactical curricula, and students. Also, for Juzwick, curriculum is only ever strategic; it is a kind of authoritative discourse that shapes what instructors do. In contrast to Juzwick, I would argue that identifying curricular strategies and curricular tactics could better account for the emergence of the curriculum that students experience. In other words, it is not only strategies but tactics that contribute to shaping the “experienced curriculum,” to use Yancey’s term (see below). Recognizing curricular strategies and curricular tactics also better accounts for teachers’ agency in shaping curriculum.

*Lived, delivered, and experienced curricula (Yancey)*

While Juzwick focuses on theorizing how teachers tactically appropriate standard curricula, Kathleen Blake Yancey offers a vocabulary and theory for explaining how students interact with curriculum. Yancey’s greatest contribution to the study of curriculum in English studies is her recognition that students construct curriculum. Writing about her experience with

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20 Juzwick uses the phrase “strategic curriculum” once but never uses “tactical curriculum,” a phrase that I am contributing here.
researching students’ portfolios in English education courses, Yancey writes, “I came to understand that what I think I deliver isn’t delivered but rather constructed from one student to the next. What I sensed intuitively—that there was an experienced curriculum—was documented in the portfolios” (100). In order to describe this process of construction, Yancey divides curriculum into three parts:

- the lived curriculum—a student’s “set of prior courses and experiences and connections that contextualize the delivered curriculum” (16);
- the delivered curriculum—“the one we are most familiar with … the one we design” (16);
- the experienced curriculum—“what some call the de facto curriculum—that is, the curriculum that students construct in the context of both the lived curriculum they bring with them and the delivered curriculum we seek to share” (58).

Yancey seems to have in mind that it is the experienced curriculum that is constructed through the interaction of the lived curriculum and the delivered curriculum—the interaction between students’ prior experiences and learning and the designed curriculum. Yancey first describes this interaction by writing that the lived curriculum “contextualizes” the delivered curriculum. However, later, she writes that “the lived curriculum … contextualize[s] both [the delivered and the experienced curriculum]” (100). Yancey does not clarify what she means by “contextualize” in either of these passages, but she seems to mean that students draw on their lived curricula as they make sense of and give meaning to the delivered and experienced curriculum.

Yancey’s framework is easy enough to understand: students’ prior experiences shape how they construct curriculum. This framework draws attention to the difference between the delivered (or designed curriculum) and the one that students, in fact, experience—each student
engaging with the delivered curriculum in at least a slightly, but possibly drastically, different way. With this theoretical framework in place, Yancey goes on to argue for a particular way of teaching: inviting the lived curriculum and the experienced curriculum into the classroom. For Yancey, bringing the lived and the experienced curriculum, in addition to the delivered curriculum, into the classroom, teachers can create opportunities for “reflective transfer,” a concept that, here at least, she borrows from a philosopher, Donald Schön. Yancey suggests that by encouraging students to write about, discuss, and otherwise examine their lived and experienced curriculum, teachers create more opportunities for students to engage in reflective transfer: “the process of thinking that allows us to generalize from specifics, to develop schemata and other models that move us from one specific instance to another, and to create a prototype that lends itself to transfer” (15).

Yancey also claims that such invitations to reflect on the lived and experienced curriculum allow teachers to observe better what students already know, to discover what they are actually learning (opposed to what we think they should be learning), and to learn from students. To explain this, she sets her approach to curriculum in contrast to what she calls “the FedEx truck model of curriculum” (99):

We package curriculum, load it into the FedEx truck, and send it on its way to our students…. We don’t ask what else might have been delivered, or what the student might want to send back to us, or whether the student is even at home to accept delivery or what that home looks like. (99)

Working against the FedEx truck model requires attending to both the lived and experienced curriculum. Here, Yancey is moving beyond just theorizing curriculum to explore her theory’s consequences for pedagogy. She is not only arguing that the FedEx model does not accurately
describe what a curriculum is, but is advocating for an approach to, and theory of, teaching and learning that builds on the recognition that the delivered curriculum differs from the experienced one.

In this dissertation, I build on Yancey’s recognition that students participate in constructing curriculum—for Yancey, “the experienced curriculum”—even when their curricular contributions are not invited into the classroom and even when students are not brought into the formal processes of curriculum development and design. Yancey’s model, however, poses some issues in its liberal use of the word “curriculum” itself. For instance, it is not clear exactly what the three curricula that she names have in common or what makes them “curricular.” In the case of the “delivered curriculum,” Yancey’s definition is clear enough, corresponding with the commonly held understanding that a curriculum is what educators design in syllabi, assignments, course readings, and so on. But when Yancey describes the “lived curriculum” and the “experienced curriculum,” she does not clarify why the word “curriculum” should be used in all three categories. An explanation might be found in what Yancey has written about curriculum elsewhere (see above). For Yancey, curriculum seems to be “the what of education” (“Standards” 21). In *Teaching Literature as Reflective Practice*, the lived curriculum is what students bring to a course (especially “prior courses and experiences” [16]) and the experienced curriculum is what students actually learn, as opposed to what we think we deliver. Still, I am not convinced that the “lived curriculum” is really curriculum. It is not clear why “lived curriculum” is an improvement on other phrases and words that Yancey could have used—for example, prior experience, knowledge, habits, dispositions, and values. The phrase “experienced curriculum” works better—it does help to explain data from the case study presented in this dissertation—and it is one I will use going forward.
More significant than Yancey’s tripartite division of curriculum is her recognition that curriculum is “constructed from one student to the next” (original emphasis 100). Although Yancey limits this observation to “experienced curriculum,” it offers a useful way to think about curriculum more generally, without the adjective “experienced” attached. The recognition that curriculum is constructed, and constructed differently for and by each student, suggests that curriculum is emergent, rather than something that precedes, follows, and exists separately from educational experience itself. Therefore, while teachers, administrators, and others might “design curriculum” (writing up course descriptions and learning goals, establishing sets of required courses for general education or a major, creating assessment tools, writing syllabi, selecting readings, and so on), and while we should pay attention to practices of curriculum design, Yancey’s theory suggests that curriculum emerges within the context of the practices in which students are themselves engaged. An implication of this observation is that a theory of curriculum that attends only to curriculum designs (from the design of a major to the design of a single class), especially when students are not imagined as participants in curriculum design, inadequately accounts for how students are agents in constructing curriculum.

In addition to Yancey’s view that curriculum is “constructed from one student to the next” (100), I would suggest that it is important to also look for patterns in the curricula that emerge as students engage in practices in educational institutions: Do different groups of students tend to experience, or not experience, curricula that are similar in a significant way? Do these trends correspond to factors such as race, gender, class, and sexuality? What aspects of students’ identities and backgrounds affect or correspond to patterns in curricular experiences? Asking such questions offers a way to work against an overly-individualized theory of curriculum and can help us to recognize when systemic patterns of oppression occur in
education, such as what curriculum-studies scholars sometimes call the “differential distribution of knowledge”—providing or not providing opportunities for specific populations to access knowledge. In looking for such patterns, it would be important for differences in what students are and are not learning—for instance, whether some groups learn to devalue their linguistic resources, or whether they learn they are “not good at school” or “not good at writing.” Such learning, I argue, can be part of a curriculum. It is important that even when we are looking for such patterns, we understand that the emphasis is on the curriculum that students experience as that curriculum emerges during an education. The attention here is on emergent experiences, rather than on curriculum designs, or rather than on curriculum designs only, for curriculum designs do matter and do affect the curricula that students experience.

“Pedagogy-centered curricula” (Gallagher)

With the exception of Yancey in Teaching Literature as Reflective Practice, composition scholars have tended to theorize curriculum as a designed and purposive sequence of courses, readings, assignments, and activities that students complete, or outcomes that students achieve. This focus on design coheres with the understanding that curriculum can be designed without the participation of teachers and students. In the most prevalent theory of curriculum, teachers can be handed a “strategic curriculum” (Juzwick) to implement more-or-less accurately. This theory of curriculum—curriculum as stable designs or outcomes—is challenged in Chris Gallagher’s Radical Departures, where Gallagher argues for what he calls “pedagogy-centered curricula” (146).

Gallagher’s proposal for pedagogy-centered curricula functions as both a theoretical statement about curriculum and an argument for how curricular work should be done. As a

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21 Although I do not subscribe to the theory of knowledge that this phrase implies (that knowledge is something that can be distributed), this phrase does capture well that schools provide differential access to learning across populations.
theoretical statement, Gallagher’s proposal suggests that curricula should not be understood as rigid and transportable designs and outcomes, but should be understood, instead, as continually undergoing processes of change as students and teachers engage in dialogue with each other and work together on disciplinary questions and problems. For Gallagher, pedagogy-centered curricula “shift the focus of curriculum from standardization and stability (whether derived from a set of texts, a historical period, or an organizing idea) to flexibility and process” (163). This theoretical argument resembles Yancey’s in that it suggests the inadequacy of a curricular theory that sees curriculum solely as designed; however, Gallagher’s theoretical argument departs from Yancey’s by fundamentally challenging the notion that curriculum includes, or begins with, stable curriculum design—a notion that persists even in Yancey’s model, where the delivered curriculum is one of three types of curriculum operating at a given educational site. Instead, for Gallagher, curriculum can be reimagined as always under development and transformation. Approaching curriculum this way requires, Gallagher writes, that administrators, teachers, and students “become more comfortable with the flexibility and evolving nature of the curriculum” (emphasis in original 159).

Also, Gallagher offers an argument for how curricular work should be done. Specifically, he argues that curricular work should occur through an on-going dialogue among teachers, students, and administrators rather than through preplanning and designing alone. However, for curricular work to proceed in this way curriculum must first be reimagined and re-theorized in the manner indicated.

In addition to challenging a focus on stable and designed curricula, Gallagher’s proposal for curriculum calls for a reconfiguration of the relation between curriculum and discipline, by seeing the interaction between teachers and students as a location for disciplinary knowledge-
making, as opposed to a location for the delivery of disciplinary knowledge. As seen in the discussion of Matthew Heard’s argument for reconstructing curriculum design processes around habits of mind articulated in *Framework for Success*, Gallagher is not alone in calling for methods for increasing teachers’ and students’ participation in both curricular work and disciplinary knowledge-making. But while Heard calls for inviting teachers and students to grapple with disciplinary questions and problems, Gallagher more explicitly argues that pedagogy-centered curricula would position the activities of teachers and students as a location for knowledge-making: “In this view, we ought to think of disciplinary knowledge as deriving from the work that students and teachers do together, not the other way around” (*Radical* 146).

An “intralude” in *Radical Departures* demonstrates what this proposal would look like in practice. It presents three sets of materials: (1) excerpts from curricular materials from the Writing Sequence at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany (e.g., course descriptions and assignments); (2) excerpts from student writing produced in the Writing Sequence; and (3) excerpts from a CCCC presentation given by Gallagher, by other teachers from SUNY, Albany, and most significantly by an undergraduate student who enrolled in courses taught by the other presenters. The intralude demonstrates that the student who presented at CCCC with Gallagher and other teachers from SUNY, Albany contributed knowledge not only about the curriculum of the Writing Sequence and about her own processes of learning, but about, as Gallagher quotes the student (Krista) stating in her CCCC presentation, “how reading, writing, and revision intersect” (*Radical* 145). This intralude enacts the principle that the work that teachers and students do in a curriculum can be a basis for disciplinary knowledge-making in composition.
As promising and attractive as pedagogy-centered curricula are, Gallagher observes that they can be created or enacted only within specific institutional contexts and, so, understanding how institutions work and change becomes necessary. Gallagher attends to a special institutional problem that makes pedagogy-centered curricula difficult to enact. Drawing on Stephen North, Gallagher notes that English departments, the institutional unit that was most relevant in shaping the Writing Sequence at SUNY, Albany, have tended to develop along a “rambling mansion approach”: “each theoretical innovation is accommodated by adding a new wing to the mansion, without making structural changes to the existing wings” (Radical 148). The rambling mansion approach, Gallagher writes, tends to create incoherence across courses within a curriculum. To move beyond this approach, he writes, would require “a move from ‘teaching our passions’ to ‘teaching our students’” (150). Teachers would have to engage in the work of co-constructing coherent educational experiences with students as they move across courses, work that would entail regular communication about curriculum among teachers and among teachers and students. Importantly, for Gallagher, making the shift to “teaching our students” requires what he calls “institutional literacy,” an ability to read and write the discourses that make up an institution and to recognize and change “the institutional habits and beliefs that guide its everyday work” (80). A belief that would have to change, in particular, is the assumption that teachers should be “teaching their passions,” or teaching within their own specialization without

\[22\] Gallagher is not unique in calling for curricula in which courses are well-integrated and coherent. Other scholars have also offered proposals for integrating composition and literature courses under the aegis of English studies: James Seitz, for example, has proposed that an integrated curriculum in English studies could be formed around the study of metaphor, and Lynée Lewis Gaillet and Marcia A. McDonald have argued, in slightly different ways, for an English studies curriculum integrated around the purpose of providing an education in democratic citizenship. Still, it is worth noting that Gallagher’s study and others that call for an integrated English studies curriculum treat curriculum as a sequence of courses. The curriculum at SUNY, Albany was intended “to provide students with a set of coherent, sequenced writing courses” (157). Later, Gallagher reiterates this point, writing that “the teachers and students who participated in the program were responsible … for the work that happened … across courses” (159). While viewing curriculum as a sequence, or an integrated sequence, of courses is by no means novel, it is important to recognize this feature of how Gallagher theorizes curriculum.
regard for what students are learning in other courses. To change this state of affairs, Gallagher argues, it is necessary to carry out institutional change.

I find three aspects of Gallagher’s theory of curriculum and proposals for curricular work especially useful: (1) that a curriculum can be a site for disciplinary knowledge-making rather than a site of the delivery of disciplinary knowledge; (2) that curriculum should be understood as work that students and teachers do together; and (3) that changing curriculum and processes of curricular work requires institutional literacy. Gallagher’s proposals and theory promote an approach to curriculum that allows for teaching and learning to proceed flexibly, goals and purposes open to renegotiation as teachers and students work together. Such flexibility, which makes room for teacher and student agency over education, is not as present in the other models of curriculum discussed so far. Even in Yancey’s theory of the experienced curriculum, in which students are invited to bring their own experiences into the classroom as a resource for learning, students do not seem to be invited to participate in creating curricular coherence with teachers and administrators across courses. Furthermore, Gallagher recognizes that curricula are inseparable from institutional processes and argues for the necessity of institutional literacy—for the ability to read and rewrite institutions. While Gallagher focuses on the need to attend to the institutionalized habit of “teaching our passions,” his observation that curricular change requires institutional change might be applied more broadly. Changing curricula, especially changing how and why we engage in curricular practices, is more likely to succeed if we identify and leverage opportunities for change in institutions and recognize the limitations of doing so. No curriculum is likely to “take hold” or be sustained in the absence of such literacy.

Conclusion
In this chapter, I have summarized and critiqued theories of curriculum operative in composition studies. I have directed this summary and critique toward the goal of building new ways to research and practice curriculum in composition. With this goal in mind, I want to highlight the following insights gleaned from the literature reviewed here: (1) teachers and students actively shape curricula even when they are not invited to do so (Yancey, Teaching; Juzwick); (2) curriculum designs affect but do not determine the curricula that students experience (Yancey, Teaching; Juzwick); (3) effectively changing local curriculum designs and processes of curriculum design requires what Gallagher calls “institutional literacy” (Radical); (4) material, social, cultural, political, and historical context shapes curriculum (e.g., Diogenes and Lunsford); and (5) curriculum designs are social actions that affect the world we live in (e.g., Owens).

Overall, composition scholarship has tended to emphasize curriculum designs and design processes. Also, scholars writing about curriculum have often focused on the outcomes that students should reach or produce by the conclusion of a course or a sequence of courses. In contrast, I would like to argue that composition scholars should give more attention to who participates in curriculum design, what this participation entails and how it proceeds, how students and teachers engage with curriculum designs, and to how students experience curriculum. Especially by attending to teachers and students’ engagement with designs and to experienced curricula, we in composition will have to ask what students are learning in writing courses, whether or not that learning was designed or intended or written up in outcomes statements. Furthermore, we will have to ask how and why specific experienced curricula take shape at materially embodied sites. It will not be possible to answer these questions by arguing over learning goals and curriculum designs alone. Research will have to address how people
engage, fail to engage, or disengage with concrete, locally situated curricular materials and environments. Such research would trace where curricular materials come from, how and why those curricular materials were made, how and why those curricular materials entered into a specific educational environment, and what students and teachers do, or don’t do, with them.

As I articulate the kind of research that I think is missing in composition, I am confronted with an inadequacy in our inherited terminology for talking about curriculum. The word “curriculum design” seems especially inaccurate for conveying the sense of curriculum that I intend to communicate here. I would rather that the discussion of curriculum shift toward objects, discourses, and practices. Such a shift would have the benefit of directing our attention not to course designs as represented in a syllabus, a planned sequence of reading and writing assignments, or a sequence of courses, each with its own set of goals; but to what people—especially students but also teachers and administrators—do with objects such as syllabi or course readings and the consequences that follow. We might ask, for instance, “How and why are particular objects incorporated into and made meaningful within practices of administration, teaching, and learning?”

This shift in terminology might also encourage us to research also how “distant practices” produce curricular consequences. Distant practices could include activities such as writing up outcomes statements, or changing a university’s writing requirement from two courses to one course. For example, Libby Miles’ work on textbook publishing offers a model for how research on distant practices might proceed. Miles work on textbooks suggests, for example, that textbook publishers continue to produce modes-based textbooks because they sell: publishers’ practice of making a profit might be understood as creating objects (textbooks), which then have curricular effects as they are incorporated into administration, teaching, and
learning. Such distant practices have the potential to affect experienced curricula. We might be able to better trace such practices and the effects.

In pointing out these examples for what curricular research into objects and practices would look like, I do not want to place too much emphasis on objects. The practices that teachers and students engage in together are just as important as, if not more important than, curricular objects. The research that I am calling for would attend to how a range of practices affects students’ experienced curricula, including students’ practices, whether they are “sanctioned” or not, such as pleasing the teacher or maintaining relationships with other students in the class—two practices which might not seem to have curricular consequences at first glance.

The examples that I have mentioned ultimately ask us to inquire about individual students’ experienced curricula. These experienced curricula might be understood as the ultimate object of analysis in the research that I’m calling for. Despite this focus on experienced curricula, I want to maintain a meaning for “curriculum” that emphasizes learning and denials of learning that are systemic or patterned rather than purely individual. Curriculum as a concept gives us a unique comprehension of education precisely by directing attention to patterns and regularities, for good or ill. Maintaining a research focus on patterns allows us to stretch the definition of “curriculum” in the ways I am suggesting without moving it too far beyond its accepted usage. This approach to curriculum, then, should be understood as maintaining the emphasis on patterns and regularization implied by the term “curriculum design.”

This theory also has consequences for how we understand not only research on curriculum but also curricular work. It suggests that curricular work includes any activity that, intentionally or not, significantly shapes patterns in what students are learning in an educational institution. This understanding of curricular work considerably expands it beyond traditional
notions of course design or program development. For instance, this understanding might allow us to account better for how designing and constructing new classrooms, for how making admissions decisions, and for how hiring new teachers and administrators are all potentially forms of curricular work. Such a notion of curriculum and curricular work, then, can help us to attend to how a broader range of activities and artifacts produce patterns in learning, and by better understanding these processes, we might be more attuned to the curricular consequences of activities that, at first glance, might seem tangential to teaching and learning.
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN THE STUDY OF CURRICULUM IN WRITING PROGRAMS: AN OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of an approach to using theory of communities of practice to study curriculum and curriculum change. In doing so, it sets up the sociological theory on which the following two chapters draw. Building on the discussion of curriculum in the previous chapters, this chapter, chapter three, and chapter four closely examine curricular “practices” and their “reifications,” terms which I borrow from Etienne Wenger. I find these terms especially useful in accounting for the “curricular plurality” that stemmed from each curricular change being studied. The studied curriculum changes were “singular” only from a distant institutional perspective—from the perspective of programmatic learning goals, changes in course titles, and descriptions—but from a closer perspective, the curriculum change was multiple and multifaceted. “Curricular plurality” is intended to name this multiplicity of curricula that exists even when institutional discourses and texts recognize only a single curriculum.

In making a case for curricular plurality, I am drawing on, in part, Kathleen Blake Yancey’s notion of “the experienced curriculum.” As seen in chapter one, Yancey uses this term to name her observation that no two students experience a designed curriculum in the same way. Instead, each student can be said to have his or her own “experienced curriculum.” But I intend for the concept of curricular plurality to go beyond Yancey’s theory by accounting also for how a broader range of curricular practices and reifications, not just students’ experience, shape curriculum such that it multiplies or such that a singular institutionally recognized curriculum is refracted, so to speak, into a prism of curricula. I especially want to account for how, in this case study, teachers’ practices played a role in creating curricular plurality, a role that Yancey’s concept of the “experienced curriculum” omits.
The approach to curriculum in this chapter and chapters three and four also borrows from Wayne Au’s theory of curriculum (see introduction, specifically the section titled “A Definition of Curriculum”). Au argues that curriculum should be understood as “the tool that structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (49). Au’s understanding of curriculum as a tool that structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form helps me to describe how specific curricular practices and reifications gave rise to and shaped the diverse educational environments studied here. In drawing attention to what shapes educational environments, I do not understand environment as “that which surrounds,” in a way that figures environment as a naturalized background beyond human intervention. Rather, in the context of this discussion about curriculum, I consider environment to be deeply affected and constituted by human actions, texts, discourses, genres, and technologies—all of which, I argue, can be categorized and understood as practices or reifications. In other words, throughout the following case study, I have attempted to describe how various curricular practices and reifications, at the research site, have contributed to “structuring the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49).

However, I diverge slightly from Au’s theory. Au writes that curriculum is a “tool” (49), a word which suggests that educators have more control over curriculum than I think is warranted. The case study here supports the claim that curricular reifications (simply put, “the things of curriculum”) can have an agency of their own even if they must be reinterpreted and reincorporated into practices if they are to have an effect. Discourses, genres, and materially embodied texts shape curricular practices—and vice versa. This does not mean that humans cannot affect reifications (reifications require human action to exist and to be meaningful), but it does mean that reifications at times guide practices such that they circumscribe and partially determine practices, which is not to say that such circumscription is unproductive, or that such

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23 This approach is implicitly informed by Bruno Latour’s object-oriented ontology.
determination is deterministic. In short, my departure from Au is intended to better represent the ways curriculum can escape human agency and sometimes take on an agency of its own.

In what follows, I explain the five central terms of theory of communities of practice and how they have helped me to organize themes identified in my data. These five terms are practice, negotiation of meaning, participation, reification, and alignment. Next, I describe the organizational structure of the Writing Program at Global East Coast University through the lens of communities of practice.

**Practice, Negotiation of Meaning, Participation, Reification, and Alignment**

Wenger’s theorization of practice sprawls in many directions, but here I want to focus specifically on the concept of “practice”; three of its consistent parts (“negotiation of meaning,” “participation,” and “reification”); and the concept of “alignment.” These five concepts help to account for how practices shaped curriculum at the research site. Looking at practices as the unit of analysis has the advantage of allowing us to examine how practices other than just curriculum design, in a narrow sense, contribute to making curriculum. With this understanding of curriculum we can begin to look for a range of what we can call “curricular practices,” some of which will fall under traditional notions of curriculum making, such as program development and course design, and some of which will fall outside of these traditional notions. Using curricular practices as the unit of analysis, we can then go on to research how, for example, textbook publishers and students engage in curricular practices, even at moments when these curricular practices might be difficult to recognize. Next, I offer an outline for this approach to researching curriculum.

*Practice*
For Wenger, practice can be understood, at a basic level, as “doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. In this sense, practice is always social practice” (47). Practices are social activities that have histories and that are made meaningful through negotiations among people over the course of their mutual engagement in an enterprise. Mutually engaged in an enterprise, people within communities of practice hold one another accountable, assessing one another’s practices and negotiating what constitutes competent practice. Practices and the meaning that we attribute to them change over time, as the conditions surrounding a practice change and stimulate invention, and as members in a community learn from newcomers and from contact with objects, discourses, and members from other communities of practice.

An important feature of a practice, for the following discussion, is that it does not have to be institutionally sanctioned. Describing the practice of the insurance claims processors whom he studied, Wenger writes that they

… do not come to Alinsu [the insurance company] to form a community of practice; they come to earn a living…. They want to make money in order to go on with their own lives, which they see taking place mostly outside the office…

Yet the very longing to go home that pulls claims processors apart is also something they share, something that brings them together. (45)

This passage helps to illustrate that practice can include activities that a social group has been institutionally organized to accomplish, such as processing insurance claims or teaching writing to undergraduates, but it means more than that. It can include other practices that take shape within the community of practice itself. For instance, communities develop practices for coping with adverse work conditions: practices for building self-esteem while occupying a low-status
social role in an insurance company, or ways to manage large teaching loads. In a writing program, then, we can identify practices that are both institutionally recognized and not. Keeping in mind that practices do not always have to be institutionally recognized, such as practices other than teaching and learning, will be important for discussing how the practices of administrators, instructors, and students at GECU shaped curriculum.

For instance, the administrators and instructors who developed “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE) at GECU were explicitly engaged in the practice of revising curriculum; in particular, they were engaged in developing a writing course that could ethically and effectively teach writing to a growing number of multilingual international students on campus. The course that they developed together also was intended to draw on students’ languages as resources for learning. In addition to engaging in these main explicitly recognized practices, the group was also organized around a practice of combating monolingualism and racism on campus. Not all members of this community of practice seemed to find as much meaning in this latter practice as other members did, and as time passed, these practices came to seem less meaningful or urgent to participants. Still, the practices in which this community was engaged shaped, among other things, what texts and writing assignments were used in their courses and, hence, what knowledge was made accessible in environmental form.

In the following case study, I have used the term “curricular practice” to mean any practice that was meaningful to a specific community during a specific period and that affected curriculum. Multiple social groups can participate in curricular practices. This means that not only do administrators and teachers engage in curricular practices, but that students (and potentially others) do too. The case study here discusses data produced about the curricular practices of administrators and teachers. However, it would also be possible to research
curricular practices that other social groups perform. For instance, a study could address

curricular practices within textbook publishers. An example of this later type of research would
be the work of Libby Miles (“Building”; Constructing). Miles has shown that, within textbook
publishers, the practice of producing a profit has contributed to conservatism in composition
textbooks—in particular, the persistence of modes-based approach to writing. These practices
can be considered curricular practices insofar as they shape the accessibility of knowledge in
environmental form in composition classrooms.

Central aspects of practice: Negotiation of meaning, participation, and reification.

As the above discussion of practice suggests, practice should be understood as concerned
with meaning. Wenger writes, “Practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life”
(original emphasis 52). How people find meaning in practices involves what Wenger calls
“participation” and “reification.” I have grouped these three concepts together because they are
interrelated.

At its most basic, “negotiation of meaning” names how participants in a community of
practice find meaning in what they do. Wenger describes negotiation of meaning as a making
and remaking of patterns that “gives rise to the experience of meaning” (52). Wenger writes that
even mundane practices, such as going to lunch with coworkers every day, begin to form
patterns, to which participants in a community ascribe meaning. These meanings, however, are
subject to renegotiation as time passes. For Wenger, the term “negotiation of practice” is
intended “to convey a flavor of continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-
take” (53). In Wenger’s theory, then, meaning arises from the interaction of people mutually
engaged in practice; it is social. Moreover, it includes “both interpretation and action” (54).
In addition to the negotiation of meaning, practice entails participation. Wenger writes that participation not only “refers to a process of taking part” in the activities of community (55), but is characterized by “the possibility of developing an ‘identity of participation,’ that is, an identity constituted through relations of participation” (56). To take on such an identity requires “mutual recognition” (56). In other words, participants in the community must mutually recognize one another as participants, as having an identity produced through relationships within the community. Wenger notes that these identities cannot be simply “turn[ed] on and off” (57). It is something that people take with them beyond specific communities of practice. For this reason, the “effects [of participation] on [participants’] experience are not restricted to the specific context of their engagement” (57). This last feature of participation is especially important to this case study. This study’s research participants’ curricular practices were affected by their participation in various communities of practice. For example, one instructor, Anna, mentioned that her participation as a volunteer teaching English to asylees shaped how she approached teaching writing at GECU. Specifically, her experience with asylees taught her not to assume that her multilingual international students (who tend to pay full tuition, which is over $40,000 per year, at GECU) come from privileged backgrounds and taught her that learning to write in English can be as serious as survival. Finally, and more obviously, the three instructors’ participation in what was called “the multilingual writers subcommittee,” where IWWE originated, shaped what they did in their individual classrooms, especially what readings and writing projects they assigned.

Wenger writes that participation forms a “duality” with reification (62). Participation depends on reifications, and reifications depend on participation. At its most basic, reification “refer[s] to the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this
experience into ‘thingness’” (58). Reifications can be physical things, such as books, syllabi, and learning goals, but they can also be discourses and abstractions. Wenger is quick to note that the term “reification” is itself a reification. “The term,” Wenger writes, “is a projection of what I mean. It is an abstraction. It does not do the work by itself. But after a while, as I use it to think with, it starts talking to me as though it were alive” (58). Because a reification “does not do the work by itself,” it requires participation. For example, Wenger writes that a nation’s constitution gains meaning only through how citizens use it as they participate as a citizenry. However, reifications “can take on a life of their own, beyond their context of origin. They gain a degree of autonomy from the occasion and purposes of their production” (62). A reification may be transported beyond its original context and subsequently affect practices in temporally or spatially new contexts. To use a constitution as an example again, a constitution can persist for centuries and take on a life its own, giving rise, for instance, to staunch commitments to the right to bear arms.

Reifications played a significant role in shaping curriculum at the research site of the curriculum change studied in Part II, both by helping to bring about curriculum change and by slowing it down. The two most meaningful reifications for the FYW program being studied were a programmatically endorsed document called “Student Learning Goals” and a textbook, Ways of Reading. Research participants referred to these reifications to justify their teaching, to describe curriculum, and to account for their practices. Furthermore, these reifications were incorporated into the communities of practice that arose in individual classrooms. Selections from the textbook Ways of Reading were used in all sections of IWWE. The textbook, in effect, might be said to have been incorporated into the practice that developed in each individual section. Finally, reifications also played an important role in producing “alignment,” the concept
addressed in the next section; reifications brought a degree of consistency to the practices of various communities with the writing program.

**Alignment**

The concept of alignment will help to account for how practices in diverse classrooms engage in enterprises beyond themselves. In other words, if we understand each class as itself being a community of practice, alignment helps to account for how activities and energies across multiple classes are mutually engaged in an enterprise larger than each class. For instance, alignment explains how multiple writing classes participate in accomplishing programmatic or university goals of preparing students for their personal, professional, and civic lives. Wenger writes that “alignment bridges time and space to form broader enterprises so that participants become connected through the coordination of their energies, actions, and practices” (178-79).

Alignment entails both participation and reification. In terms of participation, alignment requires what Wenger calls “boundary practices” (187). Boundary practices work across communities to coordinate their activities. In a large company, for example, a low-level manager coordinates the activities of higher-level managers and the employees that she or he supervises. Manager moves across boundaries or between communities. Alignment also occurs through reifications, especially “sharable artifacts … able to create fixed points around which to coordinate activities” (187). As I already mentioned, an influential reification in the writing program at GECU was the document “Student Learning Goals.” This document has been incorporated into and aligned practices throughout writing courses at GECU.

Alignment should be understood as a form of power. Wenger points out that alignment can include “convincing, inspiring, [and] uniting” or “imposing one’s view, using power and authority” (186). He also writes that alignment can include “connect[ing] local efforts to broader
styles and discourses” (186). As I will show in the next chapter, a major strategy of alignment used in the writing program was negotiating perspectives—a strategy that participated in “convincing, inspiring, [and] uniting” (Wegner 186) instructors to align their teaching with a new enterprise. However, other forms of alignment were also present in the GECU Writing Program. One strategy of alignment was the use of surveillance to produce compliance. The GECU Writing Program provides all instructors with a checklist of what to include on their syllabi. This checklist tells all instructors to reproduce “Student Learning Goals” in full. Then, every semester, the program collects all syllabi—the university’s requires the program to do so—and the Assistant Writing Program Director reads them, analyzes them, and reports on them to the Director of the Writing Program and the Writing Program Committee. Such activities might be said to produce alignment in the GECU writing program through demanding compliance.

However, alignment occurred not only as a result of administrative actions, but through local translations of disciplinary discourses. The discourse of “translingualism” in particular shaped IWWE in a way that might be said to have coordinated “energies, actions, and practices” (Wenger 179) such that they aligned with a broader political and academic movement in writing instruction. The discourse of translingualism still participated in the functioning of power, but it aligned practices with a social movement beyond the scale of the writing program and the university.

Offering a comprehensive theory of the relation between power and discourse is beyond the scope of this dissertation and chapter. Instead, I focus on Wenger’s argument that the use of a particular discourse aligns one’s activities and energies with social movements and organizations that are larger than communities of practice. To use and work with a discourse of translingualism in one’s teaching, for example, entails a coordination with other people who also have taken up
the discourse, a coordination that spans across space and time. That writing instructors in this study worked with a discourse of translingualism might be seen as evidence of both (1) the power of disciplinary journals and authority to shape disciplinary discourses, disciplinary agendas, curriculum, and pedagogy, and (2) the reciprocal power of local administrative and teaching practices to give disciplinary discourses meaning, to revise its meaning, or to reject it. In other words, it is not only that disciplinary discourse “trickles down” and shapes what locally situated administrators, teachers, and students are doing, but that local communities of practice also have the power to shape the meaning of that discourse, especially the meaning of that discourse within the context of practice. For example, Nathan, an instructor of IWWE, explicitly stated that he and the other instructors who piloted the version of FYW were concerned with the meaning of translingualism in practice:

What practically—so what does that [the translingual statement by Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur] mean in the writing classroom? So, I think when the three of us got together, we were thinking about, you know, what does this mean for the course that we’re teaching.

What translingualism meant in the course of practice was not a given. Instead, the discourse had to be translated by the local community. Nathan’s statement represents both the power that disciplinary publications such as *College English* have to distribute a discourse, but it also represents the power that local communities have in translating this discourse and manipulating it such that it has meaning in practice. While we can see that a connection exists between local practices and a broader disciplinary movement that we call “translingualism,” from my data I cannot tell to what extent the local translation and (re)construction of translingualism resembles

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24 A fuller treatment of the relation among alignment, discourse, and power might draw on theories that offer explanations for how academic communities regulate the production of discourse and membership (Bartholomae; Foucault, “Order”; Johns; Swales).
its other local translations and (re)constructions. However, it seems adequate to recognize that the discourse of translingualism has influenced—and so has some power over—local practices, even if the precise nature of that influence cannot be predicted beforehand and even if, ultimately, the local community of practice has the power to determine the meaning of that discourse.

As these examples suggest, alignment can occur anywhere along a spectrum ranging from participation to nonparticipation: on the one hand, a person can actively align her or his practices with a larger enterprise; on the other hand, a person can be coerced to align practices. For example, as Wenger notes, alignment can occur through “allegiance to a social movement” and “persuasion,” but alignment can also occur through “submission to violence” and “literal compliance” with procedures or rules (190). In all these cases, whether a community willingly aligns its practices or is forced to do so, the result is that the community’s practice aligns with a broader social movement, organization, or enterprise, and in this sense alignment should be understood as a form of power.

Finally, before moving on to discuss the organizational structure of GECU’s Writing Program, I want to remark on the complexity of the approach that I am developing here. When we look at curriculum through the theoretical lens of practice, it becomes obvious that curriculum change does not follow a neat linear trajectory. Furthermore, curriculum is enmeshed in a complex web of social practices, and even a change in remote practices can have noticeable effects on curriculum at a given locality. It is hard to say where a curriculum change comes from, when it starts, and when it ends. The discourse of “change” even becomes problematic because curriculum seems to be always in flux. There is not a single thing, or set of things, that we could point to and say, “There! That’s the curriculum.” Instead of talking about a curriculum as a
singular thing, fully represented in institutional documents, it makes more sense empirically to talk about curricular practices and consequences. We should be asking not what the curriculum is at a particular site, but what practices shape curriculum and how do they do so: rephrasing these questions, we can ask, “What and how do specific practices shape the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form?” This is a difficult question that I do not think can be ever completely answered at any location. Too many practices influence curriculum to describe them all. But perhaps we can talk about significant curricular actions and events: crucial moments that shape curriculum, consequential moments under the control of self-consciously performed human actions, or not. This approach to curriculum makes the task of research on curriculum and curriculum change difficult but potentially rich.

The Structure of Communities of Practice in the GECU Writing Program

So far I have reviewed central concepts in Wenger’s theory of communities of practice, concepts which will reappear and be applied throughout chapters three and four. This section discusses Wenger’s distinction between communities of practice and constellations of communities of practice, which I will sometimes refer to simply as “constellations.” This distinction helps to explain the social structure within GECU’s writing program—“social structure” meaning, here, the more-or-less stable, but also changing and changeable, relationships among roles and communities within the writing program. Specifically, the writing program exhibits characteristics of both a community of practice and a constellation. Here, the difference between these concepts will be explained and then applied in order to describe the social structure of the GECU writing program.

Wenger writes that a community of practice is defined by three features. To form a community of practice, community members must be (1) mutually engaged in (2) a joint
enterprise and (3) use a shared repertoire (shared “resources for negotiating meaning” [82]). All members in the writing program can be said to share a “joint enterprise” (teaching writing) but they are not consistently “mutually engaged”: most instructors work independently as they teach, entering into the communities they form with their students, and many instructors do not spend significant time at the office, where they might be mutually engaged by “talk[ing] and interact[ing] while they work” (Wenger 75). When instructors do come together, they tend to form tightly knit social groups that exclude other members of the writing program, or they meet with people with whom they share an office. Chances for mutual engagement are further reduced by office assignments. Graduate students are in offices only with other graduate students, part-timers with other part-timers, fulltimers with other fulltimers. Professors occupy their own offices. There are exceptions to these divisions of office space: one office is occupied by a part-time instructor and a professor, who are married, and directors who are all fulltime instructors have their own offices.

All of this indicates that the writing program, most of time, divides into multiple communities of practice, but is also at times a single, more-or-less coherent community of practice. Seen as consisting of multiple communities of practice, the writing program has internal communities, some that overlap and some that do not. For instance, small social groups overlap what are at times distinguishable communities defined in part by rank: graduate teaching assistants, part-time instructors, fulltime instructors, and tenured or tenure-track professors. For instance, a group of administrators, fulltime instructors, and a graduate student TA have been mutually engaged for at least two years in the joint enterprise of researching multilingual writers at GECU. While members of ranks (graduate TAs, part-time instructors, fulltime instructors, and professors) in the program sometimes do come together to work on joint projects, they have
infrequent opportunities for mutual engagement, and these ranks have their own fissures and divisions. For example, the writing program employs graduate students who study literature in the English department at GECU, some of whom appear to have minimal contact with other members of the writing program beyond attending mandatory triannual meetings hosted by the writing program. This complexity and fragmentation does not mean that Wenger’s theory cannot explain social life and practice within the writing program—it can—but it does mean that some adjustments need to be made.

The major adjustment entails treating the writing program as both a community of practice and as an organizational structure larger than a community of practice. In other words, the writing program should be understood as, at times, a community practice and, at other times, a “constellation of communities of practice.” In different situations, one of these two aspects comes to the fore, although neither is ever entirely absent. Sometimes, participants are mutually engaged in a joint enterprise accomplished with a shared repertoire. An example is the multilingual-writers research group. But mutual engagement also occurs when the program as a whole meets during its triannual mandatory program-wide meetings. At other times, the writing program is a larger organizational structure with which different communities of practice “align” or are made to align their practices. In this case, seen as multiple communities of practice, the practices and energies of which are coordinated through alignment, the writing program acts as a constellation. The alignment that helps to produce and maintain the constellation occurs mainly through administrative power.

In the writing program at GECU, alignment can be seen when instructors comply with writing program and university policies. For instance, nearly all instructors submit their syllabi and schedules for their courses every semester, and nearly all instructors include in their syllabi
the complete text of the writing program’s “Student Learning Goals.” Alignment in the writing program, then, can be understood as producing curricular effects. That writing instructors include the “Student Learning Goals” on their syllabi suggests that these learning goals function as a reification that aligns practice in writing courses, possibly both instructor and student practices. Indeed, the learning goals were referenced by an instructor, Nathan, as he described his own teaching practices in IWWE. It was a text to which he alluded to authorize his own approach to teaching the course that he was piloting. That is, Nathan pointed out in an interview that the innovations he was experimenting with in IWWE were “consistent” (his word) with “The Student Learning Goals.”

By describing the writing program at GECU as both a community of practice and a constellation of communities of practice, I am drawing on Wenger’s vocabulary to help me to describe both (a) the various levels at which curricular practices take place and curricular reifications are made and (b) the ways that these practices and reifications at different levels shape other practices and circulate with curricular effects. More specifically, I am drawing on this vocabulary to draw attention to three levels of practices and reifications:

1. teaching and learning practices and reifications—these are specific to an individual course;
2. administrative practices and reifications—these practices and reifications produce alignment among the communities of practice within the writing program; and
3. distant practices and reifications—these practices and reifications produce alignment with social enterprises beyond a writing program, enterprises such as disciplines and political movements.
In the GECU writing program, all three levels were observed as affecting curriculum and as participating in processes of curriculum change. In particular, it is notable that that data collected has made it possible trace the circulation, and manner of circulation, of administrative and distant reifications, such texts and discourses. Moreover, I have found it useful not only to trace where a particular reification—a snippet of discourse, a reproduction of a text—comes from, but also the manner in which it is incorporated into practice. Understanding the manner in which reifications are picked up in practice helps us to understand the quality of its curricular effects.

An illustrative example (explored in more depth in 4) is that multiple research participants mentioned that a faculty senate report (a reification) was a major motivator in the invention of IWWE. The report identified “a certain subset” of students as dragging down the intellectual rigor of courses at GECU. The subset of students was a euphemism used to name multilingual international students. The report can be understood as a reification that resulted from the administrative practices in which the faculty senate was engaged. However, this reification did not produce alignment with an administrative goal handed down to writing program administrators and instructors “from above.” Instead, this document gave rise to resistance that stemmed from administrators’ and instructors’ alignment with anti-racist social justice movements. This alignment was evidenced by a persistent discourse on racism that appeared during interviews with every instructor and administrator. In this case, the meaning of the faculty senate report, as an administrative reification, was renegotiated by the administrators and instructors in the writing program such that it could be made meaningful in terms of their own practice. This case says something about the power and powerlessness of reifications to affect subsequent practices on their own: administrative or distant reifications, if they are to have any effect at all, are necessarily mediated by local communities of practice; they are subject to
the meaning-making activities of local communities of practice, as Wenger suggests (80). For this reason, it is not enough simply to trace the circulation of an administrative or mass reification; it is also necessary to know the manner in which it was renegotiated by a local community of practice. This observation holds true for the circulation of reifications in the communities of practice that can be said to emerge within individual writing courses. It is not enough to know that, for example, a particular textbook (Ways of Reading) has entered into a classroom; it is also necessary to know how teachers and students renegotiate the textbook’s meaning in and through their practices.

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Ultimately, the purpose of these observations, and the theoretical framework I am building here, is to offer a way to discuss what “structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49) and how this structuration happens. Having a better grasp of these processes will help us to understand curriculum change, not just as it happens on an administrative level (in new course descriptions, new textbooks, trainings, and new outcomes), but at the local level of individual classrooms and students. A consequence of this theoretical framework is that, even under the most standardized forms of education, curriculum change is simply always happening: each classroom gives rise to a new community of practice that must renegotiate curricular reifications (e.g., the standardized textbooks, goals, and assignments), and every student brings with him or her identities, formed through participation in other communities of practice and elsewhere, identities which also shape curriculum. At the very least, we can say that what structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form always changes, from student to student (as Yancey observed [Teaching]), but also likely from class to class, even under conditions of standardization. In making this later claim, I do not mean to
imply that efforts to standardize curriculum should be ignored—they shouldn’t—or that such efforts do not shape curriculum, possibly in eerily deterministic ways—they probably can and do. Instead, I am trying to create room for the recognition that teachers and students always have, and exercise some degree of, agency in shaping curriculum, however circumscribed that agency is.
CHAPTER 3: PROCESSES OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN LARGE WRITING PROGRAMS: MAKING NEW PRACTICES MEANINGFUL

… you know, we can mandate all the kind of new course designs that we want but, but if the people who are actually in the classroom don’t feel like they own it in a certain way, or are invested in it, it’s not gonna happen, it’s simply not, gonna, happen. (Louis, Interview)

… one of the things that’s interesting about curriculum is how it, it can sometimes live on past, sometimes long past, the decisions that are made in a program because curriculum is partly something that people carry in their heads. (George, Interview)

I don’t think it’s necessarily healthy for a program to all speak and think in lockstep and so while I might kind of bristle and like the hair stands, right, when those positions are advanced in the meetings, you know, ah, ah, I’m happy that people feel comfortable to put them out there … (Nathan, Interview)

In previous chapters I have argued that curriculum change should be understood as changes in “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49). I have also argued that an analytical framework informed by theories of communities of practice can help us to attend to diverse practices that impact a locally situated curriculum. This chapter focuses on one aspect of curriculum change in the First-Year Writing Program at Global East Coast University (GECU): local administrative practices that produced what I am calling “realignment” among communities of practice within the GECU Writing Program. In this chapter, I treat the GECU Writing Program as a constellation of communities of practice and administrative practices as those that coordinate the activities of the constellation toward a particular enterprise. As this chapter will show, institutional labels such as “Lecturer” or “Director” do not determine who engages in administrative practices. Any person in a program has the potential to align practices within a constellation, although some people tend to have more potential than others, due to their institutional positioning and other factors, such as perceived expertise and authority. Although by itself this chapter, as it focuses on administrative practices, is inadequate for researching changes
in curriculum for reasons that I hope have been made clear, administrative practices still produce curricular consequences worthy of attention.

At the level of administrative practices, I argue that curriculum change can be understood as realignment. Realignment occurs when the activities in which a writing program’s constellation engages are realigned toward a new or significantly different enterprise. “Alignment” occupies an important and complex role in Etienne Wenger’s theory of communities of practice, but for now, it might be useful to keep in mind this basic definition: “[…] alignment is a mode of belonging that is not confined to mutual engagement. The process of alignment bridges time and space to form broader enterprises so that participants become connected through the coordination of their energies, actions, and practices” (Wenger 178-79). Wenger does not use the term “realignment,” which I am inventing here. By naming realignment, I hope to represent how administrative practices can change the enterprise toward which a constellation in a writing program has been directed. This term offers a useful way to describe how administrative practices produce coordinate changes in curriculum across courses and allows the analysis here to remain within this dissertation’s conceptual framework.

For the following discussion, it is also relevant to consider the particular activities that Wenger associates with “the work of alignment” (186). Among these activities are

- “negotiating perspectives, finding common ground” (186);
- “imposing one’s view, using power and authority” (186);
- “convincing, inspiring, uniting” (186);
- “devising proceduralization, quantification, and control structures that are portable” (187); and
• “walking boundaries, creating boundary practices, reconciling diverging perspectives” (187).

These activities were central to the realignment that occurred through administrative practices in GECU’s writing program. The first item in this list—“negotiating perspectives”—was the primary strategy that administrators used and occupies a central place in this chapter. This strategy, I argue, was tied up with values across the writing program. These values centered around a respect for instructor autonomy, expertise, and pedagogical diversity. These values would have made other strategies for achieving realignment less desirable. For example, a respect for instructor’s autonomy—especially the autonomy to design one’s own courses—would likely have run counter to the alignment strategy of “imposing one’s view, using power and authority” (Wenger 186). Instructors and administrators would likely have felt that the imposition of a standardized syllabus would have been a violation of the values that members of the organization held.

Drawing on these concepts and theory, this chapter discusses a discernible realignment in the FYW writing program at GECU. This realignment did not happen suddenly—it has slowly unfolded over years—and neither its beginning nor end can be pinpointed. However, despite the haziness of this realignment’s boundaries, this realignment can be organized around two central events. In the spring of 2012, the Writing Program released a list of learning goals, titled “Student Learning Goals,” on which instructors were then instructed to build their courses. Over a year and a half later, in the fall of 2013, the program published new course descriptions for FYW on its website and in the university’s catalog and soon after changed the name of the first-year course from “College Writing” to “First-Year Writing.” These two events—centered on “Student Learning Goals” and new course descriptions—should be understood as the anchors of
this chapter. It is around these events and documents that the realignment discussed in this chapter hinges. These documents were co-written by instructors and administrators from all ranks in the program (graduate students, part-time lecturers, full-time lecturers, and tenured and tenure-track faculty), and these acts of writing documents involved deliberation, often lengthy, over the values and purposes of the writing program and the first-year writing program. Both this deliberation and the reifications that emerged from it realigned practices across the constellation that constitutes the Writing Program at GECU.

The data on which this chapter is based suggest that

(1) local values shape the processes through which realignment occurs—that is, the processes that will successfully produce, or are appropriate methods for producing, realignment are dependent on the values to which members of a writing program subscribe;

(2) realignment can entail explicit (re)negotiation over the organization’s enterprise and the production of reifications (including documents and discourses) new to the program; and

(3) realignment can require the coordination of teaching and learning practices through the use of boundary practices and objects.

In what follows, I first sketch the major contours of GECU’s writing program as a social organization and describe the curriculum change being studied. Second, I turn to data that indicate dominant values that shaped processes of curriculum development and change in the writing program. Third, I examine data that show how community members negotiated the meaning of first-year writing (FYW) and reified new meanings by producing and introducing discourses and documents new to the WP. Fourth, I consider boundary practices and objects, two
means by which teaching practices were encouraged to align across the program as a whole. Finally, I discuss the implications of this chapter for future research and curriculum work.

**GECU’s Writing Program and Changes to Its Curriculum**

Certain basic programmatic features affected curriculum change within the GECU Writing Program: program size, administrative structure, professional development for instructors, division of responsibilities, communication tools, and the organization of time and space (especially when and where members met or could meet).

GECU’s Writing Program employs over 80 instructors and administrators, who are divided into four ranks: graduate teaching assistants, part-time lecturers, full-time lecturers, and tenured or tenure-track faculty. The program has four “Directors” and two “Assistant Directors”: Writing Program Director, Director of Writing in the Disciplines, First-Year Writing Director, Writing Center Director, Assistant Writing Program Director, and Assistant Writing Center Director.

Two on-going committees help to administer the Writing Program: the Writing Program Assessment Committee and the Writing Program Committee. The assessment committee comprises volunteers from all ranks of instructors, meets multiple times every semester, and collects and analyzes data on the writing program. For example, in 2013 this committee collected and analyzed student writing to determine whether students in Writing Program courses were learning to write with and accurately cite sources. It was this assessment committee that from 2010 to 2012 worked on writing up “Student Learning Goals,” which have guided programmatic assessment ever since. While the assessment committee consists of volunteers, the Writing Program Committee is made up of the Directors, the Assistant Directors, and elected representatives from the four ranks with the program. The Writing Program Committee is an
official standing committee of the English Department. Louis, who was Writing Program Director when I interviewed him, noted that this committee has been responsible for approving new course descriptions and has created subcommittees focused on topics of special interest to the program. Other administrative committees have come and gone. A “First-Year Writing Curriculum Task Force,” again made up of volunteers, met periodically throughout the fall-2013 semester and then dissolved soon after writing up new course descriptions for FYW. A Multilingual Writers Subcommittee formed in 2011 and—under various names—has continued to meet to carry out research on multilingual writers at GECU. That research has informed programmatic decisions and resulted in presentations at CCCC. Other groups and subcommittees have met regularly to discuss special topics in teaching writing, such as digital portfolios and service learning.

The program often hosts professional development workshops and guest speakers. Professional development happens primarily in two ways. Every semester each instructor must attend two meetings held as part of what’s called a “Teaching Network.” Teaching-network meetings are run by instructors in the program and have addressed topics as varied as commenting on student writing, the rhetoric of numbers, and labor-conscious pedagogy. Each of these meetings is typically small. Sometimes a teaching-network meeting will be attended by as few as two instructors and other times by as many as 20. In addition to teaching networks, every instructor must attend three program-wide meetings throughout the academic year. At the beginning of the each academic year, instructors must attend a “Start-of-Term Workshop,” and at the end of each semester, they must attend an “End-of-Term Workshop.” At these workshops, instructors listen to presentations, sometimes given by composition experts but also by instructors and administrators from the writing program and by staff from other parts of the
university, such as crises management staff and specialists of technology in teaching. Also at these workshops, instructors discuss topics related to teaching writing and share and discuss student writing. Only during these program-wide workshops are all instructors in the program required to gather in the same room at the same time.

Periodically throughout the semester, administrators send emails to instructors, informing them of new policies and relevant professional and social events. All instructors are enrolled in a course on Blackboard (the online course management software), where programmatic documents, such as an instructor handbook and resources for teaching, are available for download and where instructors must upload their syllabi every semester. The writing program has a website, which displays its major programmatic documents (“Philosophy & Aims,” “Student Learning Goals,” and course descriptions) and the contact information of administrators.

Every instructor is responsible for designing the courses that they teach. They write their own assignments and syllabi and independently select readings and textbooks. The most significant restriction on the courses that instructors design is that they must meet the program’s learning goals, reified in “Student Learning Goals.” Each instructor is also responsible for planning and conducting class time and grading. Before the curriculum changes discussed in this chapter, instructors designed their own courses but were required to use Ways of Reading, an in-house publication called the Portfolio and Guidebook, and a shared set of grading criteria.

This brief description of the WP is intended to sketch its social life quickly. It shows where and when instructors and administrators meet. It describes the communication tools that are used to send messages and to publish and circulate programmatic documents. It suggests the social hierarchies and social divisions represented and affirmed in discourse and space. And
perhaps most importantly, it provides an image of the program’s size and the difficulties of coordination that attend it. Of course, by themselves, these descriptions fail to adequately represent social life in the writing program, but they offer a way to begin to understand the obstacles and opportunities to change curriculum.

Due to program size, not all instructors could participate in negotiating the meaning of the program’s enterprise in committees. Instead, only a subset of program members could meet to deliberate and write new official curricular reifications (i.e., “Student Learning Goals” and course descriptions for FYW courses). These reifications would go on to be used in subsequent boundary work. They helped coordinate the teaching practices of those instructors who had not directly participated in negotiating the program’s enterprise. It is important to note that administrators seemed to attempt to make the new curriculum meaningful across the program by inviting instructors to participate in revising it. Former Writing Program Director George noted that when he arrived at GECU, he “was very interested in seeing change” in the curriculum. Inviting instructors into “negotiating perspectives, finding common ground” (Wenger 186) was the main method for bringing about change, but other methods were used too. Because not everyone could participate in negotiations due to program size, Administrators also worked to persuade instructors to find new curricular reifications and new understandings of the program’s enterprise meaningful. Both practices helped create what Writing Program Director Louis, in the epigraph above, called “ownership” and “investment.” They occurred during committee meetings and program-wide meetings and were also often mediated, through email and digital repositories for documents and other “resources,” a word used by participants (see below).

Organizational Values in GECU’s Writing Program: Respect for Expertise, Pedagogical Diversity, and Instructor Autonomy
During interviews research participants remarked that they valued diversity in approaches to teaching writing and the autonomy, both for themselves and for others, to determine for oneself how to teach FYW. These values appeared as Directors described their experiences with, and administrative approaches to, doing curricular work and as instructors commented on the program, other instructors, and hypothetical scenarios. The value placed on autonomy and diversity of approaches to teaching was closely tied to valuing instructor’s expertise. These values seemed to give rise to specific approaches to curriculum change. Although instructor autonomy was valued, I do not mean to imply that instructors were free to develop their own courses with absolute independence. For example, Instructors still had to submit syllabi every semester so that Directors could monitor whether they taught in accordance with the program’s goals. This monitoring of syllabi might be understood as alignment through “control structures” (Wenger 187). While instructor’s autonomy was valued, this autonomy should be understood as relative rather than absolute. Teachers could not do anything that they wanted, but research participants still valued that the program could—and should—allow diverse approaches to teaching FYW to coexist.

The values of autonomy, expertise, and pedagogical diversity were often closely related when administrator discuss training procedures and curricular decisions. Barbara, who was FYW Program Director when I interviewed her, described events related to work done by the FYW Task Force. Based on the task force’s work, Barbara wrote a proposal for changes to the first-year course, then titled “College Writing.” In the fall of 2013, She gave the proposal to the Writing Program Committee (WPC), which had the institutional authority within the program to
approve or reject proposed changes to curriculum.\textsuperscript{25} In that proposal, which Barbara said “was kind of like my wish list,” she wrote:

The FYWCTF [First-Year Writing Curriculum Task Force] recommends making a clean break with \textit{Ways of Reading}. Right now, the majority of First-Year Writing instructors are choosing \textit{Ways of Reading} as the required text for the course (as of Spring 2013 only 4 instructors used other textbooks). We believe that while this textbook \textit{can} work for First-Year Writing it is not the best choice to support the kind of work that we want to do. (Original emphasis)

The program had ceased to require \textit{Ways of Reading} as the textbook for the first-year course in the Spring-2013 semester. Still, perhaps not unsurprisingly since by that semester instructors likely had not yet had time to adjust their course designs, the vast majority of instructors continued to use \textit{Ways of Reading}. The textbook was seen by Barbara as an obstacle to carrying out the new curriculum, oriented toward the “Student Learning Goals,” and saw the work of the Task Force as an opportunity to remove that obstacle. Barbara was not alone in criticizing \textit{Ways of Reading}. Both George and Louis criticized the book as promoting teaching that was inconsistent with the new learning goals, but they also noted, as Barbara did in this excerpt from her proposal, that \textit{Ways of Reading} could be used to accomplish the new learning goals—it \textit{can} work for First Year Writing.” It just had to be used in creative ways, as some instructors were doing.

\textsuperscript{25} Certain changes to the curriculum would also have to be approved by other agencies in the university. For example, Louis and Barbara told me that after the Writing Program Committee approved new course descriptions for FYW, those course descriptions had to be approved by the Chair of the English Department, the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, and university. Changing course descriptions appeared to be a fairly minor curricular adjustment when compared to changes such as adding a course or removing a course in the writing program. No research participants informed me exactly what the process for adding or subtracting courses would look like, but it seemed that such a change would have to appeal to an institutional entity with more power than the Writing Program Committee.
However, this part of Barbara’s proposal, the recommendation to “make a clean break” from *Ways of Reading*, was not approved by the WPC. Here is an excerpt from an interview in which Barbara discusses the WPC’s reaction to this part of the proposal:

Barbara: I was shot down on that one.

Michael: Why?

Barbara: For good reason, I say reluctantly. So for me that proposal was kind of like my wish list. Right? So, I brought that to the WPC [Writing Program Committee], and the way I sort of framed it was this is my, like, personal sort of manifesto or whatever. It was brought up in that meeting that, you know, it’s hard to make a really solid case for taking something away from people who are doing good work, and there are plenty of people who are doing really nice work with *Ways of Reading*.

Barbara went on to reiterate that “I was reluctantly acknowledging that I needed to be shot down on that particular goal.” She explained that she and the WPC reached a “kind of compromise”: “for [Louis] with his training of new grad students in particular, I think that before he would present it like—well let me put it this way, we now have a recommended textbook list.” Members of the WPC and Barbara, who “reluctantly” agreed with the WPC, decided not to place a restriction on instructors concerning what textbook they could or could not use. They decided, instead, to publish a list of “recommended textbooks.”

This move, avoiding restrictions and requirements and offering “recommendations,” was a consistently applied strategy for and discourse about curriculum change in GECU’s WP. For example, George described curriculum revision in the program as not issuing “a mandate that everybody spends X amount of time” doing something in class. In contrast to issuing mandates,
George said that “we have done a lot of things to support people, to sort of direct people’s gaze in certain directions.” To show how the program has done this, George mentioned programmatic efforts to encourage instructors to incorporate multimodal composition into their courses:

So, we don’t have a mandate that everybody needs to do multimodal composing, or think about digital writing in their classrooms, and in fact, a lot—some don’t. But there’s been enough conversation and resources and thinking about it [… that most instructors are] do[ing] multimodal composing, or think[ing] about digital writing. (my emphasis)

The strategy and discourse about curriculum change focused on directing attention, making recommendations, and providing support and resources. A consequence of this strategy was that most, but not all, instructors designed their courses to incorporate elements of the new curriculum.

This strategy of not issuing mandates and providing resources was closely linked to a respect for pedagogical diversity. This connection was illustrated as Louis talked about *Ways of Reading*, its persistence as a central text in the WP’s first-year course, and his administrative approach to guiding how instructors used it. While Barbara expressed reluctance about accepting that the WPC would not prohibit the use of *Ways of Reading*, Louis took a more affirmative stance:

[…] from my perspective as Writing Program Director, I don’t want to lose the width and breadth of possibilities for First-Year Writing. I mean, I don’t want to replace the narrowness of *Ways of Reading* with some other narrowness just because it’s not *Ways of Reading*. I think the values of breadth are the ones that we need to continue and hold onto in a certain kind of way, but guided by shared
principles and that’s what the learning goals, I think, have been and what certain
teaching goals could be.

Louis explicitly links the decision not to prohibit *Ways of Reading* to valuing diversity in
“possibilities” for teaching FYW. When I interviewed Louis, he was then teaching a course for
new Ph.D. students in the English Department intended, in part, to prepare them to teach writing
courses at GECU. As part of this course, students were required to review textbooks that could
be used in FYW, and one of those textbooks was *Ways of Reading*. He predicted that some Ph.D.
students would be using *Ways of Reading* but would be using it in a way that emphasized that
“writing is the focus of the course” (Louis). (Making writing and not reading an emphasis for
FYW was understood as a central curricular change for multiple research participants.) Louis’s
comments demonstrate an aversion to “narrowness,” a valuing of “breadth,” and, most
importantly, a respect for the autonomy of even Ph.D. students, many of whom, in GECU’s
writing program, are entirely new to teaching, to decide how they will design and teach their
courses.

For Barbara, this valuing of instructor autonomy was closely related to instructors’
“expertise,” a word that she associated with being “hands off” and letting instructors “‘Go forth
and do it!’” At one point, this linkage between expertise and being “hands off” came up as
Barbara explained decisions about “training” new instructors (new instructors that were not also
Ph.D. students): “Most of our classes are taught by full-time lecturers with comp-rhet expertise.
That alone, I think, is an argument for, ‘Okay, you guys know how to teach writing.’ Right? ‘Go
forth and do it!’” She explained that this expertise led her to be “hands off”: “these are people
with expertise, they know what they’re doing.” She also described this approach with reference
to another participant in this study, Hugh, a fulltime instructor who has specialized in L2 writing:
So we have all these people with expertise. We have someone like [Hugh] who knows more about multilingual writing than I ever will. You know? And so I think that having that openness in the program allows someone like him to do what he does and flourish with it. (my emphasis)

As this passage suggests, expertise and “openness in the program” were closely linked. There was the perception that instructors had expertise and that they should, therefore, be given freedom to do what they do and “flourish.”

These values also came up during portions of interviews in which research participants discussed a piloted version of the FYW course, which is the subject of the next chapter, “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE). At one point, fulltime lecturer Nathan and I discussed statements sometimes uttered during program-wide meetings. Specifically, we had been discussing statements that conveyed a particular kind of frustration with L2 writers. Nathan remarked: “there are moments during those meetings where, heh, that there’s almost [in a slightly amused voice] a kind of, like, shockingly racist tone to some of the anecdotal evidence, quote-unquote ‘evidence,’ that’s presented.” Within the year prior to the interview when Nathan made this remark, the WP had been visited by Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu, who, during their visit, argued for a translingual approach to teaching writing. Nathan said: “I don’t think that talking about the work that these writers are doing will change, right, talking about the work of Horner and Lu and Trimbur, I don’t think it’s going to change that perspective. I don’t know why that’s so.” Yet, despite labelling the “shockingly racist tone” used by some instructors as they discussed L2 writers, Nathan still seemed to value a program that was capacious enough to allow for such perspectives. Soon after saying that he thought that the perspectives of other instructors could not be changed by reading up on translingualism, he quipped:
Nathan: I mean I’d like to be optimistic about it and to say that that’s a perspective that through, ah, reeducation could [laughter]—I mean it sounds like North Korea now …

Michael: … or *A Clockwork Orange*.

[laughter]

Nathan: Right. […]

These jokes about “reeducation” and North Korea suggest Nathan’s deep reservations about the possibility of changing certain perspectives about students and their writing. Nathan immediately went on to explain explicitly that he valued that people in the program could take different approaches to teaching writing and could bring such perspectives out in the open, even if Nathan personally found them repugnant:

… the people that are advancing that don’t strike me as people who are interested in that scholarship around these ideas. They’re, they’re very, for good or ill, kind of pragmatic in their approach to teaching in the classroom, and they have a pretty specific way of thinking about what teaching writing means, pretty prescriptive way of thinking about writing. And I, you know, personally, that doesn’t bother me. I like that the program can contain those kinds of differences, that you could have those different camps. Like, I don’t think it’s necessarily healthy for a program to all speak and think in lockstep, and so while I might kind of bristle and, like, the hair stands, right, when those positions are advanced in the meetings, you know, I’m happy that people feel comfortable to put them out there […]
Even though he disagrees strongly with approaches to writing that are narrowly “pragmatic” and “prescriptive” and even though he labels some comments made by teachers who take such approaches as having a “shockingly racist tone,” Nathan still values that the WP can “contain those kinds of differences”: he welcomes this openness and capaciousness, alternate programmatic models being less desirable.

Nathan’s attitude toward top-down control over teaching was also illustrated as he discussed how he would react if “the university,” in a hypothetical situation, were to disapprove of his methods of teaching multilingual writing strategies. When Nathan taught IWWE, he encouraged students, for their first major course project, to engage in their writing with Suresh Canagarajah’s “The Place of World Englishes in Composition,” which the students had just read. He asked students to do this as they wrote a text that imitated Susan Griffin’s “Our Secret,” a collage essay published in *Ways of Reading*. He did not tell students exactly how they should engage with Canagarajah’s article, but he did propose that they might do so by codemeshing, a multilingual writing strategy that he and his students had been discussing in class. During an interview, which occurred soon after Nathan assigned this project, I wondered aloud whether “the university might not appreciate it all that much if they knew the focus was not standard academic English, whatever that might mean.” Nathan replied, half-jokingly, “Yeah, and they can go fuck themselves.” He went on to explain:

No, I mean, so, but that, yeah, I think that’s a concern and that’s something that Canagarajah kind of brings up too, is, like, the students’ expectations, and he speaks to that body of literature and research that says that, you know, “Yeah, we can invite them to do this as with African American languages too and that sometimes there are scholars saying, ‘Great, they have a right to their own
language, but that’s not going to help them succeed.’” Right? this is the Lisa Delpit version, right? And so his compromise is to say, “Yes, and…”— right?— “let’s do both, instead of doing either-or. Let’s have them coexist as kind of equal partners.” So, [Susan] Griffin—again, trying to make connections there—see how successful they are. That other reading that we’re gonna be doing that makes more explicit connections as to why, that Wideman piece where you see him as a writer trying out different Englishes, right? He imagines how his brother speaks and writing in that way, and that is you know an example of codemeshing. That kind of coexistence of those different Englishes in that text.

This excerpt suggests that Nathan valued the freedom to pursue a pedagogy grounded in disciplinary knowledge. Though Nathan’s invocation of Delpit suggests that he attends to institutional pressures to teach privileged varieties of English, Nathan also insisted that these institutional demands can “coexist” with codemeshing. But were “the university” to disapprove of codemeshing, he said unequivocally that he would continue to teach it anyway, presumably because this pedagogical practice was grounded in composition theory and research. Like the other excerpts discussed in this section, this one also demonstrates the value placed on instructor’s autonomy from institutional strictures, in particular, the autonomy to practice in accord with one’s own expertise, here linked to disciplinary debates in composition.

The central values held within the program that I want to highlight here concerned instructor autonomy, respect for expertise, and pedagogical diversity. These values, I am arguing, should be understood as linked to particular strategies used in this writing program for carrying out realignment: namely, negotiating the enterprise and directing attention and providing “support,” “resources,” and “recommendations” rather than issuing “mandates.”
Realignment through Deliberation: Renegotiation of the Enterprise

The renegotiation of the FYW writing program’s enterprise occurred mainly in two locations: the Writing Program Assessment Committee and the First-Year Writing Curriculum Task Force. Both committees included members from all ranks, from graduate teaching assistants up through tenured faculty and program administrators. In this section, I mostly discuss these committees’ activities and research participants’ accounts of them and their outcomes. However, first, I also briefly discuss events leading up to these activities because they might have caused renegotiation of the enterprise to occur in the first place. A particularly important impetus for renegotiation and realignment was the entrance of new members to the program. In particular, the program hired a new Director, who in turn hired a significant number of fulltime instructors (eight or nine by his own count), many of whom were trained in the same writing program of a nearby college. These new members brought perspectives that at times conflicted with teaching practices already in place in GECU’s writing program. This conflict can be understood as stimulating discussion about the goals, purposes, and teaching methods of the writing program. Overall, the events and activities discussed in this section contributed to bringing about realignment in teaching practices across the writing program. This realignment resulted from members engagement in “negotiating perspectives, finding common ground” (Wenger 187) about the purposes of writing courses in general and first-year writing courses in particular. In the next section, I address a second form of realignment in GECU’s writing program: boundary work.

A significant event in changing curriculum at GECU was the hiring of George as Writing Program Director in 2009. When I asked George why the FYW curriculum at GECU changed, he said, “I think it happened for a number of reasons. One is that as a new director I was very
interested in seeing change, because I didn’t like that curriculum, or felt like it needed to be expanded or revised.” He also said that it changed because he hired new instructors and because the previous FYW Director (who no longer works at GECU) wanted the curriculum to change too: “She didn’t think the *Ways of Reading* model was what we wanted to keep with in the future partly because of changes in the field.” Throughout my interviews with George, he associated the previous curriculum with *Ways of Reading* and the new curriculum with the new learning goals. Louis and Barbara also made this distinction. George seemed to have wanted the curriculum to change in part because the previous curriculum focused too narrowly on teaching students “how to produce academic discourse”: “we’re not at a historical moment where that old model of remediating students who don’t know how to produce academic discourse that’s clean enough for professors can hold anymore. That’s just not an exigence for first-year writing.” He reiterated this critique at another point during interviews, saying that the old curriculum “revolved around a text in which a large part of the attention was on academic writing and responding to and interpreting, analyzing, difficult texts.”

The perspective that George brought into the program seemed to have affected instructors who were already teaching there. During interviews fulltime lecturer Nathan recounted his experience of being influenced by the perspective that George brought:

[…] when he first came and started to review the program and was looking over the syllabi and was saying, “People, when they talk about arranging their courses, talk about the readings in a way that does not make clear to me what they’re doing with those readings.

“So I’ll say to them, ‘What are you teaching this semester?’

“I’m teaching Foucault.’” […]
I think he was right to kind of underscore that kind of problem in the way in which we talked about our teaching because conversations should have been happening about the [student] writing.

This excerpt points toward the challenge that George’s perspective posed to existing, commonplace discourse on teaching FYW in GECU’s writing program: a focus on readings rather than writing. A comment by Louis also suggests that a concern with a focus on reading rather than writing was a major motivation for curriculum change in the FYW program. He said: “So the fear was—the concern was—that first-year writing became a reading class, not a writing class.” Although Louis did not identify this fear or concern as originating with George, the perspective that George brought—which challenged the reading-based model of the existing curriculum—seems to have taken hold of the narrative that participants told about curriculum change in the program.

Nathan was not the only participant to identify George’s arrival at GECU as influential. Another lecturer, Anna, indicated that George’s arrival and his actions after arriving gave her a sense of “validation” that provided some of the motivation for her to experiment with new teaching practices. More than the other participants in this study who piloted “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes,” Anna pushed for piloting the course in a particular way. She seemed especially concerned with making sure that the piloted course enrolled equal numbers of multilingual international students and students from the U.S. This background helps to provide some context for the following excerpt, in which Anna states that her ideas about teaching English writing to international students were “validated”:

[…] [I] never had any training in ESOL, or anything like that, but on and off have taught it [the FYW course for multilingual writers at GECU], and around the
same time [George] came, came to really value the experience, I think in a bit of a different way than I had before. […] [There was] a lot more validation of the whole program of teaching international students English here, and therefore, a lot more collaboration, a lot more, critical pedagogy related to these kinds of courses that just seemed ancillary previous to [George] coming.

Anna went on to say that the previous Writing Program Director was not as interested in pursuing a “critical” approach to “teaching international students English” in GECU’s writing program. This excerpt does not address the effect that George’s arrival had on FYW curriculum as a whole as directly as does the previous excerpt from an interview with Nathan. But this passage does demonstrate that research participants saw a shift in values and organizational social life following George’s arrival. Anna claims that after George arrived she “really came to value the experience” of teaching English to international students in a new way and that “collaboration” and “critical pedagogy” came to be more central, less “ancillary,” than they were.

As George’s comments above suggest, not only his arrival but the arrival of others were responsible for bringing new perspectives into the program. He noted that since he arrived in 2009, he hired “eight or nine full-timers. I mean a lot.” A significant portion of these fulltime lecturers came from the same program, which focused on a genre-based approach to teaching writing. George said:

[...] they were trained in programs and had experiences and views that didn’t necessarily mesh very well with the first-year writing model that we had here either. Some of them actually came from [a nearby college]. So that’s a program
where they do spend a lot of time thinking about genre and rhetoric and things like that.

Louis also claimed that the FYW program moved away from the *Ways of Reading* approach in part because people from the nearby college that George named were hired: “I think that [change] really stems more from—particularly folks who teach in the program who came from [the nearby college], which takes very genre-based approach.” One research participant who came from the nearby college was Barbara, and she described the FYW course there as “a multi-genre research project course […] in which] students would research usually one topic and then write about it in four different genres.”

What these passages all suggest is that the arrival of new members in the program brought new perspectives that challenged the existing understandings of the enterprise of the FYW program. These perspectives challenged not only teaching methods but the purpose that FYW courses were supposed to serve. These new perspectives seem, then, to have been a major impetus for the negotiations that would later occur in committees that addressed curriculum and related matters in the program. However, George’s statement that the previous FYW Program Director wanted to see change in the program “partly because of changes in the field” suggests that the arrival of new members was not the only impetus for negotiating perspectives. Changes in rhetoric, composition, and related fields also seemed to be a motivation. George said: “There isn’t a direct link between the scholarly conversation happening in writing-about-writing right now and what we did, but I can’t say there was no influence.” Either way, whether the impetus was disciplinary change or the arrival of new members, it seems that “negotiating perspectives, finding common ground” (Wenger 186) became necessary or desirable because new perspectives were emerging in the program and clashing with existing perspectives.
As already noted, the two locations where the negotiation of perspectives occurred—a negotiation that I argue ultimately concerned the purpose of FYW and that led to realignment of teaching practices across the program—were the Writing Program Assessment Committee and the First-Year Curriculum Task Force. George described these two committees as being “collaborative”; making sure they were collaborative seemed to be an attempt to make curriculum change more successful:

[…] our feeling was the more collaborative we could be, the more opportunities people had to give feedback, the more likely it would be that people would shift their thinking and that people coming in would immediately be able to pick it up. And then maybe some of those who were either experiencing inertia or resistance would come along as well.

This excerpt points directly toward the characterization of the work of these committees as realignment. By allowing members across the program to give “feedback,” these collaborative processes would “shift thinking” and possibly bring along people who were “experiencing inertia or resistance.”

At another point, George described the work of the curriculum task force as “a discernment exercise.” This term seemed to denote collaborative activities in which instructors and administrators shared and discussed their current teaching practices to arrive at a new curriculum design. George explained:

… [Barbara] leading that group through this sort of discernment exercise of like, “Where are we now? What are you teaching? Let’s look at some syllabi. Let’s look at assignments. Let’s…”—and move through some iterations of that to get
the place where you design something that feels, you know, sort of capacious enough, but also coherent enough that it could actually stand as a curriculum.

George claimed that such discernment exercises were necessary “to do true kinds of curricular change and innovation.” He continued: “It requires a lot of time, a lot of people.” In George’s account, curriculum development at GECU required, and was carried out through, an iterative communication process in which instructors and administrators shared and discussed their current course designs. This would result, George hoped, in a curriculum “design” that was both “capacious” and “coherent.” That is, the design that resulted from the discernment exercises would take into account diverse perspectives and teaching practices but also unify them in some way. Again, this account points toward the use of negotiating perspectives as a realignment strategy to achieve curriculum change.

A more concrete understanding of how the strategy of negotiating perspectives at GECU proceeded and of its results can be gained by examining a report produced by the assessment committee at the conclusion of its first academic year of work (Fall-2010 – Spring-2011). This report demonstrates that realignment of the GECU writing program’s enterprise occurred in part through communal deliberation over values and purposes. The report begins by listing the names of eight instructors who participated on the assessment committee in its first year and who presumably either coauthored or approved the report. The instructors who are listed include part-time lecturers, fulltime lecturers, and one English Ph.D. student. It goes on to state that the committee “met eight times from September to March” and “interspersed between these meetings we used Blackboard for discussion and file sharing.” The report is careful to note that it “invited Prof. [George] to several meetings, primarily as we launched our work, and he attended for the opening minutes to answer questions, offer options, and help us clarify our process.
Otherwise, the committee worked independently.” This assertion of independence from the Writing Program Director is followed by this description of the committee’s “process”: “Our process was guided by Pamela Moss’s call for a ‘rational debate among a community of interpreters’ leading to ‘acknowledgement, documentation of, and collective inquiry into differences.’” Two short paragraphs later, the document states:

Our work was completed through openness, dialogue, and responsiveness. We wanted to learn from each other how we define writing and learning, and we attempted to fold what we heard into our process and plan. Our process was deliberative and therefore slow, but we feel now that all program participants can benefit from this inclusive and responsive approach to assessment.

The document then lists seven “values” that “the committee has highlighted … as central to the Program.” These statements of values included “We value the interconnections between reading, writing, and thinking,” and “We value the interconnections between genre and rhetorical situation.” The next year, the statements of values would go on to inform the writing program’s central curricular document “Student Learning Goals,” which includes these two goals, closely related to the values that I have written out in full: “Students negotiate their own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and situation”; and “Students practice critical reading strategies.”

Above all I want to highlight that this report provides insight into how members of the assessment committee and of the writing program in general described and understood the administrative practices in which they engaged and which, I argue, have had curricular consequences, as suggested by the similarity between the statement of values and the learning
goals. Particular words and phrases in the report stand out: “openness, dialogue, and responsiveness”; “the committee worked independently”; “rational debate among a community of interpreters”; “collective inquiry into differences”; and “inclusive and responsive approach.” Overall this report impresses on readers that the committee worked “independently” from administrators and that it used what might be called democratic or egalitarian deliberation to arrive at a consensus that has taken into account members’ differences. Indeed, the report explicitly states:

While the committee sought consensus in its definition of writing and what we value about it, we understand there are myriad definitions of writing swirling within and about this large program, some of which are different or even divergent from our values as they are currently stated in program documents […]

Throughout this document, then, there is a tension among diverse perspectives that were being negotiated in a manner that produced new explicit statements of values and new learning goals for the program. The last quoted statement from the report—that some “definitions of writing” are “divergent from our values as they are currently stated in program documents”—points toward an emergent challenge to existing curriculum, as represented in “program documents.”

The tensions and challenges represented in this report seemed to play themselves out also in the discourse that circulated—or as the report might have phrased it, “swirled”—within the program. Two terms that started to gain ascendancy in the writing program around the time when this report was released were “rhetoric” and “genre,” words which appeared rarely in official curricular documents in the program prior to the assessment committee’s report and the publishing of “Student Learning Goals.”

26 In fact, from my experience serving on the assessment committee, I remember that, the next year (Fall-2011 – Spring-2012), the assessment committee began its work of writing up “Student Learning Goals” precisely by reviewing and drawing from the statement of values.
An example of the absence of “rhetoric” and “genre” from previous discourse in the program can be seen in a slim in-house publication that all FYW students used to be required to buy. It used to be a central text in FYW courses. This publication was titled *First-Year Writing: A Portfolio and Guidebook* and was edited and in part authored by the FYW Program Director who preceded Barbara. Some sections were authored by part-time and full-time lecturers. It contains policy documents for FYW along with other resources, such as a guide to “Plagiarism and Academic Honesty” and “Grammar.” The 2009 version of the guidebook, the last version to be published (it ceased to be required starting in the fall of 2010), begins with a section titled “Learning Goals and Philosophy.” It’s first sentence reads: “The overall goals of our writing program are to engage students in academic discourse […].” Throughout this section, rhetoric and genre are rarely mentioned and are used in a poetic or formalistic, rather than rhetorical, sense. For example, rhetoric is used in this way: “We are aware that all texts in the second category [texts classified as ‘something else,’ something other than literature] are composed by the same textual and rhetorical strategies used by the literary author (tone, voice, conventional structures, figures of speech, intertextual connections, punctuation, visual arrangement, and so on) […].” The closest that this definition of “rhetorical strategies” perhaps comes to being rhetorical is its recognition of “intertextual connections.” However, the emphasis seems to be on formal elements of texts. Likewise, when “genre” is mentioned, it seems to have a largely arhetorical meaning—the categorization of texts:

Many instructors in ENG 111 already supplement the anthology [*Ways of Reading*] with literary works such as poems, plays, or short stories, as well as visual “texts” such as films or photographs. Working across genres is one way that we hope students can become more aware of the features that literary texts
share with the academic essays they are reading and writing […] [Students can expect to work] with texts that call genre boundaries into question […]. Such texts demonstrate […] that contemporary intellectual work often produces hybrid or “blurred” genres as older categories of knowledge are called into question.

These are the only two mentions of “genre” or “rhetoric” that I was able to locate in the 121 page Portfolio and Guidebook, which I consider to have been an influential official curricular document, and these two mentions seem to share more in common with literary theory than with rhetorical theory. In pointing this out, I am not aiming to criticize the Portfolio and Guidebook, but to show the changes in the writing program’s discourse that were afoot circa 2009–2011. As the assessment committee’s 2011 report makes clear, members in the writing program were beginning to voice “values” which, as the report states, were “different or even divergent from our values as they are currently stated in program documents.”

Part of the reason why I have singled out the Portfolio and Guidebook’s use of the terms “rhetoric” and “genre” stems from comments that George made during interviews about the writing program’s discourse. George claimed that most of the new learning goals that emerged from the assessment committee’s work were “holdovers from the old curriculum.” “I would say probably eight or nine of them,” he said:

We’ve always be doing process pedagogy, which is what most of it [“Student Learning Goals”] is, you know. It’s like there are critical reading strategies in there. That is an attempt to sort of recognize that this has always been a part of the program.

In contrast to these eight or nine goals, which continued to emphasize writing process and critical reading, George stated that his own investment was in the second learning goal: “Students
negotiate their own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and situation.” He said:

I mean, I think probably, I’ve focused a lot of attention both in my teaching in First-Year Writing and in my conversations with people about it, on that learning goal two, which is sort of where a lot of my thinking here has been—the one about audience, writing for multiple genres, audiences, so forth.

I want to highlight George’s observation that the learning goals largely carried along existing discourse in the program, such as discourse associated with writing processes and critical reading. At the same time, the new learning goals incorporated other discourse, which was mostly new to the program and which centered on “rhetoric” and “genre,” defined in particular rhetorical ways. This mixture of old and new discourse in “Student Learning Goals” strongly suggests that the discourse in the program, especially as it appeared in programmatic documents, acted as a site of negotiation over the writing program’s enterprise.

That the program’s official discourse was a site of negotiation can also be seen a proposal that was based on the work of the curriculum task force. Barbara submitted this proposal to the Writing Program Committee in the fall of 2013, three years after the Portfolio and Guidebook ceased to be used in the program. In the proposal’s cover letter, Barbara wrote:

Over the past few years, as our program has moved from a focus on reading and the required use of the textbook Ways of Reading, we have seen a shift in what First-Year Writing means to our program. Many of these shifts have already been codified in our Writing Program Learning Goals, which highlight our programmatic values of audience, genre, and attention to rhetorical situation.
However, as of now, the ways that those values play out in First-Year Writing have been unclear. First-Year Writing, in these past few years, has lacked an identity. We hope that these new documents will be the basis for that identity in a way that honors the traditions of our program while also incorporating new ideas and approaches.

This excerpt from the proposal’s cover letter suggests that, by the fall of 2013, the discourse “swirling” around FYW had undergone a distinct change. Terms that had previously occupied a minor place in the program’s discourse—“audience,” “genre,” and “rhetorical situation”—had come to be associated in this proposal with “programmatic values” and with “what First-Year Writing means to our program.” However, although this cover letter indicates a shift in the program’s discourse, it is also itself a rhetorical action that contributes to changing programmatic discourse. This cover letter does not merely represent, but asserts, that “audience,” “genre,” and “rhetorical situation” are central to the program’s new values.

The final sentence quoted in the excerpt from the cover letter circles back to a noteworthy issue entailed in negotiating perspectives: how to change perspectives and discourse while respecting and maintaining continuity with existing perspectives and discourse. Barbara wrote that she hoped to establish an “identity” for the program in a way that respects “traditions” but that also brings in “new ideas and approaches.” This balancing act, between old and new, seems to have resulted in the production of new official curricular documents that display elements of both old and new discourse. As George noted, the “Student Learning Goals,” which was made an official curricular document in the Spring-2012 semester, contained 11 goals, but eight or nine of them were “holdovers.” George’s assessment seems correct to me: the learning goals mostly did preserve elements of the old curricular discourse. Still, even though the new learning goals seem
to have mostly preserved, rather than to have introduced new, discourse, George wondered whether the program had done enough to “bring along” elements of the old curriculum. He said, “I don’t know, one of the questions I have in retrospect was whether we did enough to try to bring along the pieces of that Ways of Reading approach that people really did like.”

In describing the pieces of the old approach that people liked, George explicitly pointed out three elements, each with its own distinct language: “reading with and against the grain”; Kenneth Burke’s metaphor of academic discourse as “conversation”; and a language of difficulty and rigor. The first phrase comes from the David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky’s introduction to Ways of Reading, while the latter two pieces of discourse can be found both in Ways of Reading and in FYW programmatic documents, such as the Portfolio and Guidebook. For example, the “Introduction” to the Portfolio and Guidebook begins with an excerpt from The Philosophy of Literary Form in which Burke asks readers to “[i]magine that you enter a parlor. You come late […] You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar” (quoted in Portfolio and Guidebook). Furthermore, in the next section of the Portfolio and Guidebook, under “Learning Goals and Philosophy,” the following statement is literally highlighted: “We want to challenge our students to do a higher level of critical thinking in their reading and writing.” It was these ideas and this discourse to which George was likely alluding when he wondered whether the new curriculum brought along what people had liked.

George seemed to be particularly concerned that the new curriculum had not brought along enough of “that kind of ‘rigor’ language and the sort of challenge of the difficulty.” George said that “one of the things that I’m hearing” is that instructors in the program considered
the new curriculum to be less difficult and “therefore lesser.” As he said this, he offered a defense of the new curriculum precisely by making a claim for its difficulty:

The old curriculum is a friggin cinch. It’s easy to teach. The book comes with all these concepts you can work with. It has activities in it. You can do the active reading and the highlighting and all that stuff. […] I think it’s way easier actually than shifting their [students’] whole way of thinking about writing to now considering multiple audiences, thinking about what a rhetorical situation is, thinking about discourse communities, thinking about modalities, thinking—I just think it’s much more expansive for them to think that way and to learn about these concepts that, in most cases, they’ve never heard of before than it is to honestly do a kind of thirteenth grade model of an English class, [laughs a bit] which is what I think the old model is.

Even here, during the interview, it is possible to see a negotiation over the meaning of the enterprise playing itself out. In this instance, George is, first, acknowledging that people in the program value the “language of ‘rigor’” and, second, attempts to shift what this language means by re-centering it on, or reattaching it to, the new discourse of “multiple audiences,” “rhetorical situation,” and “discourse communities.”

In this last excerpt and in the excerpt from the cover letter to the task force’s proposal, it is possible, then, to get a sense of what negotiating new and old perspectives looked like. This negotiation played itself out, and continues to play itself out, in a contest or (to use a less agonistic metaphor) dance over official programmatic discourse and its meaning. In the beginning of this section, I noted that much of this negotiation occurred throughout the work of two committees, work that participants described as “collaborative” (George), “crowd sourc[ed]”
The collaborative atmosphere that surrounded these negotiations and the centrality of give-and-take over discourse were also demonstrated in the report that the Writing Program Assessment Committee produced during its first year of existence—the report that described the committee’s activities as, borrowing from Moss, “rational debate among a community of interpreters.” Another activity in which members negotiated perspectives through manipulating discourse was the rewriting of course descriptions for FYW.

Members of the First-Year Writing Curriculum Task Force rewrote FYW course descriptions during the Fall-2013 semester. I participated on this task force and was present—although not as a researcher—when course descriptions were rewritten. A group of us gathered in a classroom in the English Department and wrote the new course descriptions very slowly, debating nearly every word. I remember that the meeting went well beyond the hour that we had scheduled for it. The new course description for FYW is 89-words long. Only one research participant in this study, Anna, talked about that meeting, but her comments help to illustrate her own attempt to use official programmatic discourse to renegotiate the enterprise. She said that she was especially concerned with how the task force wrote course descriptions for the multilingual sections of FYW:

I really wanted it [the multilingual FYW course] to sound like 1111 [the non-multilingual course] in many ways. So we had key phrases that you probably remember, putting it up on the overhead and kind of changing the language and arguing about that. So that was part of what I wanted. I felt that would free us up to do in 1102 some of the things, not only the readings and the more experimental type writing, challenging conventions that I wanted to do anyway, but I thought it
might give the students an alternative or a set of pedagogical aims that were a little bit different from the five-paragraph essay, the grammar emphasis that they would have had before coming into 1102.

I want to highlight two segments of this excerpt. First, Anna describes the activity as working with “key phrases” and “changing the language and arguing about that.” Writing up new official, curricular documents, then, entailed debate over discourse. And second, Anna seemed to understand the writing up of new documents as an opportunity to seize control over her own teaching practices as a teacher of 1102, the course for multilingual writers. In particular, she wanted the 1102 course “to sound like 1111.” This excerpt begins to get at topics addressed in the next section, on boundary work. Anna understood the course descriptions as shaping what could and could not be done in writing courses, specifically in courses for multilingual writers. For Anna, shaping the discourse of official curricular documents functioned as a way to shape teaching and learning practices.

It might also be remarked that Anna wanted 1102 to sound like 1111 so that she could do “the more experimental type writing, challenging conventions” that she wanted to do. This latter discourse—“experimental” writing and “challenging conventions”—seemed to have had more in common with the existing 1111 curriculum than with what some research participants identified as the new curriculum, focused on “rhetorical situation” and “genre.” For example, the Portfolio and Guidebook tells students that they can expect to work “with texts that call genre boundaries into question, as we increasing see both in Ways of Reading and in the literature that [writing-program] instructors use to supplement it. Such texts demonstrate … hybrid or ‘blurred’ genres […]” I understand this excerpt as informing students that FYW will often entail reading and writing texts that are “experimental” or that “challenge conventions.” While I do not want to
make too much of similarities between Anna’s goals for rewriting the course description and language in *Portfolio and Guidebook*, it is possible to locate in Anna’s account the mixing and struggle among the discourses swirling in the program. She hoped to change the course description of 1102 to make it possible for her to use “experimental” writing that “challenged conventions” rather than, for example, to teach a course based on “rhetoric” and “genre,” words that did not show up in Anna’s interview.²⁷

Ultimately, as Anna hoped, the course descriptions for both 1111 and 1102 did “sound like” one another. The descriptions are exactly the same except for that the multilingual course contains this addition: “Designed for students whose first or strongest language is not English. Parallels ENGW 1111 but focuses on the concerns of multilingual writers.”

The course descriptions, as I have been arguing, were a site for negotiating perspectives. The main result of the work of the curriculum task force was the creation of new course descriptions. The new course descriptions seem to have been the only approved element of the proposal that Barbara submitted. The Writing Program Committee approved the new course descriptions but did not approve new “grading criteria” for projects in FYW and did not approve a standard assignment sequence for FYW courses. Barbara said these latter two segments of the proposal were not approved because of a “hesitation to proscribe.” Although the new course descriptions were “new,” they did not, in Barbara’s opinion, represent a curriculum change but a “curriculum re-articulation”:

 […] there was stuff going on [in the FYW program] that wasn’t accounted for in our previous sort of way of presenting ourselves as a program. […] [W]e thought of the curriculum change as less of a curriculum change and more of a curriculum

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²⁷ It is perhaps noteworthy that, according to Anna’s estimation, she had been teaching “on and off” at GECU for 30 years. This personal history with the writing program might have affected her perspective on the writing program’s enterprise.
re-articulation. So we sort of looked at the course descriptions and that website and all these different places where we present ourselves, and we were sort of looking at those and going, “That doesn’t actually sound like reality.”

Barbara’s characterization of the course descriptions as a “curriculum re-articulation” suggests that the new course descriptions were the culmination of a years-long process of negotiating perspectives and changing teaching practices. In Barbara’s account, perspectives had already shifted before the new course descriptions were even produced. As Barbara wrote in the cover letter to the task force’s proposal, “Many of these shifts have already been codified in our Writing Program Learning Goals.” For Barbara, the next stage seems to have been to “codify” programmatic shifts in course descriptions as well. However, I think that Barbara’s use of “we” in this excerpt deserves some scrutiny. Looking back over the interview transcript, I cannot piece together exactly who “we” represents. This “we,” I think, can be understood as a biased sense of the collective opinion of the writing program. Barbara’s use of “we” might be doing the rhetorical work of smoothing over conflicting perspectives and understandings of “reality” in a manner that consolidates the emergent and newly “codified” discourse and enterprise. Regardless of the rhetorical effects that follow from Barbara’s pronoun usage, it is important to recognize that, at the least, the curricular work of the task force centered on “rearticulating” official curricular discourse.

Throughout this section, I have argued that negotiation of perspectives produced realignment of the constellation of communities of practice throughout the writing program. By negotiating perspectives, members of GECU’s writing program were able to find common ground about the meaning and purpose of the enterprise in which they were engaged. This negotiation of perspectives in part played itself out in the discourse that circulated in the
program, especially the official discourse that appeared in programmatic documents like “Student Learning Goals” and course descriptions. Furthermore, this section supports the argument that a method for detecting evidence of realignment is examining changes in a program’s discourse that result from negotiation of perspectives, such as that which occurs during inclusive committees (i.e., committees that include members from across social stratifications in an organization).

It is important to recognize that only a portion of all members of the Writing Program could participate in negotiating perspectives. It is these members who, I argue, would have been likely to change their subsequent teaching practices as a result of these negotiations. That is, members who negotiated perspectives would have subsequently taught in ways that aligned their classes with the newly re-formed enterprise of the writing program. Those teachers who did not participate in these negotiations would have been less likely to do so. Not having participated in negotiations, these teachers cannot be said to have found common ground or to have consented to the new enterprise. These teachers’ practices would need to be changed through mechanisms other than negotiation if the communities of practice that these teachers formed with students were to be realigned with the new enterprise. In other words, because negotiation included only a subset of members of the program, its reach as a realignment strategy could only be partial. To make realignment complete, or more widespread, across the constellation of the program, other realignment strategies would also have to be used. The next section addresses such strategies.

**Realignment Through Translation and Boundary Objects**

Alignment, Wenger argues, entails specific forms of participation and reification: “It requires participation in the form of boundary practices and of people with multimembership who can straddle boundaries and do the *work of translation*” (my emphasis 187). And, “[i]n
terms of reification, alignment requires shareable artifacts—boundary objects able to create fixed points around which to coordinate activities” (my emphasis, Wenger 187). So far, this chapter has examined the realignment strategy of negotiating perspectives. Like the activities discussed in this section, negotiation of perspectives can be considered a form of boundary work: at GECU negotiation of perspectives entailed administrators and instructors working across at least one set of boundaries (the boundaries between instructors’ individual classrooms and the assessment committee or the curriculum task force). This work across boundaries was a strategy for producing realignment. However, though the negotiation of perspectives is a form of boundary work, I have decided to separate negotiation from the activities discussed in this section for two reasons. First, the activities discussed here illustrate two closely related strategies used to achieve realignment in the GECU Writing Program: the implementation and distribution of “boundary objects” and “translation.” Second, chronologically these activities occurred after negotiation of perspectives. It was after perspectives had been explicitly negotiated in committees that administrators and instructors distributed boundary objects and engaged in the work of translation in ways that changed and redirected teaching practices.

The realignment that followed negotiations occurred mostly as administrators and instructors distributed “Student Learning Goals” and translated this reification, and practices associated with it, for teachers throughout the program. In GECU’s writing program, instructors and administrators collaboratively engaged in translation as they worked both (1) to make the “Student Learning Goals” meaningful within the context of teaching practices and (2) to guide how instructors across the program interpreted, or attributed specific meanings to, the new curricular reification. The major method by which translation occurred was through a set of activities that can be categorized as what George called “providing resources.” For George, this
term seemed to signify programmatic efforts to make available to instructors professional
development workshops, scholarly texts, and other instructional materials. Only one other
participant, Louis, used the term “resources” in this sense. As he talked about Ways of Reading’s
role in the program, Louis said: “We have a lot of internal resources built up around it.”
Similarly, although without using the term “resources,” Hugh remarked on the enduring
programmatic role of Ways of Reading by saying that “people have built a lot over the years
based on that [textbook], so, you know, it’s hard to give up” (my emphasis). While George was
the only participant to use the phrase “providing resources,” this term seems capable of naming a
variety of practices and reifications in which administrators and instructors engaged and used in
order to bring about alignment and realignment with the program, either intentionally or
unintentionally. Under the category of “providing resources,” I also include activities described
by participants such as “directing instructors’ gaze” (George); helping instructors to “feel
equipped” to teach “options” (Louis), and “getting information out” (Barbara)—a way to change
undesired teaching practices without singling out instructors and reprimanding them.

Like the realignment strategy of negotiating perspectives, providing resources seemed to
be consistent with the values of the Writing Program. It was an alignment strategy that
maintained respect for instructor autonomy, expertise, and pedagogical diversity. In particular, it
offered a way to “coordinate activities” without relying on standardized procedures. This
strategy directed instructors toward particular teaching practices, as George’s use of the phrase
“directing teachers’ gaze” suggests, without dictating precisely how and what instructors should
teach; it guided instructors’ teaching practices toward a common enterprise while maintaining

28 I write “unintentionally” because it seems that the “resources” that people have “built up” “around” or “based on”
Ways of Reading have continued to align teaching practices across the Writing Program in ways that go against the
new curriculum. In other words, the resources built around the textbook themselves seem to have some power over
the alignment of teaching practices in the Writing Program, even though the administrators who participated in this
study seemed to welcome a move away from the textbook.
programmatic values—allowing instructors to design their own courses by writing or choosing their own assignments, textbooks, class activities, and schedules.

Most of the translational work discussed here centers around “Student Learning Goals.” Since its publication “Student Learning Goals” has coordinated activities across the program more than any other document. In an excerpt already quoted, Louis said that the program should be “guided by shared principles, and that’s what the learning goals, I think, have been […].” Indeed, the learning goals do seem to have provided, or have been interpreted as providing, a shared set of principles around which administration, teaching, and assessment have been structured in the program. The learning goals have been widely discussed, applied, and reproduced. They have been the subject of conversation at program-wide meetings. They have guided programmatic assessment, shaping what data the program collects about itself for and how it collects and analyzes that data. And they appear on the vast majority of syllabi in the writing program because instructors are required to reproduce them. No other document has had quite the same hold over the program since the realignment discussed in this chapter began.

The only other document or thing that served as a boundary object as strongly as “Student Learning Goals” was Ways of Reading, but once the learning goals had been created and published, the role that Ways of Reading played diminished significantly—but not entirely. This suggests that one way to understand realignment in the Writing Program is to see it as taking place in part through a substitution of boundary objects. Ways of Reading used to be—and in some ways, still is—a boundary object that coordinated activities across sections of FYW

29 The Writing Program provides instructors with a checklist that indicates what every syllabus must contain. This checklist tells writing-program instructors that they must include the learning goals on their syllabi. The checklist reads: “Please include this material in the syllabus itself. Simply referring to the Writing Program website or including a link does not ensure that the student is exposed to this information.”
All instructors used to be required to use *Ways of Reading* until the Spring-2013 semester, and no other required textbook has taken its place. Instead, the FYW Program is now, as George observed, “learning-goal driven”:

> The challenge of the new curriculum, I think, is to say it’s learning-goal driven. It’s not driven by any particular textbook. Right? It’s not driven by any materials that you would bring into a first-year writing class. It’s driven by a set of learning experiences that we hope students have, and you as a teacher have to figure out how to do that, how to offer that kind of experience. You choose the readings, you choose the assignments. We’ll provide some guidance, but this is really up to you to do.

This excerpt directly suggests a substitution of boundary objects. Where the old curriculum had been driven largely by *Ways of Reading*, the new curriculum is driven by “Student Learning Goals.” George here also articulates, I think, his intention as an administrator to influence instructors to see “Student Learning Goals” as meaningful, to place it—and not *Ways of Reading*—at the center of their teaching practices in the Writing Program.

Boundary objects, of course, do not act on their own. To influence curriculum, they have to be meaningfully incorporated into teaching and learning practices. Much of the boundary work of translation addressed here seems to have been directed both at making “Student Learning Goals” meaningful and at shaping how instructors interpreted it. That is, the boundary work of translation shaped both the meaningfulness and the meaning of boundary objects central to coordinating the activities of the program’s constellation of communities of practice.

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30 There were other boundary objects that played a coordinating role prior to the publication of “Student Learning Goals”: a list of grading criteria that instructors used to assess students writing in FYW and *Portfolio and Guidebook*. Here I focus on *Ways of Reading* because it seemed to have had the most enduring influence on curriculum.
As I hinted above, *Ways of Reading* has continued to have staying power, despite its official replacement by “Student Learning Goals.” For example, all of the instructors whom I interviewed continued to use readings from *Ways of Reading* even after the textbook ceased to be required and the new learning goals had been published. While these instructors were, I would argue, using readings from this textbook in ways that were consistent with the new goals, that they continued to use the textbook is notable: in one way or another, it continued to structure teaching and learning. Furthermore, some comments by Louis suggested that many instructors were continuing to use *Ways of Reading* in a manner not sanctioned by the new learning goals:

> We know that a lot of the instructional staff—and you know we’re talking about 85 people [total teaching for the program, not 85 still using the textbook]—are still using a *Ways of Reading* approach. So in a sense, you know, they’re using a curriculum that is the only one they’ve ever used here that they’re comfortable with. I think there’s lots of room for inquiry in terms of why folks are holding on to this, what it’s doing for them, and trying to understand teacher change in a certain kind of way. Right? How does that—what do we need to put into place to make that happen?

Louis’s concluding question might be answered in part by examining the boundary work of translation addressed here. A challenge encountered in carrying out realignment was making new boundary objects meaningful in ways that could carry out what Louis refers to as “teacher change.”

While translation can be understood in part as performing some of this work of making new boundary objects meaningful, translation does more than just guide the interpretation of objects. In the discussion of translation activities below, I address how some translation activities
shape interpretations of boundary objects, but also how others, more generally, translate meanings and practices from one group to other groups, whether or not these meanings and practices are reified in easily identifiable boundary objects like “Student Learning Goals.”

Shaping interpretations of boundary objects or not, all of the acts of translation discussed here can be understood as producing realignment and curriculum change. Demonstrating a variety of these forms of translation as used in GECU’s Writing Program and how they worked to produce realignment is a major purpose of what follows.

As noted, the main strategies for translation described by research participants fall under the category of what George called “building resources” and “providing resources.” George first mentioned this strategy when he described steps that the writing program might need to take to change teachers’ practices so that they accorded with the new learning goals. Providing resources, for George, could help “people change their minds.” As he described this strategy, he said, “I mean just writing out new curricular documents is not a very helpful thing to do.” It was also necessary to “provide resources” that would help teachers to teach in accord with the new curricular documents.

To describe the resources that the program would have to provide, George used as an example the new learning goal that focuses on “genre.” He said:

[…] it may be that we need to provide more resources for people to really figure out, “How do I teach the concept of genre?” […] I mean it’s not a—especially for people outside of rhetoric and composition—this is not a very familiar thing and to the extent that it is, for literature people, it might be a concept that’s not very usable in the classroom. (my emphasis)
George went on to reference Carolyn Miller’s “Genre as Social Action” to describe the meaning of “genre” that, for him, would offer a concept “usable in the classroom.” He said: “Carolyn Miller, you know, sort of blew up the notion of genre and said, ‘Actually, you know, it’s a form of rhetorical action.’ Right? ‘And it’s in response to recurring situations.’ And then, that makes it very usable for the writing classroom.” For George, it was necessary to “provide more resources” that would enable teachers to understand this approach to genre. “Just putting the word ‘genre’ in our learning goals,” he said, “does not help teachers figure out how to teach it.” In this instance, the strategy of providing resources was intended to shape how teachers interpreted “genre” in the learning goals and how to develop teaching practices that accorded with that interpretation. This was made even clearer as George said:

We’re gonna have to build—and we are—there’s lots of things going on—[Louis] and [the Assistant Writing Program Director] and others have been doing to try to help build—those kinds of resources, you know, intellectual resources for people so that they can get their heads around how would one teach the concept of rhetorical situation.

Building and providing resources, or “intellectual resources,” are described here as helping instructors “to get their heads around” terms such as “rhetorical situation” and “genre” in ways that make these concepts “usable” in practice. Furthermore, it seems that George has in mind that, by providing resources, the writing program will encourage instructors to adopt specific understandings of these terms. In the case of “genre,” the term should, in George’s account, be understood not in the way of “literature people,” but in the way of “rhetoric and composition.”

George used the term “resources” in a similar sense at two other points during interviews. In the first of these latter two instances, George described “resources” as a way of directing
attention. In the second instance, he used “resources” to describe an approach to curriculum work more generally. In the first instance, he noted:

[…] we have done a lot of things to support people’s, to sort of direct people’s gaze in certain directions, so we don’t have a mandate that everybody needs to do multimodal composing, or think about digital writing in their classrooms, and in fact, a lot—some don’t. But there’s been enough conversation and resources […] that it’s actually a rare class now in the Writing Program that doesn’t deal in one way or another with digital writing, where there isn’t at least blogging or something like that. (my emphasis)

In this case, it’s clear that providing resources becomes a way to shape teaching practices by “directing people’s gaze” or by directing attention. By providing resources on digital writing, the Writing Program, in George’s account, had been able to create the conditions that have led to nearly all of its writing courses including digital writing.

In the last instance in which George used “resources” in a related sense, he was describing a specific approach to doing curricular work. He described what he called “a spectrum” of approaches to curriculum. On one end of the spectrum was an approach that depended on strict standardization. That approach would require that instructors use a single standard syllabus, schedules, readings, and assignments. On the other end of the spectrum, there was an approach that George described this way:

What you really need to do is provide them [instructors] resources—examples, professional development, opportunities to talk and learn from each other—and some really basic kind of bottom-line stuff that needs to happen, and then let them develop the curriculum for their class from the pedagogy of their class and really
let them take advantage of their own particular strengths and build a culture of trust, right, but also give them those resources. (my emphasis)

About this second approach to curriculum George said, “I think I lean in that direction pretty heavily.” In this case, George seemed to understand “providing resources” as a major method for shaping curriculum in the Writing Program. Here “resources” explicitly includes “examples,” “professional development,” and “opportunities to talk and learn from each other.” This excerpt clarifies that providing resources acts as a method for producing alignment within the Writing Program without resorting to standardization. George explicitly puts “providing resources” in opposition to other alignment strategies that might be labelled as the creation and implementation of “proceduralization, quantification, and control structures that are portable” (Wenger 187).

“Providing resources” is translation in two senses, which are exemplified in the last few excerpts. Providing resources both translates or transports practices, taking practices from one location into another (e.g., providing resources means creating “opportunities [for instructors] to talk and learn from each other”), and translates in the sense of establishing the meaning of official curricular discourse in terms of teaching practices (e.g., providing resources enables instructors to understand “genre” and “rhetorical situation” in a “usable” way informed by rhetoric and composition).

What “providing resources” looks like as a translation and alignment strategy is illustrated also in a set of documents that were emailed to writing program instructors soon after the new learning goals were released. The set of documents that I discuss here included annotated syllabi, annotated assignments, an accompanying email, and a cover letter. The syllabi and assignments were annotated with the new learning goals to indicate how the syllabi and
assignments were meeting the new learning goals. The email and the letter were signed by George and Barbara. About the annotated syllabi and assignments, Barbara said:

I think that those do a really nice job of showing syllabi with multiple textbooks and multiple approaches, like, sort of different ways of looking at first year writing, but that all, you know, in you know, using that common feature makes it more explicit how they’re all meeting the learning goals in their own unique way.

Again, for Barbara, the annotated syllabi and assignments show “multiple approaches” for “meeting the learning goals in their own unique way”; they are intended not to indicate to instructors that they must use the example syllabi and assignments, but that the examples show various ways of satisfying the new learning goals. While these examples do not issue a “mandate” or create a portable control structure, they can still be understood as an attempt both to shape how instructors interpret the learning goals and to impress on instructors the meaningfulness of the learning goals by reemphasizing that all writing courses must be designed with the learning goals in mind. In other words, the annotated documents work to establish the meaning and the meaningfulness of the learning goals for instructors’ own practices. The annotated syllabi, annotated assignments, and accompanying email and letter offer insight into how administrators used the strategy of “providing resources” in order to do the boundary work of translating “Student Learning Goals” from the assessment committee to the broader program and in order to align teaching practices with the new curriculum.

Administrators first presented the new learning goals to writing instructors during a mandatory program-wide meeting at the end of the Spring-2012 semester. Later, on August 1, 2012, administrators emailed the annotated sample syllabi and assignments to every instructor (see fig. 1). After addressing readers in the email, George and Barbara write, “We are pleased to
circulate the attached resource for course design. We think it will be helpful to you as you plan your writing courses” (my emphasis). Just before signing off, they write, “We wish to thank the instructors who participated with us in this project: […].” The names of four instructors are then listed.

Fig. 1: Image from a sample “College Writing” syllabus annotated to indicate how the described course meets specific learning goals listed on “Student Learning Goals.”

The document attached to the email begins with a 737-word letter signed by George and Barbara and addressed to “Dear First-Year Writing Instructors.” The letter first refers to the
program’s “Philosophy and Aims” and to a “heuristic” for designing FYW courses—this heuristic for designing courses had been presented during the final program-wide meeting of the 2011-2012 academic year. The philosophy and aims statement, the heuristic, and the annotated syllabi and assignments are described as “reflect[ing] programmatic emphasis on what [George] called a ‘writing studies approach,’ by which we mean in brief, an approach in which writing is both the means and the object of students’ inquiry.” The letter then informs readers that, after the Fall-2012 semester, they will not be required to use *Ways of Reading* any longer. The statement that *Ways of Reading* will not be required in the future provides an exigence for the annotated syllabi: “In light of these developments, we want to provide you with additional resources for building your courses” (my emphasis). The letter then notes that the annotated syllabi, which include examples of FYW courses designed without *Ways of Reading*, were developed by George and Barbara and “a diverse set of instructors who have been involved in curriculum and assessment work over the past couple years: […]” (my emphasis). The same four instructors whose names appeared in the email are listed again. The letter then gives directions for how instructors should use the annotated syllabi. Among these instructions, George and Barbara write: “We do not have a standard syllabus for first-year writing at [GECU], but we do expect all courses to operate within our programmatic parameters.” They also write: “if one can’t map a syllabus and assignments to these documents [“Student Learning Goals” and “Philosophy and Aims”], then they are probably operating outside of the parameters of the program and need to be revisited.” The letter ends by explaining that *Ways of Reading* will be required for the final time during the following semester, fall of 2012, and tells readers, in bold type, to “design your fall course with WoR [*Ways of Reading*] as the required text.”
The email, the letter, and the annotated syllabi and assignments all work toward establishing both the meaningfulness and meaning of the new “Student Learning Goals.” These documents clarify that the new learning goals define the “programmatic parameters” within which instructors’ courses must “operate” and provide examples that translate the learning goals into an important part of writing instructors’ practice at GECU—writing up syllabi and assignments. Furthermore, these documents highlight that the writing program is moving toward a new approach: a “writing studies approach.”

Finally, in order to understand the impact of this email and letter better, it is also important to take into account its rhetorical strategy. The email and letter create what might be called an egalitarian ethos—which might have been appealing within the context of the already discussed programmatic values. They do so in two ways: first, by informing readers that it was “a diverse set of instructors,” not just administrators, who had created the annotated documents and, second, by being signed by both Barbara and George. The email and letter appeared less than two months after Barbara had been appointed as the “Interim Director of First-Year Writing.” Barbara held neither a tenure-track position nor a Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition, while George held both. This email and letter, then, are signed by two administrators who span an institutional inequality that might have been apparent to readers. The acknowledgement of the work performed by instructors from across ranks in the program and this co-signature contributes to an egalitarian ethos by showing a willingness to share power across institutional ranks. Although I am not certain how significant or effective this strategy was (or if it even was a “strategy” in the sense of a conscious decision intended to produce a specific result), it does seem worthwhile to consider the role that the rhetoric of such letters play in making new boundary objects meaningful and in establishing the meaning of boundary objects. By noting out
that the email and letter seem to be constructing an egalitarian ethos as a rhetorical strategy, we might better understand how the alignment strategy of translation works. In part, this alignment strategy depends on persuasion. An appeal to an egalitarian ethos can be seen as have been potentially effective in convincing instructors to find the learning goals meaningful.

These observations about the annotated documents and accompanying letter and email are intended to explore (1) how administrators and instructors working with administrators engaged in the boundary work of translating the meanings and practices of the assessment committee into teaching practices; and (2) how the meaning and meaningfulness of an official curricular reification—“Student Learning Goals”—was shaped in order to align teaching practices with the new curriculum. In other words, the documents I have just discussed provide examples of boundary work and alignment in the form of “providing resources” to instructors. The rhetoric and rhetorical situation in which this artifact—the collection of annotated syllabi and assignments—and the learning goals were presented potentially affected instructors’ adoption of the learning goals in their own course designs and teaching. In particular, I am suggesting that, while the learning goals, the annotated syllabi, the email, and the letter were issued from a position of institutionally legitimated authority, the learning goals were presented within an egalitarian discourse that might have appealed to programmatic values. The language of “providing resources” might also have had a similar effect. Rather than demanding that instructors use a standard syllabus, the language of telling instructors that they were being “provided with resources” might have made the new “programmatic parameters” seem less like a demand and more like an invitation to teach in a new, more professionally developed way.

This discussion suggests at least one answer to Louis’s question: How can the writing program produce “teacher change” and move teaching practices away from the Ways of Reading
approach? An answer might be to engage in more boundary work—such as making new curricular discourse meaningful, shaping the meaning of new curricular discourse, and translating practices among communities within the program (i.e., creating opportunities for administrators and instructors to share practices). Much of this kind of boundary work is already going in GECU’s Writing Program. Especially notable are the program’s Teaching Network and classroom-observation programs. The Teaching Network offers professional development workshops created and led by instructors in the program, who are paid for doing so. Attendance at these four workshops per year is mandatory for instructors. And each instructor must be observed by another instructor or an administrator once every academic year. These classroom observations offer an opportunity for instructors to share and revise their teaching practices. It seems that the GECU Writing Program might do well to continue with the strategy of “providing resources,” which appears to be consistent with programmatic values. The main difficulty faced by the program, however, seems to be balancing programmatic values with a desire for specific changes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that curriculum change at the level of administrative practices can be productively understood as realignment in the constellation of communities of practice within a writing program. The data presented in this chapter suggest that the strategies or activities through which realignment is achieved are intertwined with organizational values. Significant organizational values in the GECU Writing Program were a respect for instructor autonomy, expertise, and pedagogical diversity. These organizational values were consistent with the main realignment strategies and activities in the program. The main realignment strategies and activities were the (re)negotiation of perspectives, the distribution of new
boundary objects, and the translation of practices across communities. These strategies and activities worked toward changing teaching practices across the constellation in the program.

Another strategy of alignment, not yet discussed, appeared in the data and deserves remark. This strategy was the use of administrative power, specifically the power to offer or to deny employment to instructors. Only one participant, George, mentioned this strategy. He noted that some instructors had not yet changed their teaching to accord with the new learning goals. Speaking about these instructors, George said:

[… the administration can figure, can determine whether it’s just going to say, “We don’t need you teaching for us anymore if you’re not going to teach these learning goals.” We know who they are actually. We see their syllabi every semester.

No other participants discussed this strategy, and George spent only a little time discussing it. Still, instructors might have anticipated that employment was tied to their changing teaching practices when the new learning goals were distributed. George’s comment also hints that surveillance, connected to administrative power, might have played a role in alignment at GECU. Every instructor must submit their syllabi every semester, and program administrators read and analyze these syllabi.

Yet participants seemed to resist such blunt applications of administrative power. I asked Barbara what she had done when she had discovered that a teacher failed to design courses that meet the learning goals. She replied: “I think that we try to mainly reach out instead of sort of directly going into the syllabus and being like, ‘Oh there’s that assignment, let’s intervene.’ I think the approach has been more let’s get information out to the whole program.” As she elaborated, she said: “I think [the current strategy is] less threatening because I know if I got
called in by the director—like, ‘So you’re assignment’—I would be a little like, ‘Oh, god!’” These responses suggested that Barbara resisted, or avoided, directly disciplining instructors. Also, in this response, Barbara says that she “mainly” uses the strategy of providing resources, or “getting information out.” Similarly, Louis never talked about disciplining instructors, but he did mention that he wanted to prompt “teacher change” in the program. He said that he intended to devote time during the next End of Term Workshop, which all instructors had to attend, to setting “teaching goals”: “to get people to articulate some goals for themselves for the spring semester and see whether they’ve met those goals or not.” Again, this response shows an administrator turning to the strategy of providing resources—in this case, time for professional development—rather than resorting to discipline.

An issue faced by the program seems to have been that many instructors have continued to use *Ways of Reading* long after it was required and the new learning goals were published. I lack data that could tell me what percentage of instructors continue to use the textbook, or how this percentage has increased or, more likely, decreased over time. I also cannot say whether or not instructors are using the textbook in ways that meet the new learning goals. It was notable to me that every instructor who piloted IWWE used readings from the textbook in the piloted course—texts by Gloria Anzaldúa, John Edgar Wideman, Susan Griffin, Richard Miller, Richard Rodriguez, and Mary Louise Pratt. Sometimes they used assignments from the textbook too. At one point, Hugh and I talked about *Ways of Reading*, and he observed: “[…] people have built a lot over the years based on that, so, you know, it’s hard to give up […] you get used to [it].” Louis made a similar observation: “We have a lot of internal resources built up around it.”

Instructors may also be persisting with *Ways of Reading* because it offers guidance in ways that the learning goals do not. Hugh observed that *Ways of Reading* gave “structure” that
seems currently to be missing from FYW at GECU, and he had hoped that the FYW Curriculum Task Force would restore some of that structure:

I was hoping [the task force would] work out something because, obviously, when I came here, the big thing was using *Ways of Reading* in some way, and whatever you think about *Ways of Reading*, it did give sort of a structure or approach to what you were supposed to be doing in class. But now, you know, we’ve got these goals, but you can try to realize the goals in lots of different ways.

He noted that his uncertainty about the first-year course was exacerbated by the change in its title from “College Writing” to “First-Year Writing”:

Hugh: [...] it’s “First-Year Writing” and not “College Writing” anymore, so First-Year Writing is like // its own little |

Michael: // It’s not focused | on college, right, it’s not kind of about, right, academics, whatever that might be.

Hugh: It’s focused on, well I don’t know what it’s focused on. But, um, sorry.

Michael: No it’s okay.

Hugh: No, I’m apologizing to whoever. I mean that was something that at that first—I don’t know if you were on that committee, the first-year writing committee.

I: Yeah.

Hugh also compared FYW to the other course that the program offers, Advanced Writing in the Disciplines, or AWD. Hugh said that his sense of purpose in FYW was less clear than it was in AWD, and this lack of clarity caused him to avoid teaching FYW:
I’m kind of resisting teaching 1111 or 1102 for the time being anyway because I’m trying to go back and figure out—I feel like with the AWD, I have a somewhat clearer purpose. […] Maybe I’d go into writing-about-writing, or maybe I would do something else. I’m not really sure at this point. I suppose one of these days I’ll have to teach it [FYW] again [laughs].

Hugh’s concerns about FYW seemed to be shared by others. For example, Barbara said:

I just know that in my conversations, just sort of casually with people in the program, the number one thing I always hear from instructors is “Oh, I wish we had something for first-year writing like we do for AWD,” in terms of that like superstructure.

In AWD, that “superstructure” took the form of an assignment sequence. “Everyone knows when you teach AWD,” Barbara said, “you do some kind of meta-analysis of writing in the discipline, you do scholarly, you do public, and you do professional.” Newly hired instructors, Barbara claimed, have “picked up” AWD more quickly than FYW.

These excerpts point toward problems that the Writing Program might need to address. Instructors may be finding it difficult to design their own courses to meet the new learning goals. In the face of this difficulty, many instructors seem to resort to Ways of Reading, which offers a familiar “structure” and “approach.” Such a structure was offered in the task force’s proposal, submitted by Barbara to the Writing Program Committee—that proposal contained a recommended assignment sequence—but it is unclear how widely circulated and known that assignment sequence is throughout the writing program. For instance, Hugh did not seem aware of it. It may be that such models need to be brought to instructors’ attention. In short, the Writing Program might need to provide more resources. It might need to spend more time explicitly
explaining teaching practices—including assignment design, assignment sequencing, text selection, and classroom activities—that meet the new learning goals.

In pointing out these problems, which are the loose threads of this chapter, I am especially hoping to provide knowledge useful to the research participants who might read this dissertation. But these problems, the persistence of an old textbook and the possibly incomplete shift toward the new learning goals, also get a basic issue in understanding curriculum change. Curriculum that students experience does not necessarily change because documents or policy has changed. It is necessary that teaching and learning practices change as well. In this chapter I have attempted to account for how administrative practices change, and fail to change, teaching practices in a writing program. The theoretical framework that this chapter builds—that curriculum change at an administrative level can be understood as realignment—offers a way to describe, and potentially intervene, in curriculum. Most of all, it seems important to trace the curricular consequences that follow from specific administrative practices—how specific administrative actions and objects affect learning environments. The theoretical framework of this chapter offers a way to trace these consequences.
CHAPTER 4: STRADDLING BOUNDARIES: TEACHING PRACTICES AS BROKERING BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES

While chapter three examined administrative practices involved in a program-wide curriculum change at GECU, this chapter looks at administrative and teaching practices during the course of a piloted curricular innovation, a version of the FYW course at GECU titled “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE). This chapter is intended to better understand the relation between administrative and teaching practices in shaping curriculum and producing curriculum change. In the case study presented here, the teachers who piloted IWWE moved among two types of communities, an administrative community (where IWWE was planned, discussed, and revised) and the communities that each instructor formed with her or his students. This chapter finds that as these instructors moved between communities they acted as “brokers” and engaged in “brokering”: “use of multimembership [membership in multiple communities of practice] to transfer some element of one practice into another” (Wenger 109). Wenger writes that brokering “involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives. It requires enough legitimacy to influence the development of a practice, mobilize attention, and address conflicting interests” (109). This chapter shows that the teachers of IWWE transferred and translated elements of practice from the administrative community that they formed with one another to classrooms and back again. Brokering, then, accounts for how teaching practices across sections of IWWE were coordinated, but brokering does not account for differences in individual teachers’ practices. This chapter finds that other influences on teaching practices included an instructor’s alignment with social-justice movements; an instructors identity within the Writing Program at GECU and his understanding of his social role as a teacher; and an instructor’s on-going negotiations with students over the meaning of
practice. In addition to explaining brokering as one way that administrative practices influence teaching practices (and vice versa) and to exploring other influences on teaching practices, this chapter also offers insight into how broader social transformations—in particular internationalization and translingualism—are translated into local practices that shaped curriculum in GECU’s writing program. This chapter draws on interviews with all research participants with the exception of Barbara, who had not been involved in the creation and piloting of IWWE, although some of these participants’ perspectives are not addressed until deep into the chapter.

The institutional context in which IWWE was created is relevant for the following discussion. Between 2004 and 2012, the percentage of GECU undergraduate students who were, in the U.S. federal government’s parlance, “nonresident aliens,” or international students, more than tripled (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System). By January of 2012, in part in response to these demographic changes, the Writing Program at GECU had assembled a group of instructors and administrators to form what was called “The Multilingual Writers Subcommittee.” This subcommittee first met at the beginning of the Spring-2012 semester, and throughout that semester and over the following summer, this subcommittee invented IWWE. This course ended up having two significant features: first, it was intended to enroll U.S. and international students “half-and-half,” as Anna, an instructor of IWWE, described it; and second, it was intended to make language and language difference an explicit object of study. Some research participants described IWWE as a “themed course,” or a “themed version” of the FYW course, meaning that it was like any other FYW course at GECU, except that, throughout, it focused on a unified topic. This special-topic course was piloted for two semesters—Fall-2012 and Fall-2013—and as it was being piloted, it was listed as a special section on the university’s
registration system and on the Writing Program’s website. But by the Fall-2014 semester, the course ceased to be taught, and the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee had moved on, having transitioned into a research group, no longer concerned with piloting IWWE.

Although IWWE has ended, participants made it clear that they did not consider IWWE to be a failure. George, who had been Writing Program Director when IWWE was piloted, described it as a “soft launch”—an informal experiment that could, but did not have to, produce lasting change. Still, the course offers grounds for research into curriculum. In this chapter, I treat IWWE as a case of curriculum change and, more specifically, of curricular innovation. Though, unlike the case discussed in the last chapter, IWWE did not produce lasting program-wide change, its piloting did produce changes in the educational environments of the courses taught by three instructors, over at least the two semesters when the course was piloted. While last chapter addressed curriculum change at an administrative level, this chapter looks more closely at the relation between administrative and teaching practices during curriculum change and innovation. Like the program-wide curriculum change addressed last chapter, the curricular innovation of IWWE entailed administrative practices that produced realignment, although on the smaller scale of the courses of three instructors in a program that employs over 80. Some of the same administrative practices were used once again—namely negotiating perspectives and producing reifications that served as coordinating boundary objects. However, these administrative practices, while significant, are not the main focus of this chapter. This chapter instead focuses on why instructors changed their teaching practices so that they coordinated—and at times did not coordinate—with the new enterprise signified by IWWE.31

31 Although, at moments, interviews with the three instructors who piloted IWWE offer insight into the relation between teaching practices in IWWE and the broader curriculum discussed in the last chapter, I have decided to focus on the relation between teaching practices and the enterprise of IWWE in order to narrow the scope of this chapter to a more well-defined and simplified set of relationships. To have addressed the relations among teaching
Throughout this chapter, I continue my argument that teaching practices change when instructors find new practices to be meaningful. I pay special attention throughout this chapter to instructor-participants’ accounts of their motivations, purposes, and reasons for teaching writing, for teaching IWWE, and for engaging in specific practices, such as using particular writing assignments. While each instructor had different reasons for changing teaching practices so that they accorded with the enterprise of IWWE, most participants mentioned that IWWE was invented as a response both to increases in the international student population at GECU and to the treatment of international students by faculty across campus—treatment which participants identified as a problem. The teaching practices that arose with IWWE, then, might be understood as being meaningful to participants in part because they saw them as a way to change the university, specifically how the university treated its multilingual international students. In this way, IWWE can be understood as a form of “institutional critique” (Porter et al.) and an effort to transform “language policy” (Tardy) in both the Writing Program and the university. Yet even as participants identified institutional change as a reason for piloting IWWE, instructors also gave significantly differing accounts of their own motivations and purposes for piloting it and for engaging in the specific teaching practices it engendered. These differences in participants’ motivations and purposes suggests that the meaning of new teaching practices is not monolithic, but plural, fluid, and influenced by biography, identifications, and extracurricular commitments. Despite IWWE’s plurality and fluidity of meaning, participants sometimes couched their practices, IWWE as an enterprise, and the broader “official,” reified curriculum would have added more variables that would have had have been kept in play, but would not have changed this chapter’s analysis or conclusions substantially. For instance, this chapter finds that teachers brokered—or moved between and coordinated—two types of communities of practice: the administrative communities that they formed as they invented, discussed, and compared experiences in IWWE; and the communities that each instructor formed with her or his students. I do not anticipate that this finding would not have been changed by a consideration of the relation between teaching practices in IWWE and the GECU FYW Program’s enterprise. A consideration of these latter factors would likely have shown that the teachers in this study also moved among other communities in the writing program, communities in addition to the one focused on IWWE and to the ones they formed with students. In other words, we might have seen that brokering was multilayered: brokering was occurring between more than just two communities.
descriptions of the meaning of teaching practices in a shared discourse stemming from the translingual movement in composition studies. Finally, instructors’ accounts of their experiences with teaching IWWE suggest a close relation between the meaning of teaching practices and the communities that instructors form with their students. That is, the meaning of teaching practices is constructed throughout teachers’ and students’ mutual engagement in the writing classroom. In this way, students too shape the meaning that teachers’ ascribe to their teaching practices.

Throughout this chapter I present and analyze data that illustrate the themes I have just identified—themes all related to the interaction between curriculum change and the meaning of teaching practices—but first, I situate IWWE and increases in international students at GECU within the context of internationalization, a broader transformation in colleges and universities in the U.S. Situating this chapter’s case study in this way offers a chance to reflect on the linkages between macro institutional transformations and micro teaching practices. This chapter ends by discussing reasons for the dissolution of IWWE and making recommendations for the GECU Writing Program about how it might draw on IWWE to improve its curriculum. While there was no single reason why the course ceased to be taught, the practice of maintaining a special section of FYW devoted to IWWE seemed to lose some of its meaning for participants, and administrative practices that might have aligned teaching practices were either too “weak” or simply were reoriented toward new goals—the Multilingual Writers’ Subcommittee, which had been the administrative structure that aligned the sections of IWWE, lacked, at one point, the organizing force of administrative power and, later, moved on to address new and different concerns.

Context of Curricular Innovation: Internationalization
The Chronicle of Higher Education recently reported that enrollment of international students in U.S. colleges and universities increased by 73 percent between the 2004-2005 and 2014-2015 academic years (Fischer). Chronicle also reported that 10 percent of colleges and universities in the U.S. accounted for the majority of increased enrollments (70 percent) of international students (Fischer). GECU was part of this 10 percent. In this chapter I understand these increased enrollments as contributing centrally to the internationalization of higher education and, more specifically, the internationalization of GECU. However, in composition, internationalization is a somewhat contested term and concept. Researchers use the term to explain a broad range of activities and trends in composition research and higher education in general. The term signifies not only increased international-student enrollments, but the growth of study abroad programs, critical perspectives on English monolingualism, and international perspectives on teaching and research on writing. Not only does “internationalization” name many different aspects of education and research, but its usefulness for guiding teaching and curriculum development has been contested. For example, Terry Myers Zawacki and Anna Sophia Habib have noted that “internationalization” tends to elide the fact that students from the same country, as well as students from different countries, can have significantly different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, making generalizations about “international students” and their writing difficult or impossible (651). For all these reasons, the term “internationalization” needs some explanation.

Composition and communication scholars have been interested in internationalization since at least the late 1980s. Early studies, in business communication, focused on developing methods for teaching students to recognize and to negotiate culture-specific rhetorical and communicative preferences categorized by nationality (e.g. Varner). In the early 1990s, an
interest in “internationalizing” writing and communication courses and curricula expanded more broadly across composition and communication (Kehrer, Hunter, and McGlynn; Hovanec; Hudson; Sturges). For example, Grace Kehrer, Janice Hunter, and Hud McGlynn argue that college composition courses could productively internationalize by incorporating non-American films and literature into first-year composition courses, the intention being that such films and literature would provide an international perspective and teach students about “non-American” cultures. Although mainstream composition journals such as CCC have shown an interest in “internationalization” (e.g. Bazerman; Zawacki and Habib), internationalization as framework for teaching and research has been more prevalent in business and technical communications research (e.g., Andrews; Lin; Smith).

An important moment in the internationalization of mainstream composition scholarship occurred with the publication of Bruce Horner and John Trimbur’s 2002 article “English Only and U.S. College Composition.” Horner and Trimbur conclude their critique of “a tacit language policy of unidirectional monolingualism” (585) in composition research and teaching by arguing that composition should adopt “an internationalist perspective capable of understanding the study and teaching of written English in relation to other languages and to the dynamics of globalization” (624). This argument has strongly influenced subsequent research that takes an international perspective has been framed (see also Hesford; Hesford and Schell; Hesford, Singleton, and García; Schell). Most importantly, this argument positions an internationalist\(^\text{32}\) perspective as a challenge to the assumption that composition courses should be teaching (only) English, or (only) a privileged variety of English, writing. Furthermore, Horner and Trimbur argue for a critical perspective that locates the teaching and research of writing within the

\(^{32}\) That Horner and Trimbur write “internationalist” rather than “international” signals their Marxist approach to understanding how composition should move beyond a narrowly U.S. national purview.
economic and political forces of globalization. We can see this call—to move beyond a tacit policy of English monolingualism and to research and theorize the relation between globalization and writing instruction in English—being taken up, for example, in articles included in the collection *Cross-Language Relations in Composition* (Matsuda, Lu, and Horner). There, composition scholars have attended to multilingual and translingual writing instruction inside the U.S., outside the U.S., and across national borders.

This discussion suggests that “Internationalization” has been bound up with multiple trends in composition teaching and research: increased attention (1) to linguistic and cultural difference, (2) to how languages and cultures transform as they come into contact with one another, (3) to how the contact of cultures and languages is tied up with economy and politics, and (4) to how the discipline of composition in the U.S. relates to, and might learn from, cognate disciplines in countries other than the U.S. (Bazerman; Donahue). These trends in composition should be kept in mind throughout the following case study. Keeping them in mind offers a way to explain and to contextualize IWWE. Specifically, this course, when contrasted with other FYC courses at GECU, exhibited features of the “internationalization of composition,” as both a discipline and area of teaching and learning. The course was designed (in various ways by each instructor who taught it) to highlight (with varying degrees of intensity) the intersections of language, culture, identity, power, and writing, although not always nationality. Furthermore, the writing instructors designed the course to bring in multilingual and international perspectives on English-language writing.

While I want to highlight these aspects of the internationalization of composition and of FYC at GECU, I am also concerned with what might be termed “institutional internationalization”: how institutions of higher education themselves have come to be
“international.” This aspect of internationalization has been discussed by Christiane Donahue, who describes the discourse of internationalization in higher education as signaling increased enrollment among international students, increases in participation among U.S. domestic students in study abroad programs and international internships, and the incorporation of international perspectives into pedagogy and curricula (215). These are the trends in higher education that I intend to name here in reference to institutional changes occurring at GECU and affecting its WP.  

As I have already mentioned, GECU increased its international student enrollment from approximately 5 to 18 percent from 2004-05 to 2012-13. Within GECU’s WP this increased enrollment was felt strongly enough that specific language came into use among some of its members who have sustained an interest in multilingual writers at the university: it is not

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33 I have settled on using the term “internationalization” mostly out of convenience: it seems to be the term used most frequently in composition literature to name increases in international students on campus, the feature of internationalization that was most relevant to the WP at GECU. Other possible terms that could be used are “transnational” and “transnationalism” or “global” and “globalization.” Each of these pairs of terms could be useful for highlighting different aspects of social forces, above or between nation states, that affected GECU. In a case study of student writers whose first languages were Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish, Susan Jarratt, Elizabeth Losh, and David Puente observe argue that “‘transnational’ evokes movement across boundaries and the sense of incompleteness, of tension, of the imbalance of power entailed in such movements” (39). Furthermore, they write that “unlike ‘globalization,’ transnationalism bespeaks the persistence of nation forms and influences, and, implicitly, of their distinct languages” (39). Jarratt, Losh, and Puente’s observations suggest that “transnational” could be applied accurately to changes afoot at GECU. It is not uncommon to see, within a single first-year writing course at GECU, students identifying themselves (and being identified by others) by nationality and moving among languages understood to be distinctly rooted in nationality. “Transnationalism” might be used to describe such movements. However, my personal sense, as a writing teacher at GECU who has worked with dozens of students in the U.S. on student visas, is that none of these terms (“international,” “transnational,” and “global”) accurately describes every interaction within a classroom, or every students’ relation to other students, to the university, and to the U.S. and other nations. Sometimes students occupy explicitly national identities—explicitly labelling and understanding themselves, for example, as Brazilian, Chinese, or Bolivian—and one gets the sense that the term “international” applies here: nationality comes to the fore and national identity is treated as distinct and complete. However, other students are self-consciously aware of their identities as being between nations in a manner that invokes “transnationalism—for example, a student who mentions that his father is ethnically Indonesian but who has grown up in Singapore, Taiwan, China, Malaysia, and the U.S. Such as student identifies himself as ethnically Indonesian, but his relation to a national identity is more complex than simple, unqualified identification. And yet, for some students I have known, nations and nationality do not account for much in their own lives, and “globalization” seems like a fitting word. They have always moved among nations but in ways that makes it possible to treat them as so many places where diverse cultures and languages can be enjoyed and intellectually examined but not exactly lived or inhabited. All of this is to say that, while I am settling on “internationalization” to describe enrollments among students in the U.S. on student visas, other terms could be just as accurate, depending on the precise situation being considered, and that all three terms could be usefully applied at different times to GECU.
uncommon to hear writing program administrators and teachers talking about “the bubble,” a phrase used to refer a cohort of students who arrived when international-student enrollment increased at a dramatic rate. While it is difficult to locate the precise moment when “the bubble” occurred, it seems to have happened sometime over the span of four academic years that saw rapid increases in international enrollment, 2008-09 to 2011-12, after which international student enrollments began to level off around 17 to 18 percent of total undergraduate students.

These increased enrollments were part of an upper administrative strategy, evidence of which can be found in GECU’s marketing and branding discourse. On its website, the university’s Marketing and Communications department advises university representatives, when writing and speaking on behalf of the university, to follow guidelines for crafting “focused messages” that use a prepared “language to describe [university] initiatives.” These guidelines advise representatives to highlight “Our Global Impact” and go on to give statistics, to be used by representatives, that show that the university partners with businesses, research organizations, and universities in over 100 countries and enrolls students from nearly 150 countries. Similarly, in reports and speeches to the university, GECU’s president also often uses a “global” rhetoric for marketing and leadership purposes. For instance, in a letter that introduces a report titled “2015 Institutional Accomplishments,” the president writes that the university is “expanding our global reach” and will “continue to be the world leader in global experiential learning.” The university also displays around its central campus banners blazoned with “global,” among other words such as “empower” and “urban.”

The increase in the percentage of total undergraduates at GECU who are in the U.S. on student visas and the marketing discourse that I have mentioned point toward the internationalization of the university. This internationalization matters to the discussion that
follows because it was a major feature of the context in which IWWE was created. Indeed, IWWE was created in large part as a response to conditions that emerged due to the university’s strategy of increasing enrollments among international students. This response, however, could have been different—the writing program could have not experimented with creating a course focused on cross-cultural and cross-language writing (for example, it could have merely increased traditional sections of writing courses for “multilingual writers,” the term used in the program, or it could have ignored international students and have insisted on a monolingual model of writing instruction). Recognizing that IWWE was not a “natural” outgrowth of the university’s internationalization and that IWWE might not have emerged if the university had not internationalized provides the grounds for asking why and how members of the writing program created and piloted this specific curricular innovation. The case study of IWWE suggests that the writing program experimented with internationalizing its curriculum due to a complex interaction among various factors:

- Local culture within the writing program
- Individual and communal knowledge of specific teachers and administrators—this knowledge often overlapped with knowledge-trends in composition
- Material resources available to the writing program (resources which promoted, for instance, course releases for administrators and professional development workshops)
- And GECU’s strategy of enrolling international students (a strategy which in turn should be contextualized within a broader movement among institutions of higher education in the U.S.)
I mention these factors together to highlight, first, that the internationalization of writing curricula should be located within institutional contexts and, second, that the internationalization of an institution (or of higher education more generally) can affect curriculum change in writing programs but does not determine it. The specific people and concrete conditions in a writing program matter tremendously. In some ways this observation repeats what we already know—local context matters—but what I hope to emphasize are the mechanisms by which broader institutional and social changes (e.g. internationalization) are translated into, practiced at, and emerge from the micro level of everyday interactions. In other words, it is not enough to say that composition curricula in the U.S. are internationalizing or globalizing because disciplinary journals say so, or because colleges and universities market themselves as global or international, or because international student enrollments are increasing. Instead, I am urging attention to what internationalization—or any other institutional or disciplinary trend—looks like “on the ground.”

**Administrative Practices and IWWE: Realigning Teaching Practices Toward a Translingual Approach**

Multiple administrative practices contributed to the creation of IWWE. As I argued last chapter, administrative practices can be enacted by administrators, but they can also be enacted by teachers as they perform, for example, committee work or share perspectives about teaching writing. Administrative practices all have in common that they align or coordinate a constellation of communities of practice, such as the communities that teachers and students make together over the course of a semester. Prior to the piloting of IWWE, as it was first being imagined and invented, significant administrative practices occurred in three locations in GECU’s Writing Program: (1) an annual series of workshops and lectures hosted by the program, which were
publicized as a “Symposium for Teachers of International/Second Language Writers” (email); (2) meetings that instructor Nathan organized as he worked on a dissertation in education—the meetings were what Nathan called “teaching inquiry networks” and George called “inquiry groups” and were part of the Writing Program’s professional-development workshops called “Teaching Networks” (these were discussed briefly in the last chapter); and (3) the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee. Like the administrative practices examined last chapter, these administrative practices tended to center around the negotiation of perspectives about the enterprise of teaching writing, in this case, specifically teaching writing to multilingual international students. Slightly different were the lectures and workshops that were part of symposium. The symposium offered new ideas and discourses for thinking about, speaking about, and teaching writing to multilingual students. The new ideas and discourses shaped writing instruction but without always requiring the kinds of negotiation of perspectives that has been common in committee work in the GECU Writing Program.

In discussing these administrative practices, this section goes over some of the same ground covered in the last chapter. However, it is necessary to address these administrative practices in order to better understand how they interacted with and shaped teaching practices in IWWE. As a whole, the administrative practices that aligned sections of IWWE entailed changing how writing teachers, the writing program, and (as some participants hoped) possibly faculty in other departments at GECU treated linguistic difference. Participants understood this change to be treating linguistic difference as a “resource” rather than as an impediment to be overcome or problem to be solved. Participants’ understanding of the project of IWWE implicitly and explicitly borrowed from a translingual approach to writing instruction (see especially Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur), which was gaining momentum in composition
during the early stages of IWWE’s development. Although translingualism affected discussion about IWWE, it was not the only disciplinary influence—for example, Hugh referred to a study written by Paul Kei Matsuda and Tony Silva to account for his own teaching practices in IWWE and for the shared motivations for piloting IWWE—but translingualism does offer a useful shorthand for understanding the shared goals of IWWE. It captures well the theory underlying the course and the activist spirit with which some participants took it on.

“Symposium for Teachers of International/Second Language Writers”

The first of the three administrative practices discussed here, the “Symposium for Teachers of International/Second Language Writers,” was funded by a private donation and occurred annually. It started in the fall of 2011 and continued through the fall of 2014, when data ceased being collected for this dissertation. Every year, the symposium brought in a new speaker, or set of speakers, each of whom led workshops for writing teachers and delivered an open-admission lecture at the university on an issue related to multilingual writers. The first speaker to come to GECU for the symposium was Paul Kei Matsuda, in the fall of 2011, followed by Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu (2012), Asao Inoue and Mya Poe (2013), and Juan Guerra (2014). The first two sets of speakers—Matsuda and Horner and Lu—had the strongest influence on how research participants talked about IWWE. One participant, Hugh, an instructor who piloted IWWE, also referred Guerra’s visit, and another instructor, Anna, alluded to the visit obliquely. Hugh’s comments about and Anna’s allusions to Guerra’s visit—which I address briefly—are interesting because they demonstrate how Hugh and Anna’s understandings and beliefs about IWWE and teaching multilingual writers continued to transform because of the symposium, even after the IWWE stopped being piloted. For Hugh, the interest that he might have felt toward translingualism—an interest that Horner and Lu’s visit seemed to have sparked in multiple
research participants—had begun to wane in part because of a workshop Guerra led, which had been geared toward instilling “skepticism” (a word Guerra used many times during his visit) toward translingualism.

Soon after Matsuda visited GECU’s Writing Program in September of 2011, a group of instructors meet to discuss issues and questions raised during Matsuda’s workshops, lectures, and conversations with members of the Writing Program. This first meeting was informal, but as Hugh remembered, it was one of the first meetings where instructors and administrators discussed integration across linguistic difference. Matsuda seemed to have initiated a discussion within the Writing Program about eliminating 1102, “College Writing—Speakers of Other Languages,” as the course was then titled, and instead offering only 1111, “College Writing.” 1111 would then enroll all students, regardless of linguistic background. About the meeting that followed Matsuda’s visit, Hugh said:

I think part of the whole impetus for that meeting, that group, the committee was coming out of that discussion because he [Matsuda] said things, you know, like the whole idea of not separating, not segregating, and all those kinds of things are things that we have to think about now that we have this larger international student population.

Similarly, Louis also suggested that Matsuda’s visit influenced IWWE: “We had Paul Matsuda that fall 2011 and I think that continued us thinking about these kinds of issues [about how the university was responding to increases in multilingual international students] but not in any kind of formal way.” Only Louis and Hugh—and no other participants—mentioned Matsuda’s visit as having had an influence on IWWE. But as Hugh noted, Matsuda bought up the idea of integrating writing courses, an idea that was central to IWWE.
Perhaps Matsuda was mentioned by only two participants because his visit came to be overshadowed by Horner and Lu’s. Horner and Lu visited in the fall of 2012. While Hugh and Louis mentioned Matsuda’s visit, three research participants (Louis, Anna, and Nathan) explicitly talked about Horner and Lu and about the translingual ideas that they espoused. Immediately after Louis mentioned that Matsuda had visited in the fall of 2011, he said:

Then, the next fall, we had Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu, and I think they were really provocative. I think they really made us sort of like confront maybe what it is we’re doing, and how we’re conceiving of who multilingual writers are, and what their roles [are] in our class. And is our class—does First-Year Writing, “College Writing” at the time—does it really come from a monolingual perspective? And if it does what does it mean? And are we being inclusive? Are we, we have—we speak diversity in terms of program goals, but do we enact that in terms of our practices, whether that’s curriculum or other kinds of things?

Growing out of that, the […] symposium in 2012, the subcommittee on multilingual writers got together.

Significantly, Louis also explicitly links Horner and Lu’s visit to the formation of the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee, where IWWE was invented. Here Louis misremembers, and this is significant. The subcommittee had, in fact, started to meet during the spring of 2012, months before Horner and Lu visited. IWWE had already started enrolling students when Horner and Lu came. Contra Louis’s claim, the subcommittee could not have “grown out of” discussions initiated by them.

One way to read Louis’ misremembering is to see it as evidence that Horner and Lu were in part responsible for bringing into the Writing Program an influential approach to teaching
writing to multilingual students. Excerpts from interviews with other participants supports this interpretation. For example, when Anna narrated how IWWE began, the second influence that she identified was the visit by Horner and Lu (the first influence was her desire to work against “racist” “cultural customs” in other departments in the university—more on this in a moment):

Bruce Horner and Min Zhan Lu came to give their presentation […] I thought it was like the beginning of the baby Jesus coming back because it was to me—they validated all of my own politics as involved in integration, and it validated my pedagogy, and it validated some of the customs that I thought within the university—I was very uncomfortable with some of the ways that international students were treated—and I felt here are people who are actually trained in ESOL, which I wasn’t, who are discussing some of the things that I think are important to restructure a program, or to move forward in a program and make social change. (my emphasis)

Throughout the interview Anna ended up using the word “validation” enough times for her to say something about it—“please tell me not to use the word validation again”—and she uses the word here to link Horner and Lu’s visit to the integrationist approach to teaching multilingual writers that she had just begun to develop with IWWE. When Horner and Lu discussed “resisting monolingualism” (the title of a lecture they gave) and adopting a translingual approach, Anna had already co-invented and begun piloting IWWE. Horner and Lu “validated” IWWE’s integrationist approach to multilingual writers. Furthermore, Anna understood Horner and Lu to have encouraged Anna’s approach “to restructure a program,” “to move forward in a program,” and “to make social change.” Horner and Lu seemed to have, at least, authorized or legitimated Anna’s own attempts to change not only her pedagogy but also the Writing Program in an effort
to bring about “social change.” Anna was influenced enough by the translingual ideas that Horner and Lu discussed at GECU that, when she taught IWWE, she assigned students to read Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur’s *College English* editorial, but on her syllabus she only listed Horner and Lu as authors of the article. This mistake in attributing authorship suggests that Anna strongly associated translingualism with Horner and Lu’s visit.

Nathan was the third research participant to discuss Horner and Lu’s visit and the influence of the symposium on IWWE. During my first interview with Nathan, I asked him why IWWE included “World Englishes” in the title when it seemed that “translingual” or “translanguaging” might have worked just as well, especially since, in the section of IWWE that Nathan was teaching when I interviewed him, there were more students who were bringing non-English linguistic resources than students who were bringing World Englishes *per se*. Nathan replied by referring to Horner and Lu’s visit:

[…] so the year that we were talking about it [the course] in meetings as Multilingual Writers Committee, we had just been visited by Horner and Lu, and they were talking about translingualism. They were promoting that view of the multilingual writers, that line, “language is a resource” and blah, blah, blah. So translingualism could have been a term that we taught and used, and to be honest with you, I don’t know how we arrived at “World Englishes.” It wasn’t something that I promoted or put forward as the term for the course.

This excerpt suggests two themes that I have been exploring here: first, Nathan refers explicitly to Horner and Lu’s visit to explain his approach to teaching IWWE, and second, like Louis, Nathan seems to be mistakenly identifying Horner and Lu’s visit as having a formative influence on IWWE. He seems to be saying that when the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee planned
IWWE, the Writing Program “had just been visited by Horner and Lu,” who he understood to have been promoting translingualism. Again, IWWE was planned during the Spring-2012 semester, and Horner and Lu did not visit until September 2012.

As these three excerpts from interviews with Louis, Anna, and Nathan suggest, Horner and Lu’s visit, as part of the “Symposium for Teachers of International/Second Language Writers,” affected how they explained and legitimized IWWE and how they (mis)remembered its invention and piloting. Rather than seeing these instances of faulty memories as a problem, I understand them as suggesting the influence that Horner and Lu’s visit and translingualism has had on the way that members of the writing program understand the meaning of their practices, especially practices associated with IWWE. We might see the symposium as offering or shaping the discourse that participants used to explain what they had been doing.

Additionally, differences in participants’ accounts and misremembrances suggest that memory plays a role in curriculum: that curriculum is in part what administrators and teachers remember and that it forms through memory. This feature of curriculum resembles composition scholars’ observations about the role that memory plays in students’ experiences with undergraduate writing courses. Susan C. Jarratt, Kathrine Mack, Alexandra Sartor, and Shevaun E. Watson write, “Regardless of sound curricular plans and expert teaching, the sense made of writing by any one student … takes shape in pedagogical memory” (48). For Jarratt and coauthors, pedagogical memory recognizes that memory is “a narrative constantly under construction within changing contexts” and that “the emotional charge around an event profoundly shapes (or impedes) its reconstruction” (49). Furthermore, pedagogical memory recognizes that memory is not only constructed by individuals, but “from broadly shared, collective experience” (49-50). Jarratt and coauthor’s approach to pedagogical memory can help
us to attend to the role that memory plays in the production of curriculum. Understood as taking shape through memory, curriculum then might be seen as a narrative affected by the context of its retelling, emotions surrounding significant curricular events, and collective experiences.

When participants were asked to narrate the origins of IWWE, they told narratives that were affected by the rhetorical situation of the interview, the emotions that attended events in the writing program (in particular Horner and Lu’s visit), and collective experiences (again, Horner and Lu’s visit). The curriculum of IWWE, or what participants’ understood the curriculum to be, took shape in memory, understood as a contextually dependent construction.

Despite Horner and Lu’s influence and the influence of translingualism as a movement in composition, there were some indications that translingualism—or a sense of enthusiasm for the novelty of the term and the approach it signified—was beginning to wane when I interviewed some research participants in the fall of 2014. What this waning of interest suggests is the fluid nature of curriculum—that curriculum shifts as participants interests and understandings change. During the fall-2014 semester, the symposium had just invited Juan Guerra to speak, and as I noted, he was encouraging instructors at GECU to take a critical stance toward translingualism and to see it as one language ideology among others. When Anna mentioned Horner and Lu’s visit, she also alluded to “critique” of their approach: “I know there’s been a lot of, not criticism, but critique of Horner and Lu since [they visited] […] and I’ve read some of that and some of that I think is justified.” Similarly, Hugh talked about translingualism in a way that suggested he was becoming disaffected with the term in part as a result of Guerra’s visit:

Yeah, after his talk, I’m suspicious of translingualism and feel like it’s kind of, it’s an interesting idea in a way, but it’s also kind of, it’s kind of a rebranding of
stuff that I feel like, a lot of which, from time—I’m not saying I do this all the
time—but from time to time I did that kind of stuff before, you know.

These latter two excerpts, from interviews with Anna and Hugh, suggest that the symposium has continued to shape the evolving meanings that instructors in GECU’s Writing Program attribute to their teaching practices, including their past practices in IWWE.

The symposium can be understood as an administrative practice that aligned or coordinated communities of practice within the Writing Program. As an administrative practice, the symposium contributed to shaping the meaning of teaching practices, especially by offering a discourse through which research participants explained what they had been doing. A trajectory for participants’ understandings of IWWE can be traced: Matsuda introduced, as some participants noted, the idea that the Writing Program could work to integrate multilingual international students, an idea that seemed, in part, to have motivated the creation of IWWE; Horner and Lu offered a “provocative” discourse that came to be central to how some participants’ found meaning in their practices in IWWE; and Guerra encouraged participants to adopt a “skeptical” or critical attitude toward translingualism. Mapping out this trajectory gives a sense of the fluid meaning that IWWE and associated practices has had for participants. It also

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34 It might help to keep in mind that I am not conceptualizing alignment as something that any single person or administrator does; the capacity to produce alignment does not reside in one person or organization or group. The people who align their energies and activities with a broader enterprise have to participate in that alignment in some way, even if that participation takes the impoverished form of compliance or submission. In the case of the symposium, we can see that administrators helped to create the symposium, which directed attention and forwarded certain ideas, but ultimately, for alignment to occur, teachers had to participate in translating ideas from the symposium into teaching practices. To understand how alignment functions, it might help to remove the notion of intentionality: in other words, alignment can occur even if no one person, or group of people, intends to coordinate energies and activities toward a predetermined enterprise. We might instead see alignment and the enterprise toward which an alignment leans as emergent. We can still identify pivotal actions and central objects that contour an alignment, but alignment is not just something that comes into being through administrative command. An event, action, or thing can contribute to the alignment of practices with no one’s intending it to do so. In the case of the symposium, speakers were invited to be provocative, and these provocations aligned practices, however, not in a manner necessarily anticipated by administrators. Yet, administrators and others acting in an type of administrative role took the action to bring in speakers through the symposium. This is why I consider it to be an administrative practice that aligned practices, even if it did so at a remove.
indicates the curricular consequences of bringing guest speakers into a program. Even though inviting guest speakers to the Writing Program was not curricular work in a narrow sense—inviting speakers did not entail writing up new learning goals and new course descriptions, nor did it include changing course requirements for undergraduates or changing required syllabi, textbooks, and assignments—it did produce changes in teaching practices and, hence, it might be expected, in students’ “experienced curricula,” to borrow a phrase from Kathleen Blake Yancey.

“Inquiry Groups”

A second administrative practice involved in the piloting of IWWE was initiated by an instructor, Nathan. Just as IWWE was being invented, Nathan had been conducting research for his dissertation. He conducted part of his research on what he termed “teaching-inquiry networks.” These were a special type of group in the Writing Program’s “Teaching Network.” George called it an “inquiry group.” Both Nathan and George identified the group led by Nathan as providing some of the impetus for IWWE. I was unable to collect much data on these “inquiry-teaching networks” or “inquiry groups,” and I mention them here because a brief discussion of them can enrich our understanding of the multiple administrative practices that influenced the piloting of IWWE. This discussion also suggests that teachers’ on-going professional development and education can have curricular effects.

When I asked George to narrate a story of how IWWE began, he replied that “the idea for it emerged out of the inquiry group that [Nathan] created around […] international students and their writing.” George said:

One of the ideas that emerged out of that inquiry group, as I remember it, was this notion for a particular course, where one would spend time in class devoted to studying language, language difference—that students brought into the class as
well there would be readings—you know, but that language and language
difference would be an explicit object of study within the class.

No other participant observed that the “inquiry group” was responsible for generating the idea
for a course that would make language and difference “an explicit object of study.” However,
Nathan did note that IWWE grew out of his own interest in second-language writing and
assessment, a topic on which, he said, his “teaching-inquiry network” focused.

Nathan claimed a few times, during our first interview, that some aspects of his
involvement in IWWE were “accidental.” For Nathan, it was an “accident of time” that he was
engaged in an “teaching-inquiry network” on second-language writing and assessment at the
same time that enrollment among international students was increasing. According to Nathan, it
was also an “historical accident” that, because he had once been what he called the “ESL
Coordinator” for the writing program years before I interviewed him, he had become interested
in both assessment and second-language writing: as part of his work as ESL Coordinator, a
position that he occupied sometime before 2007, and perhaps many years before 2007, Nathan
was responsible for overseeing the placement process for FYW, through which students were
sorted into College Writing and College Writing—Speakers of Other Languages; Nathan saw his
work on placement as part of his interest in assessing multilingual writing. For Nathan, these
coincidences or accidents help to explain why he became involved in IWWE, which he described
as “an outgrowth of […]a teaching network that focused on multilingual writers and the
question of assessment […] [and the] subcommittee about multilingual writers.”

Again, it’s not clear exactly what this teaching-inquiry network was or did, other than
that it was one among many professional development activities going on in the program and
that Nathan and George cited it as influential in the invention of IWWE. One reason that I
mention this teaching-inquiry network is to highlight that, like the administrative practices discussed last chapter, those that coordinated IWWE were “ground up.” In large part, these administrative practices started with the teachers themselves. Also of significance is that the special teaching network that Nathan led became part of his own doctoral studies. This suggests that research into the relation between instructors’ continuing education and curricular innovation might be a fruitful area of inquiry. Nathan and George’s brief accounts of Nathan’s teaching-inquiry network suggest that continuing education and professional development can perhaps give rise to curricular innovation and change, especially within contexts where instructors’ expertise is valued, as it was in the Writing Program at GECU.

“Multilingual Writers Subcommittee”

The Multilingual Writers Subcommittee first met in January 2012. It was a subcommittee of the Writing Program Committee and played a curricular role similar to other committees in the writing program. It was also run in a similar way. The committee offered a chance for instructors and administrators to negotiate perspectives about teaching multilingual writers. Additionally, like the assessment committee and the task force discussed last chapter, this subcommittee helped to realign communities of practice within the Writing Program. This time, however, the realignment was not program-wide. This realignment affected only the communities that Anna, Hugh, and Nathan formed with their students. In the Spring-2012 semester, after January, the subcommittee met twice more, and by February its members were writing back and forth to one another about a course that they were tentatively calling “Global First-Year Writing” (email). According to Anna, after the Spring-2012 semester, instructors who piloted the course continued to communicate via email throughout the summer, in order to plan what come to be named IWWE. During the Fall-2012 semester, the first semester that IWWE
was piloted, Anna, Hugh, and Nathan informally met to share their experiences with teaching IWWE. It was not clear if these latter meetings were officially conducted under the auspices of the subcommittee any longer, but I am grouping these latter meetings under the work of this subcommittee because they grew out of the subcommittee and involved its members. From Spring-2012 through Fall-2012, then, the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee can be said to have coordinated IWWE. However, by the Spring-2013 semester, the subcommittee had transformed into a research group, which had begun a project funded by, according to Louis, the Office of the Provost and approved by GECU’s Internal Review Board. By the end of that semester, the group had created and piloted a survey of multilingual writers at the university.

While the committees discussed in the last chapter operated at a general, programmatic level, the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee, at least when it focused on IWWE, was closer to the classroom. Although they taught IWWE differently, Anna, Hugh, and Nathan used the subcommittee to co-design, to an extent, a version of FYW and to test that design. In this way, the subcommittee differed from other committees discussed so far. These other committees did not produce course designs in quite the same way; they also did not ask their members to compare their experiences with teaching a co-designed course. However, even though Anna, Hugh, and Nathan planned IWWE together, they still wrote their own syllabi, created their own course schedules, selected their own course readings, and wrote or selected their own writing assignments. So when I say that they “co-designed” IWWE, I’m using the word “design” a little loosely. But I mean to represent IWWE’s piloting as collaborative. It seemed to be in the subcommittee that the course took shape and that the course was sustained. Not only was the subcommittee mostly responsible for creating IWWE, but it was also an administrative structure that enabled the course to continue. I would argue that IWWE ceased to be piloted in part
because the subcommittee stopped addressing IWWE—and other directly curricular and pedagogical matters related to teaching multilingual writers—and became a research group.

Both Anna and Nathan said that once IWWE started to be piloted during the Fall-2012 semester, they and Hugh met to compare their experiences teaching the course. Nathan said that the three instructors met twice and that during the second meeting, he told Anna and Hugh that his own course had changed significantly from the original design. He said, “by the second meeting, I was saying, you know, ‘I don’t have a lot to contribute to this group because my guys are doing something else and aren’t really doing World Englishes as we imagined it […] over the summer.’” Anna mentioned only one meeting during the Fall-2012 semester. About that meeting she said that she remembered that the three instructors discussed how students were placed into their sections of IWWE. According to Anna, during the first semester of piloting, students had not deliberately elected to take IWWE; they had been placed into the special section of FYW without knowing it or choosing it before class started. Anna remembered talking about such matters of placement with Hugh and Nathan during the Fall-2012 semester.

As I mentioned, it was not entirely clear if the meetings that occurred during the Fall-2012 semester were part of the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee. They might not have been. A comment by Hugh suggests that he, Anna, and Nathan had only every met informally to discuss their experiences with IWWE:

I don’t recall that I ever reported back to that committee [the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee] […]. It became kind of like, we didn’t really have any kind of formal, you know, thing where we came to the committee and talked about what happened, or anything like that. It just kind of slipped through the cracks. That’s my recollection anyway.
This excerpt suggests that Anna, Hugh, and Nathan never reported back to any officially organized committee once they started piloting IWWE. While they do seem to have met to share their experiences, no formal, institutionally recognized mechanism that coordinated the course was in place.

Both Hugh and Louis noted that the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee transformed into a research group. Hugh said that the subcommittee

[...] didn’t have much effect [...] once I got into teaching the pilot classes because we [in the subcommittee] were talking about something else, and we were trying to identify who are multilingual writers [...] We were kind of like just looking at the issue of getting an idea of what are the experiences of multilingual writers.

Similarly, describing the transformation that the subcommittee underwent, Louis said that, initially, the subcommittee was concerned with testing a first-year course that integrated students from different linguistic backgrounds, but that soon the focused changed: “But when we started to think about that we realized, ‘You know we don’t really know anything about multilingual writers here at [GECU].’” In Louis’ account, the subcommittee then became a research group.

Although participants’ accounts of the subcommittee’s activities are a little fragmented, it is clear that the subcommittee was where IWWE was first invented and helped to coordinate teaching practices. Louis and Hugh’s observations, about how the subcommittee transformed into a research group, suggest that this transformation removed an administrative structure that might have sustained coordinated activity in IWWE. Once the subcommittee moved on to do research—to collect data on multilingual writers and their experiences at GECU—it ceased to coordinate IWWE.
Summary and Discussion: Administrative Practices and IWWE

IWWE seemed to be affected by three major administrative practices: inviting experts to give lectures and host workshops, drawing on instructors’ on-going professional development activities, and negotiating perspectives in committee. Each of these administrative practices instigated curricular change and coordinated teaching practices in IWWE. There were some indications that one reason that IWWE eventually ceased to be piloted and did not result in broader change was because the coordinating administrative practices on which IWWE depended ceased (IWWE ended for other reasons too; these are addressed below). When the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee transformed into a research group, the administrative structure that had coordinated IWWE was removed. It might be notable that the subcommittee’s transformation into a research group was aided, or catalyzed, by funds made available by the Office of the Provost, as Louis reported. While members of the subcommittee sought out these funds to pursue a research project in which they were already interested, it might be useful to think about these funds as having curricular consequences with regard to IWWE. The funds and the Office of the Provost, in a sense, contributed to realigning the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee itself, such that the administrative practices that sustained the coordinated piloting of IWWE were disrupted. In other words, these funds helped to redirect the subcommittee’s energies toward a new enterprise, in which, presumably, the Provost’s Office had an interest: collecting data on multilingual students at GECU. I do not want to make too much of this observation here—only one research participant, Louis, talked about the funds—but that these funds played a role suggests that—and this might be obvious—a factor in curricular innovation and change is funding. That funding plays a role in innovation and change is also suggested by the fact that the Symposium for Teachers of International/Second-Language Writers, which
multiple participants identified as influential on IWWE, was made possible by a private donation.

The administrative practices discussed in this section—especially the symposium and the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee—seemed to shape how participants understood IWWE: its purpose and meaning. These common understandings are addressed in the next section. Throughout the following section, readers should keep in mind that the symposium and the committee were locations where participants developed shared understandings.

**Shared Understandings of the Meaning of IWWE**

Not every participant mentioned the same reasons for becoming involved in inventing and piloting IWWE. Nor did they all agree on the purposes that this version of FYW was supposed to achieve. However, there was some shared understanding: participants agreed that IWWE was a response to increases in multilingual international students at GECU. It was a response intended both to improve how the university treated multilingual international students and to draw on these students as “resources” for learning. Some participants understood that the course was an effort to work against negative attitudes toward and ideas about international students and language difference. Specifically, one participant, Anna, labelled these attitudes as “racist,” and another, Louis, pointed out that other faculty in the university thought about language difference as a “deficit” or “lack.” Participants understood that IWWE could work against such attitudes by “mixing” (a phrase used by participants) international and U.S. students in the same writing class, rather than segregating multilingual students into separate sections of FYW. During early stages of planning for IWWE, some participants also seemed to have hoped that IWWE could produce broader programmatic change, by testing whether and how “mixing” students from different linguistic backgrounds would work in FYW classes and by developing
teaching practices for FYW that focused on teaching students intercultural writing and communication. Both administrator-participants and instructor-participants shared the understanding that IWWE was an effort to change both the Writing Program and the university, in order to improve how both treated multilingual international students.

Work on IWWE began with discussions about how international students were being treated by faculty and departments across campus. According to Anna, these discussions started in the Writing Program Committee and then carried on in the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee. Anna said that in the Writing Program Committee, “we had a lot of discussion about cultural customs in other departments and in other programs that really approached what some of us thought were racist divisions between people and treating international students differently […].” Similar attitudes toward international students and language difference were encountered by other participants as well. George mentioned that when he served on a university-wide committee on multilingual writers, he encountered “less enlightened views” about language difference. Although George did not explicitly identify these views as a motivation for IWWE, his comments about them provide insight into how participants understood the institutional conditions against which they worked. George recalled that members of this university-wide committee called for “a course in grammar” and for courses in “accent modification.” He also recalled that companies with which the university worked as part of a co-op (internship) program had been telling faculty in the university, “Don’t send me any Chinese students anymore.” About this last comment, George said, “[M]y response to this, just so we’re clear for the record, was this is just pure racism.” Another participant, Hugh, stated that IWWE was in part a response to change the university. He said that an issue that motivated IWWE was
the question of “how can we bring [multilingual international students] into the university and
even like sort of change the university in a way that kind of respects them more.”

During early meetings of the subcommittee, participants began focusing their discussions
about the treatment of international students across campus on a Faculty Senate report, issued by
a committee on enrollment and admissions. This report has drawn criticism from participants
ever since and represents the attitudes against which participants hoped to work in IWWE. In
mid-February 2012, after the second meeting of the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee, Hugh
emailed the group with a copy of the Faculty Senate report and quoted a passage from it in the
body of his email. The passage that Hugh quoted stated that “[t]he university should provide a
diagnostic screening for entering students for whom English is not a native language” and that
there were “an increasing number of cases […] where the academic rigor of the class is limited
by a subset of students who cannot participate in the expected activities, e.g., case studies and
group presentations.” In a reply to Hugh’s email that suggests how participants understood the
implications of this passage from the report, Anna wrote, “I am uncomfortable with both the
language and tone of this statement.” She highlighted the phrase “a subset of students,” stating
that that phrase “offends [her] most.” This phrase, as Anna wrote in her email, “seems to fit into
the discussion we started on tracking and separating international students out as the
administration seems to be requesting.” She concludes her email by asking, “Are there ways we
can push back against this kind of thinking?”

During interviews participants also mentioned this Faculty Senate report and described
how it and the attitudes that it represented affected IWWE. Louis pointed out that in addition to
calling for diagnostic screenings, the report called on faculty at GECU to make their courses
more academically rigorous because they were not challenging the newer kinds of students
entering GECU, students who, as the report puts it, were “better prepared for college work than earlier cohorts.” For Louis, the report, therefore, was self-contradictory: “What?! How could we both have these stronger students but you’re singling out this subgroup? And what’s your evidence for that?” Like Anna, Louis noted that the report singled out multilingual writers, except that “[t]hey didn’t call them multilingual writers: ‘Those ESL students are dragging everybody else down.’” After describing this report, Louis explained how it related to the invention of IWWE and characterized the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee’s response: “we were like, ‘Well, you know, F you. We’re gonna do away with sections for multilingual writers altogether.’” Making this point clearer, Louis said:

We started to think, “Maybe we don’t need these [special sections of FYW for multilingual writers] at all.” I mean in some ways we wanted to push back to the larger [GECU] narrative. My sense of this, the larger [GECU] narrative, was a very kind of deficit knowledge, like, “Oh these international students are coming and they lack something.”

These last few excerpts suggest that participants invented IWWE, in part, to work against the existing institutional discourse about multilingual international students. IWWE could do this by integrating students regardless of language difference and drawing on difference as a resource. Participants hoped to work against the institutional narrative that multilingual international students were different in a way that indicated a “deficit” or “lack.” Anna also explicitly stated that, in working on IWWE, she “wanted the English Department to be on the forefront of confronting” the types of attitudes represented in the Faculty Senate report.

These purposes for IWWE contributed to shaping the design of IWWE. Specifically, these purposes motivated IWWE’s integrative enrollment and its course content. Furthermore,
some participants stated that, in piloting IWWE, they were testing whether the Writing Program could do away entirely with its segregation of students into “1111—College Writing” and “1102—College Writing—Speakers of Other Languages.” Some participants understood IWWE to be a test case for this larger programmatic change. Characterizing early discussions about IWWE, Hugh said:

So we were talking about, you know, what if we had this kind of, the term was always “bubble,” at the time, of international students coming in. We had this increasing number of international students, and we were trying to figure out how—what we can do to serve that group. […]. So we were talking, at one point, I think it was [George] that was saying, “Well, you know, maybe, we should think about not even having an 1102. Maybe the best thing would be to get rid of the ESL sections and put those students into 1111.” And then, you know, not just sink-or-swim, but what we’d have to do is support the teachers in that way by training them and, you know, working with multilingual writers […].

Anna also said that George first proposed the idea of mixing students: “I remember very specifically [George] saying one day, ‘I want to mix everyone.’ You know, and I thought, ‘My god! What a good idea!’”

Sometime during or soon after the Spring-2012 semester, when these conversations were taking place, Anna wrote a course description. Anna said that “George critiqued it and he changed it a little bit.” And George said, “I helped tweak it, but I didn’t write it.” Here is the finalized course description, which appeared on the Writing Program’s website and in the university’s registration system:
These sections of College Writing, which deliberately enroll a range of language users, examine the notion that there are multiple "Englishes." Rather than uncritically accepting one standard dialect of English, the class will explore a variety of ways English is spoken and written across the world, including by the students in the class. In this way, intercultural communication will become both the means and the object of study. Language difference will be approached as an asset, rather than an impediment, to learning. The class will study a range of texts, including the essays in Rosina Lippi-Green's *English with an Accent*, films, and short stories for what they say about language difference and how they perform it. Similarly, students will compose print and multimedia writing projects--academic, expressive, and public--that simultaneously explore and enact language difference.

The course description captures well the approach to language difference that participants understood as integral to carrying out IWWE’s motivations. Especially important is the statement that “[l]anguage difference will be approached as an asset, rather than an impediment, to learning.” Likely motivated by translingualism (Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur), this statement directly confronts the approach to language difference that participants perceived as prevalent across campus, as represented, for example, in the Faculty Senate report. This course description makes clear that multilingual international students were to be understood not as “a subset of students” who were limiting “the academic rigor of the class,” but as students who enhance it. It should be kept in mind that although this course description encapsulates the motivations for IWWE that I have been discussing, Hugh and Nathan found it meaningful in varying degrees; they did not fully subscribe to ideas that it represented, as will be seen in the
next section of this chapter. Still, the course description outlines the major contours of the course and illustrates how the course responded to participants’ desire to change the Writing Program and university to better “serve,” as Hugh put, its international students.

It should be reiterated that “mixing” students was central to this course, which was premised on the idea that students’ own linguistic resources would be “an object of study.” George put it this way: “The idea was the students’ diversity itself; what they brought in would be what they put on the table for examination essentially.” For this reason, George said, “I mean if you come in there and you got a monolingual class, it’s not going to make any sense. I mean, it might make sense. It will work differently than if you don’t.” In order to bring students with various linguistic resources into the same course, George worked with an Administrative Specialist to create a registration procedure that would encourage international and U.S. students to enroll in equal proportions. Participants spent some time during interviews evaluating how successfully this procedure worked and describing its effects. George said that Anna was somewhat disappointed with it. In contrast, Anna said that she “got lucky” when she first taught IWWE because her class did end up being “50-50.” She said that, in her recollection, Hugh and Nathan did not have the intended proportions of students. Hugh said nothing about it. Nathan remarked that during the first semester when he taught IWWE, the Fall-2012 semester, he had “like one writer who spoke another language. Everybody else was just run-of-the-mill, upper-middleclass, white [GECU] student.” According to Nathan, this enrollment pattern “affected what [students] were interested in thinking about and, you know, what resources they brought to

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35 At GECU, during the summer before their first-year of courses, U.S. students tend to register for courses during the beginning or middle of summer, and international students register during the week before classes begin. George and an Administrative specialists capped enrollment for sections of IWWE at approximately half their full capacity (9 or 10 students) until the week before classes began. Then, during the week before classes the enrollment cap was lifted to full capacity (19 students). This would better ensure that sections of IWWE would not fill up with U.S. students by offering international students a chance to enroll.
the class.” In that course, Nathan said, “their response was a non-response” to course content about language and language difference. This latter comment indicates how integral having multilingual students in the course was for participants.

This discussion of shared understandings of IWWE illustrates the meanings that participants tended to hold in common. The shared meanings were generated in part during conversations among members during their work on the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee. Participants tended to understand IWWE as an effort to change the Writing Program and the university to improve the treatment of multilingual international students at GECU. By demonstrating that participants found IWWE meaningful in shared ways, I hope to suggest that shared meanings shaped and coordinated teaching practices.

That instructor-participants did share teaching practices can be seen in a brief summary of them. All instructors who piloted IWWE asked students to read and write about issues related to language difference. Nathan assigned students to read, and write an essay that engaged with, Suresh Canagarajah’s “The Place of World Englishes in Composition.” Both Anna and Hugh asked students to read excerpts from Rosina Lippi-Green’s English With an Accent. Anna asked students to write about language ideology and to write a text that imitated selections of Gloria Anzalúa’s translingual works that have been published in Ways of Reading. Hugh gave students a writing assignment called “English and Me,” in which he asked students to describe “your previous experiences with the English language. Relate some specific incidents that describe your attitude (or attitudes—maybe you have several different or conflicting feelings) and experiences related to English.” These reading and writing assignments all, in various ways, called on students to reflect and write on language and language difference. Furthermore, in the section of IWWE that I observed and that was taught by Nathan, and in section taught by Hugh,
students discussed or were asked to discuss—orally or in their writing—the linguistic resources that students themselves had brought with them to class. While not always describing these discussions as being about linguistic resources, in class Nathan frequently directed students’ attention to how various “voices” were represented linguistically in their texts, as students workshopped their writing. He often encouraged students to draw on—and to consider the consequences of drawing on—the full range of languages and dialects with which they were familiar or fluent. For example, he encouraged one student, who spoke German at home with her mother, to think about subtle differences in meaning and feeling between the German and English words for home.

As I hope this brief description of teaching practices in IWWE suggest, instructors’ practices were coordinated across sections of IWWE. These practices were coordinated, I argue, in part by a shared sense of IWWE’s meaning and meaningfulness. Meaning seemed to center on a coordinated effort to approach language difference with respected and to drew on it as a resource for learning. This shared meaning, I argue, was generated through instructors’ engagement with administrative practices, in particular, the negotiation of meaning during meetings of the Multilingual Subcommittee and lectures and workshops provided throughout the Symposium for Teachers of International/Second-Language Writers, which was responsible in part for advancing an integrationist and translingual approach to writing instruction.

Divergent Meanings of Practice: Individual Differences Among Instructors

One way to think about the consequences of administrative practices on teaching practices, and vice versa, is to conceptualize them as translation and what Wenger calls “brokering” among communities. In the case of IWWE, instructors might be said to be have been brokers, who translated practices and meanings across boundaries, from communities like the
Multilingual Writers Subcommittee to the communities that they formed with students—and then back again. This movement of translation and brokering could theoretically start either in the classroom or in an administrative community of practice. As the word “translation” implies, practices and meanings undergo transformations as they cross boundaries, even as they retain something of their original form. This section addresses how instructors translated the meaning of IWWE as it was constructed in administrative practices and reifications into teaching practices and back again. This section pays special attention to evidence of the transformations that occurred throughout the process of translation, and it offers explanations that might account why these transformations took the form that they did. The theoretical work of this section offers a way to understand the relation among administrative, teaching, and learning practices as they shape what Yancey would call “the experienced curriculum” or shape curriculum understood as, to draw on Wayne Au’s theorization, the structuration of “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form.”

Although instructors attributed shared meanings to IWWE, each instructor had different goals for the course and for writing courses more generally. Sometimes the meanings of teaching IWWE conflicted with the meaning of teaching writing. That is, teachers sometimes found their goals for writing courses to be incompatible with the goals of IWWE. Other times teachers saw no difference between the goals for IWWE and any other writing course. For example, Nathan stated that, like IWWE, all writing courses should respect linguistic differences and all writing courses should be concerned with issues of linguistic difference and power. One instructor seemed to promote a particular language politics in her teaching, while another instructor was dissatisfied when he did so. This section addresses such differences in practices and the meaning attributed to practices.
In this section I argue that teachers’ practices differed because each teacher found meaning in different practices. Furthermore, the meaning that teachers found in their practices was affected not only by their engagement in administrative communities, such as the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee, but also by their identifications and senses of belonging with social groups, movements, and disciplines beyond the Writing Program. Perhaps most importantly, the meaning of practice was also shaped by teachers’ mutual engagement in practice with students. In other words, teachers and students can be said to have co-constructed the meaning of practice, co-determining which teaching practices were meaningful and why and when they were good enough or not. All of this is to say that the reasons why teachers do what they do is incredibly complex and so is the emergence of curriculum. The factors that influence local teaching practices are potentially limitless. Here, I account for at least three types of factors: administrative practices; alignment with broader social movements through adoption of discourse, identification, or imagination; and students’ learning practices.

At the least, this section demonstrates that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between what Kathleen Blake Yancey would call the “delivered curriculum”—or the curriculum that has been designed and represented in documents—and students’ “experienced curricula.” Yancey makes this same observation, but here I would like to add to it by offering a theoretical framework to account for the complex interactions among administrative, teaching, and learning practices. Here I especially want to account for how teachers understand their practice and, as a consequence, how they engage in specific practices that shape curriculum—practices that shape the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form. In other words, not all sections of IWWE made accessible the same knowledge in the same way, even as each section of IWWE was coordinated and aligned toward a particular enterprise, as discussed above. I argue that a central
location where the curriculum is shaped is in the meaning and meaningfulness that teachers ascribe to specific practices. Teachers engage in those practices that have some kind of meaning. Once a practice loses or ceases to have meaning, it is likely to be abandoned or transformed. The same statement can be said for the reifications that necessarily accompany practice: once reifications such as course descriptions, titles, and readings cannot be connected to a meaningful practice, then they are abandoned or changed.

In determining variations in the meanings that different instructor-participants attributed to IWWE, I have found it useful to examine their statements about a course description that Anna wrote and that appeared on the Writing Program’s website and about the course’s title. I understand the course description and title as reifications that objectified meanings developed during the administrative practices already discussed, especially during the work of the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee. Participants agreed that Anna was the author of the course description, and participants admitted that they were unsure how the title was invented, or exactly what ideas it was supposed to represent. Hugh, for example, asked me how I understood the term “intercultural writing” because it had, he admitted, seemed unclear to him. However, even though the course description was not co-authored (as “Student Learning Goals” was, as seen in the last chapter) and some participants expressed confusion about or ambivalence toward the course title, here I argue that examining participants’ interpretations of, attitudes toward, and rewritings of these reifications—the course description written by Anna, which appeared on the Writing Program’s website, and the title—can help us to see how and why instructors attributed differing meanings to their practice. Every instructor, including Anna, revised her course description for their IWWE syllabi or, as Nathan did when I observed his course, wrote an entirely new course description. Looking at how and why participants revised this course
description and looking at participants’ comments on this course description and title can help us also to trace relations among coordinating or aligning administrative practices (and their reifications) and teaching practices (and their reifications). The centralizing course description for IWWE functioned in a manner similar to other administrative curricular reifications at GECU, such as “Student Learning Goals” and the course descriptions for FYW courses. By looking at instructors’ interpretations of and interactions with IWWE’s centralizing course description, we can get a better sense of how such coordinating administrative practices and reifications affect, or are taken up throughout the course of, teaching practices.

In what follows, I discuss instructor-by-instructor differences in the meaning participants ascribed to IWWE, and although I discuss how each instructor talked about and revised curricular reifications, I also discuss other influences on instructors’ teaching practice and the meaning of the practices— influences such as biography, identification, and values.

Anna

Anna’s syllabus from the first semester in which she piloted IWWE, Fall-2012, does not include a section explicitly titled course description; instead, an image of the course unfolds throughout the syllabus. It starts off by stating, “Instructor: [Anna writes her first name only] (Please call me “[Anna]” in class and in all correspondence—I do not use titles of any kind for anyone).” Then after providing basic information about the course and office hours—when and where to meet—Anna describes herself. In the final sentence of this description she writes, “Here at [GECU] I teach International Students as well as native speakers and am interested in ways that diversity and cultural awareness supplement the teaching of writing.” Anna follows this with a description of the “Philosophy of Course.” She writes that “writing is a social act” and that she “follow[s] a COLLABORATIVE approach” (emphasis in original). After the course
philosophy, Anna lists the 11 learning goals of the Writing Program and then tells students that the course will draw on the concept of genre to “challenge you to reconsider your definition of what it means to write an ‘essay’ in 2012.” Throughout the narrative part of the syllabus, where she describes philosophy, goals, and her own biography, Anna only mentions language once. However, in the course schedule, Anna tells students, “I constructed this class around different aspects of language and culture—these parts are: Translation, Assimilation/Accommodation/Appropriation, Erasure.”

Even this short description and quotation from Anna’s syllabus can tell us something about Anna and her teaching. She takes an egalitarian or democratic approach to teaching—she asks students not to use any titles when addressing her. She announces her philosophy that writing is social and collaborative. She makes clear that respect for diversity matters to her. And harkening back to IWWE’s purpose, she states that she takes an interest in “ways that diversity and cultural awareness supplement the teaching of writing.”

The following semester, Spring-2013, Anna did not teach IWWE officially. But when I asked her to give me any relevant course materials for this project, she gave me her syllabus from Spring-2013 because, for her, the course that the syllabus represented was still IWWE. Although the course had not been listed as a section of IWWE in the course-registration system, this course focused on language difference as its theme. She titled it “Translingualism—Watch Our Language.” Unlike the syllabus from Fall-2012, this syllabus does not discuss Anna’s biography and her philosophy. It also does not include directions for how to address Anna. However, this syllabus does begin with the centralizing course description that Anna wrote, the one listed on the program’s website and the university’s registration system. Only two modifications to the centralizing description have been made. Anna adds this sentence: “We will
critically explore the learning goals of the class and relate them to the individual genre projects the students will create.” And she tells students that they will read poems and watch the film *Snow Falling on Cedars*, a film that focuses on the story of Japanese-American fisherman and addresses race as theme. The schedule for this course also gives some insight into Anna’s practices. She assigns students to read Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur’s “Language Difference in Writing”; Gloria Anzaldúa’s “Entering the Serpent” and “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”; the Wikipedia page on “Language Ideology”; and Lippi-Green’s *English With an Accent*. Some items in the schedule indicate course themes to be addressed during a given day or week: “Blackface Yellowface Gayface,” on a Thursday in February; and “Assimilation. Appropriation. Erasure,” on a Wednesday. Other elements of the schedule do not as obviously relate to the theme of language difference—although they could: students are assigned to do a “Twitter assignment,” to read Laura Kipnis’s “Love’s Labors,” and to do “genre projects”; one day focuses on “citation [sic] theory and games,” another on Michael Ryan’s poem “Dickhead,” a poem that takes jabs at a pro-life/anti-choice married Christian man and, less overtly, some people who harass him.

Again, this syllabus illustrates Anna’s approach to IWWE and teaching writing. Anna politicized her writing course in more obvious ways that Nathan and Hugh. Of the three teachers she seemed to be most interested in asking students to read texts and watch films with what might be considered “progressive” or “radical” ideas, but whether we call these course texts progressive or radical does not matter so much: Anna clearly is on the left. During our interview, Anna quipped, “I don’t mind being told what to do sometimes, as long as it’s a communist telling me what to do. Do you know?” Anna said that for her Ph.D. she “did a Marxist analysis of contemporary Canadian lit.” Outside of her teaching, Anna regularly volunteers. In recent years,
she has volunteered at a local homeless shelter—“I worked in the kitchen chopping vegetables”—and more recently she has been teaching English to asylees: “I know that in the United States it’s very hard for someone coming into a country and doesn’t know any English to find programs that do, that can support a person who doesn’t have any money, free programs.”

Although Anna did not provide me with copies of assignments in IWWE, she did describe two. In one assignment—which may or may not have not been a writing assignment, it was not clear—students were asked, first, to read Horner and coauthors’ editorial on translingualism; and, second, to “interview another professor in another department and tell that person, you know, have a conversation about [translingualism] […] and see how—ask the person how that would change his or her field if these were implemented, if we all did translingualism.” Anna said that students liked this assignment and performed well:

> The range was incredible of the projects. They had the greatest time with it, and the range was just as wide as it was when Horner and Lu were here and people from other departments came for their afternoon lecture. You know there were biology people and history people and blah, blah, blah. And some were receptive and some were absolutely resistant to their ideas, and the range was—that my students found—was just about as great.

I asked Anna how she thought this assignment affected students and the professors that they interviewed:

> I am hoping that what happened with that was that we could do the rest of the projects that I wanted to do with them after realizing that there were other people in English besides me who had these kooky ideas, sort of I wanted them […] to legitimize theoretically the ideas that I had in the class and also to realize the
range of responses to these ideas would be just as broad everywhere, I think, and I think that was the result that came out of it—that they were able to see that some people are very, very receptive to new ways of going about a certain subject like language, and other people are probably not, or haven’t even thought of these ideas, haven’t even thought of the range of possibilities of using language in a translingual way.

The other assignment that Anna gave asked students to write an “imitative essay” based on texts by Anzaldúa, an author often discussed in rhetoric and composition research on translingual approaches to teaching writing (e.g., Kimball; Ray). Anna did not describe this assignment further, except to say that an essay that a student wrote in response to this assignment had been published in a journal sponsored by GECU’s Writing Program.

Anna seemed committed to using IWWE as a form of activism. In an excerpt that I already quoted, Anna said that when Horner and Lu visited, she felt as if her own ideas had been “validated”—specifically her ideas about “things that I think are important to restructure a program, or to move forward in a program and make social change.” Her assignment that asked students to interview professors about translingualism seemed consistent with this goal. It offered a way to spread ideas about translingualism across campus and to encourage students to become more aware of the language ideologies that they might encounter at the university. After Anna told me about this assignment, we had the following exchange:

Michael: Earlier you said that you thought that this course might be a way of tackling some of the wrong-headed language ideologies, it sounds like, …

Anna: Yeah [sounding doubtful], within the students?

Michael: No within the university.
Anna: Within the university, oh yeah.

But Anna may have wanted to change how students thought about language difference too.

George noted that Anna insisted most strongly that IWWE was course not just for multilingual international students, but for monolingual students as well:

[Anna] in particular was very vocal about this being a course not for international students, that this could be as valuable, if not more valuable, for students from the U.S. who maybe hadn’t been in diverse environments.

George repeated this point at another moment in interviews:

[Anna] was very forceful at least early on about, “I really want”—what she would say—“American students in there and particularly privileged students, so that they understand how complex language diversity is and so forth.”

I think it’s safe to say that a desire to make social change motivated Anna and shaped her teaching practices in IWWE. In terms of theory of communities of practice, Anna can be said to have a strong imagination:

[…] imagination refers to a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves. Imagination in this sense is looking at an apple seed and seeing a tree. […] [The concept of imagination] emphasizes the creative process of producing new “images” and of generating new relations through time and space that become constitutive of the self. (Wenger 176-77)

In Anna’s case, imagination seemed to give her practice meanings that were not necessarily shared within the immediate communities of which she was a member. We can see this effect of imagination at play in Anna’s teaching. Her teaching gains meaning in part by being positioned
within a larger image of the world and her role in it. Through imagination Anna seemed to locate her teaching practices within a social movement or social movements, and these acts of imagination shaped how she taught IWWE. Other participants did not express political commitments as strongly as Anna did. They also did not seem as committed to using IWWE—and writing courses more generally—to carry out social change.

*Hugh*

Hugh started teaching at GECU in the fall of 2011, after having spent years teaching English-language writing in Taiwan. Hugh said that he thought the GECU Writing Program had hired him precisely because of that experience. Explaining why he took part in the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee, Hugh said,

I think I had some role in wanting to motivate that kind of a meeting to start. [...] Maybe in my own mind I’m overemphasizing my own role in it, but I sort of felt like, “Okay, one of the reasons they hired me was because of my experience teaching overseas and teaching multi—well, used to call ESL students.”

Hugh explained that, as an instructor whose role was defined in part by his experience teaching multilingual students abroad, he wanted instructors and administrators to meet so that he could learn more about how multilingual writing classes were taught at GECU. At the time, Hugh was puzzled because the Writing Program used nearly identical course descriptions for both mainstream and multilingual sections of FYW. He was also puzzled because other instructors of multilingual writing courses were telling Hugh that they taught mainstream and multilingual course in pretty much the same way. Hugh described the issue that he faced and that he hoped meeting with other instructors and administrators would clarify:
it seemed to me, when I talked to people like [Nathan], that there was a real change in the kind of international students we were getting from the past. And so I wanted to find out more about that and what we were supposed to be doing with them, and [...] we had this curriculum that said that 1102 and 1111 are basically the same course [...] but have fewer students in 1102, but not supposed to be much different from 1111. I was thinking, “How is that possible?”—I guess, with the population we have.

In the narrative that Hugh tells here, the program was teaching a “new kind” of presumably multilingual student but had not developed courses that were “much different.” Given the new population, Hugh asks, “How is that possible?”

These excerpts help us to understand what motivated Hugh to meet with other instructors in the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee. They show that Hugh became involved in IWWE in part due to how he understood his role in the Writing Program: “they hired me [...] because [...].” Other research participants seemed to understand Hugh’s role in similar terms—the role of a specialist in teaching multilingual writers. Barbara, who was FYW Director when I interviewed her, said, “We have somebody like [Hugh], who knows more about multilingual writing than I ever will.” Similarly, George said, “I know that he [Hugh], out of the three of them [Anna, Hugh, and Nathan], has the deepest background in ESL teaching. I mean he’s trained in it. He’s taught English in multiple places around the world as a foreign language.” Participants, then, identified Hugh as knowledgeable and experienced in teaching multilingual writers, and this identification seemed to have influenced his participation in the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee and piloting IWWE. These observations suggest that identity and role influence teaching practices. In this instance, Hugh became involved in negotiating perspectives with other instructors because
of his perceived role, and Hugh’s involvement with negotiating perspectives with other instructors of IWWE led him to teach FYW in a particular way: for example, by selecting particular readings and designing particular assignments. This suggests that a teacher’s role within a writing program can, at times, influence what they do in their teaching. But the influence of role and identity on practices is hard to predict. Just because Hugh is identified as a multilingual specialist tells us little about his teaching practices. This identification did, however, seem to contribute to Hugh’s participation in the activities of the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee, including the piloting of IWWE. In other words, Hugh’s identity within the program was an important element in a chain of events that led him to participate in piloting IWWE. Hugh’s account suggests that an instructor’s identity or role within a writing program—including how that role is tacitly defined (Hugh had no official title as an ESL specialist in the program)—can affect whether and how an instructor becomes involved in administrative practices that, in turn, affecting teaching.

When I asked Hugh to participate in this research project, he made his “teaching portfolio” from 2013 accessible to me. It gives insight into how Hugh taught IWWE and thought about his teaching. The teaching portfolio was published online. The Writing Program requires instructors to create teaching portfolios every year and to submit them to administrators, and so, program administrators are a primary audience of Hugh’s portfolio. The portfolio shows that during 2013 Hugh taught ENGW1111 (the FYW course not specifically for multilingual writers) twice, and officially taught IWWE once. Even though he was officially assigned to teach IWWE only in the fall, he independently taught IWWE during the spring as well. (Like Anna, Hugh taught IWWE even when he had not been assigned to do so.) Therefore, the portfolio covers two semesters when Hugh taught IWWE.
Hugh’s teaching portfolio begins with a page where he reflects on his teaching over the past year. There, he writes that he has “continued to face some levels of frustration as I tried to work with domestic students in courses like ENGW 1111. I think I’ve made some progress on this front, though I still have a ways to go.” He elaborated, in a sharply honest rhetoric:

I am still trying to work on connecting with US/American/domestic (whatever you want to call them) students. As I said in a teaching workshop last semester, I sometimes find American students inscrutable. They’re silent in class, yet they blame the teacher for not getting them to talk. They disrespect the instructor and then criticize the instructor for allowing them to disrespect him. (Note: I realize I'm generalizing and exaggerating and venting. This is the "candid" part.) After last spring's experience with ENGW 1111, I was ready to throw in the towel with 1111 and stick with what I felt I knew. But I didn't want to end on such a downbeat, so I ended up teaching another section of ENGW 1111 in the fall. It wasn't the best experience I had ever had—there's no heroic narrative here—but I do think I made some improvements in how I interacted with them. It's tough. For the better part of my teaching career I've worked with students who respected me in part because they respected the position of teacher. Here things are different (though I've admittedly been my own worst enemy, too). Perhaps the spring 2013 ENGW 1111 course was where I "hit bottom" in terms of my interactions with domestic students, and we'll see progress from here on out.

While this passage displays self-criticism, much of the portfolio is upbeat. At the top of the portfolio’s home page, Hugh has included an image of a fortune-cookie fortune that reads, “To love what you do and feel that it matters—how could anything be more fun?” Also in the
Dedek

portfolio’s reflection, Hugh writes, “It is privilege to be paid to get this kind of intercultural education” as a teacher. But this portfolio’s self-criticism and gratitude aside, this excerpt suggests that U.S. students strike Hugh, after years of teaching abroad, as strange or, as he puts it, “inscrutable.” He even dis-identifies with students from the U.S.: “US/American/domestic (what you want to call them) students” (my emphasis). At the end of this reflection, Hugh writes in some classes he feels “speak[s] naturally,” while others he is “still in the process of naturalization.” Presumably, Hugh is writing about classes for multilingual students (where he feels natural) and for non-multilingual students (where he is being naturalized). Hugh seems to see himself as engaged in cross-cultural work when he teaches students from the U.S. Hugh sees himself engaged in this cross-cultural work even though he grew up in the U.S., was educated in U.S. institutions, and taught in the U.S. before he taught in Taiwan.

Coupled with the above excerpts that show Hugh’s role in the Writing Program, these latter excerpts on what we might call Hugh’s estrangement from the customs of U.S. students can help us to understand Hugh’s relations to the communities in which and across which he moved at GECU. He seemed especially to be experiencing difficulty with the roles that students from the U.S. have expected him to play. He writes that in the fall of 2013, he improved how he interacts with students from the U.S., but even so, his experience “wasn’t the best.” Again, it is hard to trace the curricular effects of Hugh’s self-understanding. Still, it likely affected what and how he taught. Hugh’s reflections allude to events that occurred in his classrooms: Students were silent. Students disrespected Hugh. They criticized him for being disrespected. These events are social events, concerning expectations for teacher and student roles. Hugh had a long training in teaching abroad—he taught outside of the U.S. for approximately 20 years, on and off—and as at
returned to teaching in the U.S., he was undergoing his own kind of curriculum, being taught by
students how they expected him to conform to a particular role.36

During interviews Hugh spoke about the course description for IWWE that Anna wrote
and appeared on the program’s website. His comments on the description especially show how
he differed from Anna in his approach to teaching the course. He said that parts of it gave him “a
little trouble”:

[…] things are almost concluded in the course description, like, “We’re not going
to uncritically accept one standard dialect of English. And we’re going to
approach language difference as an asset rather than as an impediment to
learning.” […] the conclusions are already there […]there were things in that that
were basically saying, “Here’s what you’re gonna—here’s what we’re hoping
you’ll believe by the end of the semester—that language difference is an asset
rather than an impediment.” I mean that’s a great idea, you want people to see it
that way, but I felt like it was more, it was a little bit too, um, pushing stuff on
students I guess in way, pushing a particular view of language and language
ideology on people.

Hugh felt as if the description told students, “[Y]ou have to have a certain orientation toward
language in order to do well in this class.” Hugh’s doubts about the course description played
themselves out in his teaching.

Hugh said that during the Spring-2013 semester, when he unofficially taught IWWE, he
felt that he was pushing a language ideology onto students. He said that he experienced this
especially when he and students discussed excerpts from Lippi-Green’s English With an Accent,

36 I want to thank Neal Lerner for pointing out that Hugh might be said to have undergone his own “hidden
curriculum” (for a condensed review of the history and meaning of “hidden curriculum,” see Giroux and Purpel).
This seems like a potentially interesting line of inquiry that I cannot pursue here.
which Hugh, like Anna, had assigned. According to Hugh, in one of the assigned excerpts, Lippi-Green writes about a truck driver who was unjustifiably arrested because, Hugh said, “his English was not clear enough.” When Hugh discussed this excerpt in class, he recalled, he interacted with students in a way that made him “a little bit uncomfortable because [...] I was almost like the opposite of what I had earlier been.” He said that he usually “let[s] people talk and sort of paraphrase[s] what they’re saying.” In contrast, as his class discussed the story of the truck driver, he said, “I was [...] almost arguing with them, with some students—not arguing but kind of stating my perspective on things [...] , and it kind of became this thing where it was almost like there’s a right answer. And I didn’t feel comfortable with that.” During class, Hugh said, some students argued that the truck driver had an obligation to speak English in a way that would be understood by the police officer who arrested him. The conversation in class then took another turn, toward a discussion of international TAs, whom some students complained were incomprehensible due to their accents. Hugh took an opposing position: “What about pushing the listeners to work on better understanding the people with different accents and with different ways of speaking rather than putting it all on the speaker, especially if they’re a non-native speaker?” Hugh said, “I felt kind of like, I was sort of preaching there”: “I was kind of going on the opposite end,” Hugh said in a lecturing tone, “You have a responsibility to listen. Listening is not just about hearing what is super clear to you in your own dialect.”

This description of Hugh’s discomfort with how he taught about language difference might be read as an indication of difference between his own approach to teaching IWWE and Anna’s—but then again, it might not. Although Anna did seem interested in combatting language ideologies across campus, she made clear that she did not understand herself to have approached students with that same goal. When I pointed out to her that it seemed like she
wanted to combat “wrong-headed language ideologies,” she interrupted me and, in a surprised tone, asked: “In the students?” Still, although Anna distanced herself from the idea that she might be working to change students’ ideologies, the course readings that she selected came at language from what might called a progressive or leftist stance. When I first mentioned my research project to Anna sometime in April 2013, she told me that I should read Lippi-Green’s *English With an Accent*. The text seemed important to her. In contrast, Hugh had mixed feelings about using the book in his teaching. He even said that “it turned me into something I didn’t want it do […] the person going back and forth and […] correcting students’ mistaken ideologies or whatever.” He went on to say: “maybe [Anna] could use [*English With an Accent*] and have much more success with it than I did, but it […] kind of took the focus off […] what I should have had it on.”

At other points in our interviews, Hugh explicitly stated that he thought IWWE should focus on the students themselves by offering them opportunities to share perspectives on and to experience language difference. He put this focus on students in opposition to a focus on course readings, such as *English With an Accent*. He said that “the point of [IWWE] is more in the interaction rather than in some content.” He wanted “students to kind of see each other […] for who they are.” Reiterating this point, he said:

I think that is one of the goals […]—that’s not a writing goal necessarily—but one reason to put different groups of students together on purpose like that is for them to interact with each other and start to see each other as—this is going to sound really cheesy in a way, but—as individuals rather than as this kind of amorphous group, like with international students. American students might have
a view of international students as being kind of [...] this group, you know, and not realizing that there’s going to be variety within that group as well.

For Hugh, by putting international and U.S. students together, all students could learn to “see each other.” Hugh said that, the first two times that he taught IWWE, he had not done enough to accomplish this goal. About these two times, during the Fall-2012 and Spring-2013 semesters, Hugh said, “I didn’t do enough to kind of put [students] together with people who were different from them.” After recognizing that he wanted students to interact across linguistic and cultural differences more, he tried to design assignments that would promote interaction:

One of the things I tried to do in the third class was kind of cut out some of the emphasis on [...] reading texts about this stuff. We still read some, but one of the things I tried to get them to do [was] to work more with each other’s texts, and so for the first project, they [...] all had to do an assignment that I usually give my 1102 students, which is called “English and Me.” [...] I asked them to read each other’s papers, each other’s first drafts, and try to think about connections that they might see between their experiences and the experiences of their classmates and actually cite each other in their revisions, actually cite “according to so-and-so, they said in their paper,” and try to show connections, and those connections might be similarities or differences or kind of common themes or examples or whatever.

With assignments like this, Hugh said that the course “got [the students] to sort of get to know other people a little better.”

“English and Me” was the first assignment that Hugh gave students in Fall-2013, the semester when, Hugh said, he had tried to encourage students to interact more than they had in
previous semesters when he taught IWWE. “English and Me” instructs students that they should write a thesis-driven essay in which you “introduce yourself […] by describing your previous experiences with the English language.” Students are told to “[r]elate some specific incidents that describe your attitude (or attitudes—maybe you have several different or conflicting feelings) […] related to English.” To help students invent responses to the prompt, Hugh includes a list of “areas” that students might explore. This list includes these items:

- Misunderstandings based on English language differences (and your attempts to work out them out orally, through writing, or through other channels like texting, body language, etc.)
- Being corrected or correcting others
- Affective dimensions of everyday language contact (like impatience or frustration in service situations)
- Going abroad and English/language-related experiences
- English dialects or accents experienced or used in different contexts or environments

As Hugh stated during interviews, this assignment also asked students to engage, in their essays, with other students’ perspectives on language and language difference. Hugh breaks the assignment down into three drafts. For the first draft, students must write about at least one experience that illustrates their attitudes toward English, and for the second draft, students are instructed to revise their first drafts by “think[ing] about your responses to your classmates’ first drafts (and theirs to yours) and how those responses might point you to new or different perspectives on your relationship to English.” Finally, for the third draft, students are asked to revise again after they receive feedback from Hugh and their peers. The directions for the second
draft stand out because they encourage students to think about their classmates’ perspectives on English.

As Hugh seemed to have intended, this assignment focuses on students’ experiences rather than any course readings. It asks students to share and to respond to one another’s experiences with English. As Hugh said, he had used this assignment only in multilingual sections of FYW until Fall-2013. Using it in IWWE posed some challenges. He said:

In this class, it was like half the students were native speakers of English and some of them were pretty much monolingual as well. So to tell them that they’re supposed to think about their relationship to English was a bit of a challenge for them.

I asked Hugh how “monolingual” students performed. He said that some students wrote about “going on trips to other countries and not being able to speak the language and trying to figure out how to cross that linguistic barrier.” According to Hugh, students then argued that these experiences “helped them think about people coming here who might not speak English.” Hugh critiqued these papers: “it all sounds like a sentimental kind of thing: ‘Now I understand immigrants in the U.S. because my family went on a trip to Italy and I didn’t speak Italian.’” He said that students had some difficulties when they tried to engage with other students’ perspectives. Hugh asked students to cite one another’s essays, but “they had a lot of trouble actually doing it, and I had trouble because I didn’t have a model for them to look at.” Still, Hugh said that “English and Me” and “some of the other work we did kind of got them to sort of get to know other people a little better.”

Four elements of this discussion of Hugh’s experiences with IWWE stand out: (1) He became involved in piloting IWWE in part because of the identity that he had within the
program. (2) He seemed to have experienced some difficulty, and possibly discomfort, with teaching students from the U.S. because his and his students’ role expectations differed. (3) As he piloted IWWE over three semesters, he revised assignments and class activities to move away from a focus on textual content and from an approach that Hugh saw as too ideologically motivated. And (4) a meaningful practice for Hugh was having students share perspectives and get to know one another across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries. Hugh’s accounts of teaching IWWE suggest that his approach to teaching the course differed from Anna’s—which is not to say that this finding is surprising. More interesting than noting that his teaching differed is to account for why it differed. While I am sure there are many more reasons for why it differed than I can account for here, we can see at least that Hugh’s teaching practices were shaped by identification; past experiences that shaped role expectations; and pedagogical values and beliefs, such as that a teacher should not foist a particular language ideology onto students. All of these factors shaped the curriculum in IWWE that students experienced.

I also want to highlight that Hugh took a critical attitude toward Anna’s course description for IWWE, which I understand to be a coordinating or an aligning reification. Although Hugh reproduced most of this description in unedited form in his syllabi for IWWE, he did not understand himself to be merely implementing the course that it articulated. Instead, he reinterpreted the description such that it could be meaningful within the context of his teaching practices. Hugh’s comments on and approach to using the course description provide evidence that confirms the inadequacy of understanding curriculum on the basis of reifications alone. It is necessary also to understand how such reifications are translated into teaching and learning practices. This translation can be complicated and messy, as my retelling of Hugh’s experiences suggests; many potentially unpredictable factors, such as a teacher’s role expectations, can shape
this translation. Yet even as Hugh translated the centralizing course description written by Anna, he maintained something of the shared intention behind the course. As he revised the course over three semesters of piloting, he tried to move closer to the goal of drawing on students and their linguistic differences as resources for learning. I observed above that doing that—drawing on linguistic difference as resources rather than viewing it as an impediment—was a central motivation and shared meaning for IWWE. Next I turn to Nathan’s teaching in IWWE. My account of his practices can deepen our understanding of how administrative practices and reifications translate into and affect teaching practices—or fail to do either of these things.

Nathan

I gathered more data about Nathan’s version of IWWE than any other instructor’s. I interviewed him three times as he was teaching in Fall-2013, and I observed his course once a week throughout that semester, taking ethnographic fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw) during each visit. That semester I also interviewed one of his students three times. For this reason, there is more that I could say about Nathan’s teaching practices than about any other instructor’s in this study. However, here I limit myself to discussing one aspect of Nathan’s practice: Nathan’s practices in IWWE seemed least coordinated with those of the group of instructors who piloted the course. In this section, I address why this happened. The main reason that Nathan’s practices were not well-coordinated, or more overtly coordinated, was that some practices that he associated with IWWE conflicted with other, non-IWWE-affiliated goals that he had as a writing teacher. These non-IWWE-affiliated goals shifted slightly from semester to semester. When Nathan piloted IWWE the first time, he was experimenting with using digital portfolios in FYW. As he was doing this, he was also trying out what he called “self-sponsored” writing projects—he described these as projects in which students were given a “platform” for
writing and invited to see what they could do with it. Furthermore, during both semesters when Nathan taught IWWE, according to Nathan’s accounts, it seemed that students failed to find course content on languages meaningful. Some students did, but not many. This posed a problem because it was important to Nathan that students find their writing projects meaningful. In all these cases, Nathan’s multiple goals as a teacher—trying out digital portfolios and self-sponsored projects, and making writing projects meaningful for students—conflicted with a thematic focus on languages and language difference. Yet even as Nathan’s practices were not coordinated with other teachers’ practices in IWWE in these ways, Nathan seemed to understand all of his teaching, whether in IWWE or outside it, as informed by a translingual theory that he saw as central to IWWE. In other words, he seemed to understand all of his FYW courses as being informed by the goals and approach of IWWE. Therefore, on one level, Nathan’s course did not coordinate with collective understandings of IWWE, but in another way, it did.

We can begin to get a sense of how Nathan’s version of IWWE differed from Hugh’s and Anna’s by looking at the course description from the syllabus he used in the fall of 2013. Unlike Hugh and Anna, Nathan wrote an original course description, which borrowed nothing from the course description that Anna wrote and that appeared on the website. Nathan’s description begins by critically examining what the course’s title means:

What is the nominal subject of the course? As you can see from the title, this is a college writing course, one that has the descriptor “World Englishes” attached to it. But what does marking the course is this way mean? First, and perhaps most obviously, it announces a topic that will be a point of focus in the course. It marks, that is, a direction, a jumping off point for our reading and thinking and
writing. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this naming is misleading. Let me explain.

Nathan goes on to highlight that the term “College Writing” matters more than “World Englishes.” He writes: “So, what is college writing? What does it mean to be a college writer? To answer these questions you may ask—what kind of writing will be valued in this context? These questions are at the heart of the course.” The course description makes clear that content about “World Englishes” will be secondary to inquiring into what college writing is, what it means to be a college writer, and how college writing will be valued. Hugh and Anna’s syllabus do not do this. For the most part, their course descriptions closely follow the centralizing one. In contrast, Nathan’s syllabus does not say, for example, that in the course language difference “will be approached as an asset,” nor does it mention that the course has “deliberately enroll[ed] a range of language users.”

That Nathan does not include in his syllabus these and other central phrases from the centralizing course description can be interpreted as signaling that Nathan understands IWWE to be similar any other sections of “College Writing.” Indeed, Nathan explicitly made this point during interviews. I asked him if and why he “consider[ed] this [course] to be unique or special in some way.” He replied: “The simple answer is I don’t.” He elaborated that, for him, IWWE was an outgrowth of an attempt to apply translingual ideas in the teaching of writing. In his account, IWWE was invented as he, other instructors, and administrators “were thinking about […] what does this [translingualism] mean for the courses that we’re teaching.” After he pointed this out, Nathan expressed that, for him, translingualism involved, in part, attention in teaching to the relation between “language and power,” a relation that, in Nathan’s opinion, all writing courses should address. Elsewhere in our interviews, he clarified this view:
I think the questions that are asked […] about who has the right to speak, what spaces should they be speaking in, about authority and power—I think those are central questions for a writing class. Right? And I think they can be asked without necessarily talking about World Englishes or translingual[ism].

For Nathan, then, there seemed to be no need for a course with a special thematic focus on World Englishes or translingualism. He was more interested in translingual ideas as offering an approach to teaching writing that could be applied anywhere: Nathan understood translingualism was “an attitude toward difference [more] than it was a prescription for things to do in the classroom.”

I also asked Nathan if he thought it was “valuable for students to be thinking about world Englishes,” as he they had, sometimes, in the section of IWWE that observed. He said: “No. […] Whether the writing course be ‘Writing and Violence,’ or ‘Writing and the Movies,’ or ‘Writing and Whatever’ […]], my personal sense is oftentimes those themes are distracting.” He continued to express that he was interested in having students read and write about World Englishes only if they found it meaningful:

In the business of the writing course, those themes are just there to kind of move the process along but the process is the important piece. I mean the thinking about the writing and thinking about what they’re doing as writers and their audiences, what their purposes are—I mean that’s kind of the core of the class. All the other stuff is if not decoration but then a way to get the students engaged in the work that they’re doing, right? And I think it’s important that we find subjects, themes, ideas that are engaging the students because I think, you know, that writers work best when the material they’re working with is meaningful to them, but I think
you could do that. Yeah, and so, saying, “Let’s think about world Englishes guys. That’s meaningful and important to you.” As I saw from the first project where I said, you know, “I want you to figure out a way to fit this, ‘The Place of World Englishes,’ that particular article that we read into your project in some way.” And many of them really couldn’t find use for it, or didn’t find use for it. It wasn’t relevant to what they were doing and that was a project built around the concept of a collage, so it could have fit anywhere if they cared to think about [it], and many of them didn’t really.

In this excerpt, Nathan refers to the first writing assignment in the course. This writing assignment asked students to write a collage essay that imitated “Our Secret,” an essay by Susan Griffin in Ways of Reading. Also, for this assignment, Nathan asked students to engage with Suresh Canagarajah’s “The Place of World Englishes in Composition,” which students had also read. As Nathan says in this excerpt, many students did not end up engaging with Canagarajah’s article. That students did not do so suggested to Nathan that they had not found course content on language and language difference “meaningful and important.” Nathan seems to be saying that because students did not find the theme of World Englishes to be “meaningful and important,” it would become a distraction, would not facilitate the writing process, and would not help students to do their best work.

After the first unit of the course, during which students read, discussed, and were asked to engage with Canagarajah’s article, discussion of concepts related World Englishes continued, but in a different way. When students discussed Canagarajah’s article in class, they defined and used terms such as “code meshing” and “code switching.” These terms might have offered a useful way for students to label writing strategies that were used by the authors whose works they read.
and by students in their own projects. However, after early October, those terms are absent from my fieldnotes. Yet, in class, students did discuss writing strategies that we might identify as, if not code meshing, then code switching. In other words, as far as my fieldnotes show, while students did not continue to use a vocabulary drawn from Canagarajah’s work on World Englishes, they did continue to discuss and work through language issues raised by that article. Specifically, students continued discussed how they could draw on the languages and dialects they knew in order to represent voices and speakers in their texts. These discussions, however, did not refer to World Englishes or Canagarajah.

How students continued to discuss language and language difference and how Nathan continued to focus on these issues can be seen in the second project of the course. For the second writing project, Nathan asked students to read John Edgar Wideman’s “Our Time” and to write a digital portfolio that imitated Wideman’s essay: in the portfolio students were asked to represent a place and its people; importantly, students were also asked to include in their portfolios a reflection on the difficulties of using written language to represent the place and its people. In the writing prompt for this assignment, Nathan writes:

Wideman is preoccupied with the problem of representation. He is a writer who examines his tools, putting the effects of language under a microscope. [...] [T]he piece is about his struggles as a writer. He tries out different points of view, different voices, he thinks and writes about the organization of his project. [...] How will you dramatize the challenges and choices you face as a writer?

As students worked on this writing project, they were asked to show their drafts to the class in what Nathan called “show-and-tell.” Each student used the classroom’s overhead projector to display their portfolio to the class, described their project, and sought feedback and advice from
the whole class. During show-and-tell, discussion often centered on how students were “dramatiz[ing] the challenges and choices” that they faced as writers. For example, when Sarah, a student in the class, presented her portfolio, she said that she was having troubles with representing people because, she said, “there aren’t many things I can do to make it obvious who is speaking.” In reply, another student in the class, Kathleen, recommended that Sarah, as my fieldnotes show, “could try using a particular ‘language’ for each speaker; Kathleen said that it ‘could really help.’” In this second project, then, students continued to discuss language and language difference, here as representational tools.

Nathan reported that some of the conversations during show-and-tell, which spanned multiple classes, not all of which I observed, delved into discussions about students’ hesitations to draw on language differences as representational resources. Nathan said that one student, Angela, had included, as one of the voices in her text, a “housekeeper” to whom she was close. In her portfolio, Angela included a video of the housekeeper who, Nathan said, was “dancing for her because she was stressed out with a test […].” About the video and the portfolio, Nathan said, “You can see the real kind of warmth and genuine affection” that existed between the student and her housekeeper. Nathan said that in her reflection in the portfolio, Angela expressed a concern about distinguishing her housekeeper’s voice by using different language: “When [Angela] wrote in her reflection about representing [the housekeeper], part of what she was concerned about was this idea of class and language, and [Angela] was saying, ‘She’s not educated, but she speaks well, and I didn’t want to make her sound stupid.’ There was that kind of anxiety around some, a protectiveness.” These comments indicate that even as an explicit focus on World Englishes, or ideas associated with translingualism, disappeared from Nathan’s
course, students in his class were still exploring issues related to language difference, representation, power, and the ethics of drawing on one’s various linguistic resources.

The third and final writing project for the course also did not explicitly draw on concepts related to World Englishes and translingualism. For this last assignment, students were asked to invent their own projects—rather than being asked to imitate another writer, as they had been asked during their first and second projects. Students were to invent projects after they had read Richard Miller’s “The Dark Night of the Soul,” published in *Ways of Reading*, and after they had read and watched related texts and videos. The writing prompt for this project did not explicitly raise topics, issues, or problems related to language and language difference. My fieldnotes and interview transcripts with Nathan and with a student, Tara, also suggest that language was not an explicit object of study or discussion throughout the final section of Nathan’s course. During that section of the course, in notes and transcripts, language and language difference simply never come up.

Moving away from a focus on language seemed also to happen the first time that Nathan taught IWWE. When Nathan talked about his experiences teaching IWWE in Fall-2012, a year before I interviewed him, he said that students’ response to course content on language was a “non-response.” He said that only one student in the class wrote about the theme. In accounting for students’ non-response, he said:

I think there was like one writer who spoke another language. Everybody else was just run-of-the-mill upper-middle-class white [GECU] student, which I think again affected what they were interested in thinking about and you know what resources they brought to the class.
As I mentioned, that same semester Nathan was, along with other instructors, experimenting with digital portfolios (or eportfolios) and what he called “self-sponsored writing projects,” which he described this way:

[…] We weren’t going to give them a prompt—“write an essay about X.” We were going to say, “Here’s a platform. What can you build in it? Here is some text that we’re going to read in common. How do you use these texts to make a project that’s meaningful to you?”

Nathan said that at the beginning of this semester, he shared texts about World Englishes with students, but he said that the “projects that [students] started to build right out of the box went in a different direction.” After that, the course moved away from the World Englishes theme:

By halfway through that course, the whole idea of them grappling with the concept of world Englishes—their thinking about that as a subject in the course—almost disappeared entirely, as their projects and eportfolios […] kind of took off and went in different directions, and for me, for that particular semester, I just said, you know, “Fine.” I kind of let the course develop organically and that was okay.

Yet by allowing the course to “develop organically,” Nathan faced problems with coordinating his class with the other instructors who were piloting IWWE:

It created problems, you know, because this was, again, kind of a test case with myself and two other instructors. So we came together a couple of times that semester. The first meeting, I was saying, “Eh, I think this I getting a little out of control for me. I don’t know if it’s going in the direction that I planned.” And by the second meeting, I was saying, you know, “I don’t have a lot to contribute to
this group because my guys are doing something else and aren’t really doing World Englishes as we imagined it [...] over the summer.”

During this first semester of piloting, Nathan seems to have been drawn among at least three communities: the community that he formed with other instructors of IWWE, the one that he formed with instructors who were trying out eportfolios and self-sponsored projects, and the one that he formed with his students. Each community might be said to have shaped Nathan’s practices. Each one had a set of meaningful practices that may or may not have been meaningful within the other communities among which Nathan moved. The practices that Nathan associated with IWWE, for example, seem to have conflicted with the practices that Nathan and his students developed together. According to Nathan, his students, with whom Nathan formed a community, did not find course content on World Englishes to be meaningful, and this caused Nathan to let the topic disappear from the course—which Nathan said “caused problems” for the group that was piloting IWWE.

About Nathan’s experiences with IWWE I want to highlight that his teaching demonstrated a negotiation with students over the meaning of practice. While to an extent Nathan, Anna, and Hugh co-developed practices that were meaningful with the context of the community that they formed together, Nathan’s accounts suggest that these practices were not always meaningful to students. This lack of, or diminished, meaningfulness within the context of the communities that Nathan formed with students seemed to have caused Nathan to allow content on World Englishes to slip away. Nathan’s accounts and my analysis of fieldnotes and course documents from the second semester that Nathan taught IWWE suggest a potential way to move forward with IWWE at GECU. As Nathan stated, he saw IWWE as motivated by an attempt to enact translingualism in the teaching of writing. Doing so, Nathan claimed, does not
necessarily require that students read and write about World Englishes, translingualism, or other disciplinary topic. Nathan’s second project during Fall-2013—for which many students drew on a range of linguistic resources to represent speakers and voices—offers a model for addressing translingual writing without making language and language difference an explicit object of study, in the sense of being a topic about which students must read and write. The data that I have presented based on Nathan’s teaching IWWE suggest that teachers cannot know what is meaningful to students until a semester is underway and have begun to form a community with the students who are actually in the classroom, a community that ultimately establishes the meaning of practice, including the meaning of teaching practices.

**Conclusion**

This chapter on teaching practices has covered a lot of ground. Above all, it argues that teachers straddle multiple communities of practice, which have sometimes overlapping, and sometimes conflicting, “regimes of accountability” (Wenger 80-82). The concept of “regime of accountability” can help us to describe the mediation of practices and reifications that are transported or translated into a classroom, as was the case with IWWE: the group of instructors (Anna, Hugh, and Nathan) developed IWWE but the course might be said to have been mediated by the communities of practice that each instructor formed with their students. Wenger writes that within any community of practice, a regime of accountability determines “what matters and what does not, what is important and why it is important, what to do and not to do, […] when actions and artifacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement” (81). Furthermore, Wenger argues that “the power—benevolent or malevolent—that institutions, prescriptions, or individuals have over the practice of a community is always mediated by the community’s production of its practice. […] [I]n the last analysis […] it is the community that
negotiates its enterprise” (80). This argument is mostly supported by the data on teaching practices presented here. Practices or reifications invented outside of the classroom were mediated by the community that forms within it. This mediation was especially conspicuous in Nathan’s accounts of teaching IWWE: Nathan presented students with readings and concepts about World Englishes, but many or most students did not find that content to be meaningful. As a result, Nathan did not pursue a focus on World Englishes; to do so would have struck him as a “distracting” from the real “business of the writing course.” Here we can see how administrative practices, in which teachers and administrators were engaged prior to and outside of the sections of IWWE (practices such as those occurring with the Multilingual Writers Subcommittee), were mediated by the community of practice that Nathan formed with students. This occurred, I argue, because the regime of accountability in the community of practice that Nathan formed with his students had different notions of what was important, what mattered, and what was meaningful than did the community that Nathan formed with other instructors as they planned and oversaw IWWE.

However, the communities that formed within the classrooms were not the final arbiters. While I agree with Wenger that power is mediated through communities of practice—because communities of practice are ultimately responsible for negotiating their own enterprise—it seems that instructors, insofar as they are brokers, moving between administrative communities and classroom communities, are constantly balancing the demands of competing regimes of accountability. Teachers are accountable both to the standards that they negotiate with students and to the standards that they negotiate with other instructors and with administrators. In this sense, it is not a single community of practice that shapes teaching practices. Instead, teaching practices take shape somewhere at the borders between administrative communities and
classroom communities. This can be seen when Nathan states that, by allowing students to pursue projects that had nothing to do with World Englishes because these projects were meaningful to students, he understood his teaching as causing “problems” for the community he formed with Anna and Hugh.

Although teaching practices take shape at borders between administrative and classroom communities, they also are caught up in broader social movements, as Anna’s account of her own practices suggests. Anna saw her teaching practices as meaningful in part because she was able to locate them within a broader social-justice agenda. She wanted IWWE to be an engine of “social change” in combatting particular attitudes toward international students at GECU. Furthermore, Anna, Hugh, and Nathan all referred to disciplinary theories and research to explain IWWE and their practices within it. Translingualism was especially influential in both Anna and Nathan’s teaching, and Hugh referred to an article published by Paul Kei Matsuda and Tony Silva to describe what he understood as the model on which IWWE was based. Instructors’ allusions and references to theories and research in composition and second-language writing demonstrate that instructors are also often evaluating and revising their teaching practices by drawing on disciplinary discourse and knowledge. This suggests that when we account for teaching practices, looking at how the local communities of practice negotiate their enterprise will not always predict or explain teaching practices. Instead, teaching practices are also caught up in broader social movements, discourses, and disciplines.

This chapter also suggests that curricular alignment or realignment is far from a straightforward or linear process. It is not that case that particular teaching practices will necessarily follow from administrative practices that partake in realignment, such as negotiating the enterprise in committees, rewriting of curricular documents, or offering professional
development workshops. These administrative practices are mediated—at least—by the communities that teachers form with their students and by instructors’ sense of their place and agency within broader movements, discourses, and disciplines.

Multiple research participants hoped that my study would help the writing program to improve both IWWE and the larger curriculum. For example, George said:

I do feel like we missed an opportunity there [with IWWE], and I, we should have piloted that course and really paid attention to what happened in that course—what worked and what didn’t work—and then tried to share that out—and I think that because […] that could be a kind of incubator for the larger curriculum reform that was actually simultaneous to this in a lot of ways.

George was especially interested in learning from IWWE in order to “find that space between […] where […] it’s possible to talk about language and language difference and […] where that’s really the only thing you talk about and it’s the topic of the course.” This chapter suggests that a difficulty in creating any curricular intervention at the level of administrative practices is that it can be difficult to predict what students and instructors, throughout they work that they do together, will find meaningful. The space that George seems to be looking for, a space that he called a “sweet spot,” seems to be an unstable space with shifting borders. However, Nathan’s approach, in which he attended to what students found important and meaningful, seems to offer a way forward because it opens space for negotiation between teachers and students; Nathan deliberately took into account what students found meaningful and adjusted. Such negotiations and adjustments are deterred when it is rigidly predetermined that course readings and writing assignments will be about language and language difference—or, for that matter, any other content. Instructors should be knowledgeable about language difference and able to help students
to think through effective methods for drawing on a range of their linguistic resources, but an explicit focus on language and language difference seems not to have been particularly meaningful to many students at GECU. Rather than focusing explicitly on language difference and reading and writing across difference, the program and teachers might create opportunities where students encounter language difference and must learn to work with and across it. This can be accomplished by in part through placing students who have different linguistic resources into the same class and creating opportunities for students to read and respond to one another’s writing. At GECU, there is evidence that such placement is now happening without a deliberate policy of “mixing.” This was noted by both George and Anna. Opportunities for working with and across language differences could also be created by using course texts that draw on multilingual resources and by assigning genres and creating rhetorical situations that call for multilingual approaches to writing. Such opportunities were created, for example, when Nathan asked students to read and partially imitate Wideman’s essay, to think about how they could linguistically represent voices and speakers in their writing, and to share their projects with the class during show-and-tell. During this section of the course, students had opportunities to think about and draw on their linguistic resources without making language difference the central course topic in way that would be, as Nathan put it, “distracting” from the real “business of the writing course.”

37 There is an argument to be made too that language difference, even in populations that seem linguistically homogenized, has always been present in writing classrooms, although such differences have been obscured through various practices of “linguistic containment” (Matsuda). Here I am highlighting that, through GECU’s policy of internationalization or globalization, linguistic diversity among students at GECU has crossed a kind of threshold: highly conspicuous linguistic differences are present across many or most writing courses at GECU—and not just across writing courses for multilingual students.
CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that composition still needs to develop theories and methods for researching curriculum. In chapter one, I unpacked implicit and explicit understandings of curriculum in composition. Critiquing and drawing from these understandings, I have argued that we need a theory of curriculum that accounts for teachers’ and students’ agency in shaping curriculum and that locates curriculum not in official curricular documents but in the encounter between students and learning environments. To develop such a theory of curriculum, I have drawn on Wayne Au’s *Critical Curriculum Studies* and on insights offered by this dissertation’s case study. I have defined curriculum as the emergent network of things, people, and practices that “structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49). Building on this definition, I have argued that theory of communities of practices offers a useful framework for understanding how administrative and teaching practices produce curricular consequences. In chapters three and four, I used this framework to analyze qualitative data on curriculum change in the Writing Program at GECU. My reading of this data suggests that two administrative practices can produce curriculum change, or what I have called curricular realignment. These practices were negotiation of the enterprise and translation. Case study data also suggests that curriculum is shaped by teachers’ practices of brokering between administrative and teaching-and-learning communities. However, the concept of brokering fails to explain all differences in curriculum across sections of “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE). Other influences on curriculum in IWWE included disciplinary movements, social-justice movements, and on-going negotiations over the meaning of practice between students and teachers.
In the remainder of this conclusion, I discuss limitations of this study, its implications, and recommendations for future research.

**Limitations**

A major limitation of this study is that it has relied on curricular documents and the perspectives of administrators and teachers—the two main sources of data. This dissertation does not include data on student perspectives and includes observations from only one section of IWWE. I interviewed one student who enrolled in “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” three times during the fall-2013 semester; however, throughout this dissertation, I have not explicitly drawn on these interviews. Also, these three interviews with one student provided insufficient data on the curriculum that students had experienced in IWWE. In relying on curricular documents and administrators’ and instructors’ accounts, I have assumed that reported changes in teaching and administrative practices and changes in reifications have led to transformations in the educational environments that students encountered.

A second, but related, limitation is that I have relied on administrators’ accounts when studying the program-wide curriculum change in FYW at GECU. I have not collected data on whether and how teachers across the program have changed their teaching practices to accord with the new curriculum, represented mainly by “Student Learning Goals.” Although administrators saw curriculum as changing, and although I agree with them based on my experience in the Writing Program at GECU, I have not collected data that could reveal whether, across the whole program, changes in teachers’ practices and students’ experienced curricula were widespread, or were isolated to a handful of classes. A more comprehensive study might have done more to include a broader range of teachers’ and students’ perspectives.
Finally, participants’ responses during interviews should be understood as rhetorical—as shaped by the rhetorical situation in which interviews were conducted and by the discourses on which participants drew. Relevant elements of the rhetorical situation included my own social role and identity within the studied Writing Program, as well as the conventions of interviewing, such as the patterns of turn-taking and the social roles ascribed to interviewees and interviewers in the genre of the interview. Participants’ responses during interviews might also be understood as rhetorical actions in their own right, actions intended to shape how I—as a researcher and program member—understood and represented research participants and the Writing Program at GECU. In drawing on interview data, this study might best be understood as providing not data about the change itself, but data about participants’ retrospective understandings, and discursive representations, of curriculum change. If we consider that participants represented curriculum change as occurring through negotiation, we should keep in mind that I have been discussing participants’ representation of negotiations—with all the errors of memory, exaggerations, and omissions that accompany it—rather than direct access to the process itself.

**Implications**

*Curriculum and assessment*

Curriculum design manuals often urge readers to design assessments that measure whether a course—or set of courses—has achieved desired objectives (e.g., Lattuca and Stark). In this approach, assessment gathers data that educators can then use to improve teaching—or at least to justify an intervention in teaching—and to guide new rounds of curricular revision. In such a model, assessment appears to be distinct from curriculum, both spatially and temporally. It is figured as a tool that, reaching toward curriculum from the outside, provides information on curriculum but remains separate from it. For assessment to affect curriculum, in this model,
educators mediate between the two: assessment gathers data on a curriculum; educators (or others) interpret this data; and only then, after this process of interpretation, do educators (or others) make decisions about how they can improve teaching, revise curricular policies, or redesign curriculum.

While assessment can be used in these ways, this dissertation offers an alternate approach for researching and thinking about the relation between assessment and curriculum. This dissertation suggests that we might productively understand assessment as being a part of, and directly shaping, curriculum: assessments can shape teaching practices and students’ experiences even before data collection and interpretation have begun. The creation of an assessment instrument itself can partake in shaping curriculum.

In GECU’s Writing Program, “Student Learning Goals” has guided programmatic assessment. Chapter three has shown how these goals and their composing realigned curriculum. Programmatic assessment, however, was not the only assessment present in the GECU Writing Program. Every semester students complete two course evaluations, one sponsored by the English Department and another sponsored by the Office of the Registrar and the Office of the Provost. These latter two assessment tools, in all likelihood, have impacted teaching practices—and, therefore, curriculum in my model—and they might be doing so even before teachers and administrators have examined their results. The sole fact that teachers anticipate these evaluations might be enough to shape what and how they teach. Although I lack the space here to work this argument out fully, I would argue that these assessments act not only as instruments for collecting data, or for making arguments for interventions in curriculum and teaching, but as reifications that directly participate in disciplining teachers, in a Foucauldian sense, to comply with (sometimes nebulous) demands, made by the program, the university, and students. In this
way, these course evaluations influence curriculum more directly than is supposed in a model that figures assessment as a form of data collection. Course evaluations themselves are curricular documents.

Course evaluations are probably not unique in this way, and we might find it useful to research how other assessment instruments directly shape teaching and learning—shape teaching and learning even before the stage of data gathering. The ubiquity of the phrase “teaching to the test” strongly suggests that assessments affect experienced curricula far before an assessment has been administered. This dissertation offers a theoretical framework for researching how assessment has these curricular effects. This framework suggests that we should pay attention to the curricular consequences that follow from even the creation of assessment instruments. We might attend to how local communities either incorporate assessments into meaningful practices or how assessments encourage compliance.

**Curriculum and Pedagogy**

An unresolved tension running throughout this dissertation is the fuzzy distinction between curriculum and pedagogy. Like “curriculum,” “pedagogy” is complicated and multivalent, and how we define “pedagogy”—again, like “curriculum”—has consequences for teaching and learning. I do not feel up to the task of defining pedagogy here, but I will explore some possible implications of this dissertation’s theory of and method for studying curriculum.

Where I have used the phrase “teaching practices,” readers might be somewhat annoyed that I have not simply used the word “pedagogy.” I have used the phrase “teaching practices” to highlight that teachers’ activities can be understood as occurring within the context of locally situated communities of practice, comprised of teachers and students (or teacher-students and student-teachers [Freire]). The phrase “teaching practices” calls to mind “doing in a historical
and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do” (Wenger 47). “Teaching practices” points toward a sense of situated-ness. Furthermore, I have used “teaching practices” to indicate that what teachers do with their students is affected by a negotiation with students over what is meaningful. I find the phrase “teaching practices” to be useful because it offers one way to recognize and understand how students affect curriculum: students participate in negotiating which teaching practices are meaningful and in determining when teaching practices are good enough or need to change. Finally, I use the phrase “teaching practices” to highlight that teaching practices (and pedagogy) can be viewed from a curricular perspective; they powerfully shape students’ “experienced curriculum” (Yancey, Teaching). In other words, what teachers do in class is not just “pedagogical” but “curricular.” To have used the word “pedagogy” rather than “teaching practices” might have obscured the connection that I have been trying to draw between teachers’ doings and curriculum.

Ultimately, this dissertation points toward the inseparability of curriculum and pedagogy. I would especially argue that pedagogy partakes in shaping curriculum in the approach that I have developed. This is highlighted also in Au’s theory curriculum, from which I have drawn. Specifically, the strange sounding phrase “the accessibility of knowledge” can be read as encapsulating a theory of how pedagogy affects curriculum. How teachers teach shapes how students “access” knowledge not just in the present but, as Au emphasizes, in the future. Teaching does this in part by communicating a theory of, and assumptions about, knowledge and the uses of knowledge. For example, learning about the concept of genre by memorizing and repeating an accepted definition of it differs from developing a concept of genre as one writes a text intended to achieve a meaningful goal. In the first instance (the memorization and repetition of a definition of genre), a teacher might be communicating that knowledge is an authoritative
text that one consults but does not alter, while in the second instance a teacher might communicate that knowledge is constructed and open to revision, or that the value of knowledge is pragmatic. What I mean to highlight with this example is that it is not possible to “deliver” the same curriculum with two different pedagogies: a lecture-based course and a project-based course, or a course based on the banking concept or based on problem-posing, even if they are designed to teach students the same “content,” cannot be said to have the same curriculum.

In writing all this, I still have not said what I mean by pedagogy. Shari Stenberg writes that composition scholars have tended to understand pedagogy as a theory of teaching, as a “subject matter,” or as “mere ‘practice’” (xvii). For Stenberg, this understanding of pedagogy errs because in it “teaching is understood as a set of skills, not as an epistemic activity central to professorial work” (xvii). In contrast, Stenberg argues for a different understanding of pedagogy, one that highlights that “(1) [p]edagogy is a knowledge-making activity…; (2) pedagogy is dependent on learners and is remade with each encounter …; (3) pedagogy cannot be finished; we cannot ‘finally’ learn to teach” (xiii). Without fully carrying out the argument here, I would argue that Stenberg’s approach to pedagogy is consistent with this dissertation’s approach to curriculum. This dissertation’s approach to curriculum could be elaborated to demonstrate that teachers make knowledge throughout their practice with students, that teachers’ practices are “remade with each encounter,” and that learning to teach is always on-going.38

However, this dissertation also attends to how teaching practices and pedagogy are situated within the shifting intersections of institutional and social forces. I would argue that pedagogy is not only an epistemic activity that teachers perform in dialogue with students, but an

38 An important aspect of Wenger’s theory of communities of practice, an aspect that I have not discussed much in this dissertation, is that this theory offers a way to understand learning as social. For Wenger, practice necessarily entails learning, both for “newcomers” and for existing members in a community. If we look at classrooms as communities of practice, then we can see that the practice in which students and teachers engage together creates knowledge and produces learning for all participants, regardless of expertise or standing within the community.
epistemic activity that is affected by historical and institutional context, itself embedded and participating in broader social transformations (e.g., internationalization and translingualism). Especially, I have argued, we should see teaching practices and pedagogy as being shaped by, and at times shaping, the types of administrative practices that are typically associated with curricular work, practices such as writing up new learning goals or designing new courses. Just as important as Stenberg’s recognition that pedagogy is “dependent on learners and is remade with each encounter” is the recognition that pedagogy is dependent on local administrative practices, which can make room for flexibility and dialogue between administration and teaching, or can restrict teaching to the enactment of syllabi. Furthermore, as my discussion of the teaching practices of Anna, Hugh, and Nathan in chapter four suggests, both pedagogy and curriculum emerge from complex interactions among local administrative practices, students, ideology, and institutional and disciplinary transformations. If, following Stenberg, we understand pedagogy as an epistemic activity, then this dissertation might lead us to recognize that pedagogical knowledge and knowledge-making are influenced by not only students but local conditions.

These epistemic arguments aside, this dissertation suggests, at the very least, that pedagogy shapes curriculum and that pedagogy should be understood as a having a curricular aspect. This also suggests that pedagogy is never just a delivery system for curriculum, even in conditions of standardization, in which teachers must use standard syllabi, readings, and assignments. Curriculum is inevitably shaped—sometimes unpredictably and uncontrollably—by pedagogy, which is “remade with each encounter” (Stenberg xiii) between students and teachers. In making this argument, however, I do not mean to imply that we should think about pedagogy only as teaching “practices” in a narrow sense: for instance, I still think there is room in the
framework that I have developed here to account for pedagogy as an epistemic activity in which teachers and students engage together. Yet, this dissertation indicates the importance of attending to pedagogy in research on curriculum. Because curriculum ultimately emerges during the work that teachers and students do together, pedagogy can be recognized as a crucial point leverage—perhaps more than any other activity, likely more than writing syllabi, course schedules, and lists of outcomes—in shaping students’ experienced curricula. In this way, this dissertation’s approach to curriculum can be read as indicating that pedagogy occupies a powerful role in curriculum.

*Curriculum, Knowledge-Making, and Students*

The phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” (Au 49) in my definition of curriculum might misled readers. This definition might seem to imply that knowledge is something one either “accesses” or does not “access,” out there in the environment. Both of these readings of the phrase “the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form” would be slightly inaccurate. I read the phrase as indicating that the accessibility of knowledge has an environmental aspect, but not that knowledge merely resides in the environment. Rather, the accessibility of knowledge has at least two aspects: the environment and consciousness.

Curriculum intervenes in knowledge and knowledge-making by structuring the environmental aspect of the accessibility of knowledge. In this model, then, knowledge emerges through an interaction between students and their environments—including teachers and other students.

My thinking here has been influenced by both Au and John Dewey. They offer a way to think about the relation among environment, consciousness, and knowledge. This relation is illustrated by a passage from *The Child and the Curriculum* in which Dewey discusses the role that disciplinary knowledge should play in the creation of curricula:
There is no such thing as sheer self-activity possible—because all activity takes place in a medium, in a situation, and with reference to its conditions. But, again, no such thing as imposition of truth from without […] is possible. All depends upon the activity which the mind itself undergoes in responding to what is presented from without. Now, the value of the formulated wealth of knowledge that makes up the course of study is that it may enable the educator to determine the environment of the child, and thus by indirection to direct. (org. emphasis 39)

It is clear that in this model “truth” and knowledge cannot be imposed on students; rather, knowledge emerges as students reflect on how their environments respond to their activity. For Dewey and Au, curriculum intervenes in education by structuring the environments that students encounter—directing by indirection. Furthermore, for Dewey especially, what we might call disciplinary knowledge—or as Dewey phrases it, the “formulated wealth of knowledge,” a phrase that can be read as foregrounding the reified aspect of knowledge—assists educators in their efforts to shape educational environments.

All of this is to say that, in the theory of curriculum that I have been building throughout this dissertation, students should be understood as active participants in knowledge-making. This approach also argues that curriculum structures the educational environments that students encounter and in this way guides students’ knowledge-making activities. In this model, knowledge-making does not simply occur outside of educational environments (e.g., in disciplinary journals), or before students enter into them (e.g., during a teacher’s preparations); knowledge is not simply waiting out there in the environment to be accessed. Knowledge certainly is not something that one passes on to students. Instead, students actively participate in knowledge-making as they engage with educational environments and reflect on that
engagement. Furthermore, I would agree with Dewey that it is an educators’ responsibility to draw on their own knowledge—in particular, what we tend to call disciplinary knowledge—to guide their efforts to shape educational environments. In this approach to curriculum, then, educators do play a role in students’ knowledge-making activities, but this role is understood as intervening in the environment.

Curriculum and Student Agency

I agree with Wenger that his theory of practice accounts (1) for how history, culture, discourses, and institutions structure human action and (2) for how human action also constructs, reconstructs, and intervenes in structures (see especially Wenger 12-13). This theoretical approach offers a particular understanding of human agency—and by extension, student agency. Drawing on Wenger, I have especially tried to account for how students, in courses offered by GECU’s Writing Program, seem to have had the agency to negotiate the meaning of practice with their teachers. That students negotiated the meaning of practice was seen chapter four, where I discussed Nathan’s teaching in IWWE. The discussion of Nathan’s teaching suggests, however, that different classroom contexts open or constrict possibilities for negotiation in varying degrees. Nathan expressed that he actively attended to meaningfulness: he tried to create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful writing practices. However, such opportunities might not be available in other courses in GECU’s Writing Program, in other programs, or at other colleges or universities. In other contexts, teachers might not invite—or might be unable to invite—students to negotiate their practices. Students might be asked to perform writing tasks that have no meaning beyond completing a requirement for graduation or earning a grade. In such a context, a student might be said to comply (or not) with institutional demands. In such conditions, there seems to be little negotiation, and it becomes more difficult to
find student agency. Where such negotiation is absent, where compliance rules the day, we are likely to find institutional power playing itself out in its most conspicuous forms, such as the granting or withholding of privileges and honors—pay, employment, promotions, public praise, grades, degrees. Yet, even in such conditions, we might look for openings for student agency. We might look for what Michel de Certeau would call “tactics”: students and teachers circumventing institutional power for their own purposes, fashioning unexpected curricula within institutional spaces in the process.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that students always shape curricula; they always participate in shaping their educational environments, even if in barely perceptible and seemingly insignificant ways. But I want to take care not to romanticize students and their agency. Institutions, programs, and teachers can severely restrict students’ agency in shaping curriculum, especially by reducing time and space for negotiating the meaning of practice and by enforcing compliance.

We might also imagine other possibilities for student agency different from those I have been discussing. Students might be invited to write and revise curricular policies and documents. Students also have agency as they write course evaluations—one way to communicate when current practices are good enough or not. They also have agency as educational consumers, even if this is a form of agency that we tend to see as impoverished.

Finally, in accounting for agency, we might look more carefully at institutional and disciplinary structures. The divisions of universities into colleges and departments certainly affects curriculum, as do inherited grading and course credit systems. The structuring of time into semesters, trimesters, or quarters—a structuring that has become mostly naturalized in higher education—has its effects. Whether students take courses within the confines the
university and college, or whether they gain credit for working with organizations partnered with the university, matters too. This is an large area of inquiry that I cannot address here, but all of these institutional factors—which, for inquiry to progress in this vein, would need to be denaturalized—contribute to shaping curriculum and possibilities for students’ agency in changing it.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

*Moving beyond administrator perspectives*

In drawing conclusions about the program-wide curricular realignment in GECU’s Writing Program, this study has been limited by its reliance on administrator’s perspectives. Also, administrator’s accounts were gathered years after some of the most relevant events occurred. Future studies might seek out accounts of curriculum change from a wider range of perspectives and might study them as they are occurring. Rather than relying primarily on administrator’s accounts, future research might include interviews with a representative sample of instructors in a program undergoing an “official” curriculum change. A representative sample would at least include instructors from all ranks within a program. By gathering accounts from instructors across a program, we might better understand when, why, and how instructors learn to adjust—or do not learn to adjust, or actively resist adjusting—their teaching practices to align with a new enterprise.

Future research might also include ethnographic observations of meetings where administrators or administrators and teachers negotiate their enterprise as they develop a “new” curriculum. Such observations might provide more insight into how negotiations proceed, especially into the discourse of such negotiations. Carolyn Fulford’s dissertation on WAC program development offers a model for such research. Using ethnographic methods and critical
discourse analysis (CDA), Fulford tracked conflicts and negotiations of ideology throughout the development of a WAC program. Research on curriculum revision and change might similarly use ethnography and CDA to understand better the discursive and ideological processes through which administrators and teachers negotiate their enterprise during curricular realignment.

Research on change in teaching practices—before and after

In chapter three, I have assumed that teaching practices changed after administrators and teachers collaborated, negotiating the GECU Writing Program’s enterprise and writing up new learning goals. I have not formally collected data that supports or challenges this assumption. I do not know to what extent teachers did in fact redesign their courses around the new learning goals, or redesign their courses as a result of participating in negotiations with administrators and other teachers. One way to make up for this gap would be longitudinal studies that generate data on teachers’ practices prior to, during, and after curricular realignment. Such research could provide more data on whether, how, and why curricular-realignment strategies produce changes in teaching practices.

Student perspectives and classroom observation

Only one student enrolled in this study. Due to low enrollment, this study has been unable to track changes in students’ experiences during curricular realignment. Future research might seek out students’ accounts of their experiences in writing courses prior to and after significant curricular-realignment events. Such research might seek to identify synchronic patterns in students’ experiences and diachronic changes in those patterns. While every student may have her or his own experienced curriculum (Yancey), it seems useful to identify patterns and changes in patterns in experienced curricula to determine whether and how curriculum changes during realignment. It seems most useful to look for commonalities across experiences.
because might best indicate a shift in a curriculum’s “center of gravity,” so to speak. Yet, even as looking for patterns might be useful, we might also be interested in the idiosyncratic, which might help us to recognize a broader range of influences on the curricula students experience.

*Writing curricula and social and cultural reproduction*

As I noted in the introduction, James Berlin has claimed that college curriculum “serves as a mediator” between a society and students and that it “is a device for encouraging the production of a certain kind of graduate, in effect, a certain kind of person” (*Rhetoric* 18). Future studies might follow up on Berlin’s lead by examining what kinds of people various writing curricula produce. I understand that such research would be involved in asking how writing curricula participate in social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron). This is a form of research that could look beyond overt curriculum to study hidden curriculum (e.g. Apple; Giroux and Purpel). I am not certain how such research could be conducted. It seems difficult, for example, to trace how a single first-year writing course contributes to the person that a student becomes.

I see a promising starting point in Todd Ruecker’s recent research on students’ experiences as they moved from high-school English courses in a single high school in El Paso to college writing courses at a nearby community college and a nearby university. What is most striking about Ruecker’s study is how different the writing curricula at the college and university were—the writing program at the university had recently received a CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence, while the curriculum at the community college was mostly mode-based. In his *College Composition and Communication* article about this research, Ruecker reports on seven students in a larger study. Four of these students went to the university; three to the community college. Two of the three students who attended the college ceased their
enrollment at the college after one semester. All of the students who attended the university continued—or “persisted”—through their second semesters. While it’s impossible to say whether these students’ experiences in their first-year writing courses determined their persistence, it seems provocative to consider the role that first-year writing courses played in students’ decisions to remain in college or leave. To consider this, I would argue, is one way to think about the relation between first-year writing curriculum and social reproduction. In other words, how does first-year writing curriculum, whether overt or hidden, contribute to producing college graduates and non-college graduates?

The relation between writing curricula and social reproduction could be studied in different ways as well. Again, Ruecker’s study provides some clues. Ruecker reports that the curriculum at the university emphasized multimodal composition, an area of focus that seems to have been absent from the curriculum at the college. This difference suggests that students at the two institutions are learning to think about and experience writing differently; they are also learning to become different kinds of writers. We might ask, “For what social roles and kinds of employment do these two curricula prepare students?” Again, there are methodological difficulties to answering this question, but hopefully, it offers a starting place.

Curriculum and race, gender, sexuality, and class

This dissertation has been especially quiet about the relation between curriculum and gender, sexuality, and class. Race has figured into this study—participants identified a desire to work against racism as a motivation for IWWE—but it has not been central theme. Research on curriculum in composition might attend to these factors better than this dissertation has. It seems especially urgent to ask how curriculum is experienced differently by people who identify, or have been identified with, with various gender, sexual, racial, and class identities. How also does
a curriculum privilege some perspectives at the expense of others? It also seems urgent to ask how such identities affect processes of curriculum change, or curriculum realignment. How, for instance, does identity shape negotiations over the enterprise of a writing program? How does it shape whose voices are heard or not, or what curriculum changes seem desirable, necessary, or commonsense? And how does identity shape whether and how a teacher finds meaning in new curricular policies?

* * *

Above all, this dissertation urges readers to move beyond providing anecdotes of curriculum change to theorize how and why curriculum change happens. It urges readers to understand curriculum as more than official curricular documents, curricular policies, or academic plans. And finally, it urges readers to consider how broad social changes—in the purposes of educational institutions or in public opinion and government policy—affect and are affected by local curriculum. At one point, this dissertation contained a chapter reviewing literature form curriculum studies, a field in education that has a long history of theorizing and researching curriculum in K-12 schools, a history stretching back into the nineteenth century. For various reasons, which I do not want to go into here, it was best eliminate that chapter. However, I would recommend that composition scholars interested in curriculum might benefit from engaging more deeply with curriculum studies, learning but also contributing to the field. This dissertation has offered a starting point for developing theories of curriculum and curriculum change in composition, but there is still much work to done.
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW DESCRIPTIONS AND GUIDES

Description of Interviews

These interviews are qualitative and semi-structured. These types of interviews are described by Robert Weiss in *Learning from Strangers*. In these interviews, the interviewer follows an interview guide that contains, rather than fully articulated questions, prompts for areas of questioning. Such an interview guide allows the interview to proceed somewhat informally. It also always for a wider breadth of conversation to occur. In these interviews, the researcher may pursue a line of question as long as it is relevant to the study. In other words, the interviewer operates within the framework established by the interview guide, but also follows lines of questioning as long as they pertain to the goals of the interview. A typical line of questioning might begin with “Walk me through a time when…”

Interviews During Fall-2013 Semester

Below are six interview guides: initial, intermediary, and concluding guides for student- and instructor-participants. Each participant was interviewed three times: one initial interview, one intermediary interview, and one final interview.

Description of Interviews with Student-Participant

*Initial interview:* The purpose of this interview is to gather information about how students understand their identity; their experiences with linguistic difference and English; the language(s) they use; the relation between education and their personal, professional, or other goals; and their expectations for IWWE.

*Intermediary Interview:* This interview is intended to develop understanding of student experiences, thoughts, and feelings about IWWE during the middle of the semester. In the intermediary interview, the interviewer should focus on those aspects that seem most relevant,
spending more time on those areas indicated by the interview guide that gather the richest information about students’ engagement with IWWE. For instance, the interviewer should decide during the interview how much time to spend on writing or classroom interactions, depending on the participant’s responses.

**Concluding Interview:** The purpose of this interview is to assess whether and how students’ understanding of the relation between language and writing has changed during IWWE. This interview is also intended to assess how students understand the relation between IWWE and their educational goals.

*Description of Interviews with Instructor-Participant*

**Initial:** This purpose of this interview is to establish the instructor’s background, understanding of course goals, expectations, and past experience with IWWE.

**Intermediary:** The purpose of this interview is to develop instructor’s understandings of course developments.

**Concluding:** The purpose of this interview is to develop instructor’s assessment of IWWE and students’ engagement and future plans for IWWE.

*Interview Guides*

**Interviews with Student-Participants**

**Initial**

1. Identity
   a. Ask respondent to talk about how s/he would describe her-/himself
   b. Ask respondent to talk about how s/he thinks teachers and peers would describe her/him
   c. Develop respondents thoughts and feelings about how others would descr
2. Education and goals
   a. Ask respondent to talk about her/his decision to go to college, to attend GECU, and to select a particular major (if s/he has chosen a major).
   b. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about these decisions.

3. Expectations for IWWE
   a. Ask respondent to talk about what s/he expects of IWWE?
   b. Ask respondent to talk about what s/he would like to learn from this writing course in terms of her/his educational, professional, personal, or other goals.
   c. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about IWWE.

4. Experiences with language linguistic difference and English
   a. Ask respondent to talk about her/his experiences with speakers of English and other languages
   b. Ask respondent to talk about what languages s/he uses, when, and why
   c. Ask respondent to talk about the languages that her friends and family members use
   d. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about these experiences.
   e. Ask respondent about how important her/his languages is/are for her/his sense of self
   f. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about the languages s/he and her friends and family uses

5. Experiences with writing
   a. Ask respondent to talk about her/his experiences with writing
   b. Ask respondent to talk about what is “good” and “bad” writing
c. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about experiences

d. Develop respondent’s criteria for “good” and “bad” writing and reasons for these criteria

Intermediary

1. In-class experiences

   a. Ask the respondent to talk about his/her experiences of in-class events. Draw the respondent’s attention to any in-class events that seem significant.

   b. Ask respondent to talk about her/his engagement in in-class activities.

   c. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about her/his own engagement in the class.

   d. If needed, ask respondent for clarification or verification of in-class observations.

2. Understandings of course readings

   a. Ask the respondent to talk about engagement with course readings

   b. Develop thoughts and feelings about this engagement.

   c. Develop thoughts and feelings about multilingual/codemeshing texts (if a multilingual text has been read)

3. Understandings of writing assignments

   a. Ask the respondent to walk you through her/his writing process for any assignments that have been completed since the last interview

   b. Ask the respondent to talk about feedback s/he received on her/his writing from peers and instructors

   c. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings the writing s/he has produced for class
d. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about their voice in their writing

e. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about the language(s) they have used in their writing

4. Identity in the classroom

   a. Ask respondent about how s/he thinks others in the class (instructors and peers) would describe her/him

   b. Ask the respondent to talk about specific occurrences that make them think this.

   c. Ask the respondent to talk about moments when s/he either felt her/his self came through in her/his writing and class participation or did not

   d. Develop respondent’s thoughts and feelings about how s/he understands the ways others think about her/him.

5. Language in the classroom and on writing assignments

   a. Ask the respondent about how s/he has used the languages s/he knows in the class

   b. Ask the respondent to talk about hearing or reading others languages other than English in the class

   c. Ask the respondent to talk about the ways others in class use English either in speech or writing

   d. Ask the respondent to talk about how her/his proficiency has shaped her/his interactions in class

Concluding

1. Reflection on language and writing

   a. Ask the respondent to compare her/his understanding of language at the beginning of the semester to his/her current understanding.
b. Ask the respondent to compare his/her understanding of writing at the beginning of the semester to his/her current understanding.

c. Develop indications of changes in understanding

2. Reflection on educational goals
   a. Ask the respondent to assess how well IWWE has enabled him/her to pursue his/her educational goals
   b. Develop reasons for the assessment

3. Reflection on identity
   a. Ask the respondent to talk about the relation between the languages s/he used in class and her/his sense of self
   b. Develop thoughts and feelings about this relation

Interviews with Instructor-Participants

Initial

1. Course goals
   a. Ask respondent to talk about how s/he developed the course
   b. Develop motivations for the current design of the course

2. Past experiences
   a. Ask respondent to talk about his/her experiences teaching this course in the past
   b. Develop indications of student engagement

3. Expectations
   a. Ask respondent to talk about what s/he hopes will happen IWWE and what s/he hopes will not

4. Background
a. Ask respondent to talk about background as a writing instructor
b. Develop motivations for teaching IWWE.

Intermediary

1. In-class events
   a. Ask respondent to talk about in-class activities
   b. Develop respondent’s assessment of students’ engagement
   c. Develop respondent’s reasons and motivations for in-class activities

2. Writing assignments
   a. Ask respondent to talk about assignments
   b. Develop respondent’s reasons and motivations for assignments

3. Student writing
   a. Ask the respondent to talk about student writing that stands out, in either favorable or unfavorable ways
   b. Ask respondent to assess student writing
   c. Develop respondent’s assessment of students’ engagement
   d. Develop indications of assessment criteria

4. Readings
   a. Ask respondent to talk about how s/he selected recently assigned course readings
   b. Develop reasons and motivations for selecting reading
   c. Develop respondent’s understanding of students’ engagement with course readings

Concluding

1. Reflection on content of IWWE
a. Ask respondent to talk about what assignments, in-class activities, and readings were successful or not successful
b. Develop respondent’s criteria for success
c. Develop respondent’s reasons for their assessment
d. Develop respondent’s understanding of students’ engagement in IWWE

2. Future plans
   a. Ask respondent about whether and how s/he might teach IWWE in the future
   b. Develop respondents reasons and motivations

Interviews During Fall-2014 Semester

Instructor interviews: This interview was intended to learn about the instructor’s professional background; motivations for teaching Intercultural Writing and World Englishes (IWWE); attitudes toward and understandings of IWWE (its goals, issues, and its reception by students); his/her role in creation and implementation of the course; and his/her role in curricular development.

Program director interviews: This interview was intended to learn about the director’s professional background and experiences with, understandings of, and attitudes toward curriculum and curricular development.

Interview: Instructor-Participants

1. Background
   a. Ask respondent to talk about background as a writing instructor
   b. Develop motivations for teaching IWWE.

2. Course goals
a. Ask respondent to talk about how s/he developed the course, both in concert with others and independently

b. Develop motivations for the current design of the course

3. Past experiences
   a. Ask respondent to talk about his/her experiences teaching this course in the past
   b. Develop indications of student engagement
   c. Develop respondents experiences with course materials, assignments, and class activities

4. Expectations
   a. Ask respondent to talk about what s/he hoped to accomplish through teaching

IWWE

5. Curricular development
   a. Ask respondent to talk about their participation in curricular development
   b. Develop respondent’s understanding of the role that IWWE has played in curricular development
   c. Develop respondent’s attitudes toward their curricular development and their role in curricular development

Interview Protocol for Program Directors

1. Background
   a. Ask respondent to talk about his/her professional background, especially as a program director

2. Experiences with curriculum development
a. Ask respondent to talk about his/her role and experiences developing curriculum at GECU

b. Develop respondent’s understanding of the role that considerations of language and language difference have played in curricular development at GECU

c. Develop respondent’s understanding of curricular development and the function of curriculum

d. Develop respondent’s understanding of the role that IWWE has played in curricular development
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Anna: Anna is a part-time lecturer, with a B.A., a Master’s in Teaching, and a Ph.D. in English from Global East Coast University (GECU—a pseudonym). After receiving her master’s degree, Anna worked as an high-school English teacher for two years and, during her second year as an English teacher, started part-time work at GECU. While teaching at GECU, Anna enrolled in a newly formed English Ph.D. program there. She took a Marxist approach to studying contemporary Canadian literature and completed her doctoral studies in 2003. Anna has worked as a teacher for 30 years, taking time off to complete her doctorate and to care for dying relatives. At times she was full-time lecturer at GECU but in recent years has worked part-time, in part to devote time to what Anna described as “political work with immigrants and asylees” and to help care for a granddaughter. Anna was one of three instructors who helped to invent and pilot the special section of FYW at GECU titled “Intercultural Writing and World Englishes” (IWWE). Anna was interviewed for this study and her syllabi for IWWE were collected.

Barbara: Barbara was a full-time lecturer at GECU and was First-Year Writing (FYW) Program Director from 2012 to 2015. Before teaching at GECU, Barbara earned her MFA in creative writing. Barbara led the First-Year Writing Curricular Task Force at GECU. The task force wrote new course descriptions for FYW at GECU in the fall of 2013. Barbara was interviewed for this study.

George: George is a Professor in the English Department at GECU and was its Writing Program Director from 2009 to 2014. He has a Ph.D. in English and is an active scholar in rhetoric and composition. During his time as Director, George oversaw the curricular events on which this dissertation focuses. George was interviewed for this study.
Hugh: Hugh is a full-time lecturer who has taught for GECU’s Writing Program since 2011. Before teaching at GECU, Hugh taught English composition in Taiwan, from the early 1990s to 2011, with an intermission as he returned to the United States to complete his Ph.D. Hugh was one of three instructors who invented and piloted IWWE. Hugh was interviewed for this study and provided course documents from IWWE and access to his teaching portfolio from the 2012-2013 academic year.

Louis: Louis has an Ed.D. and was hired by the GECU English Department as an Associate Professor in 2011. Louis was Writing Center Director from 2011 until 2014, when he became Writing Program Director, a position he has occupied since then. Louis participated in early conversations about IWWE and was able to provide an administrator’s perspective on curriculum in GECU’s Writing Program. Louis was interviewed for this study.

Nathan: Nathan is a full-time lecturer who earned his Ed.D. in 2011 and has taught at GECU since 1991. “Years back,” Nathan said, he worked as “Director of Assessment and ESOL” for the GECU Writing Program. Nathan was one of three instructors who invented and piloted IWWE. Nathan participated in this study by giving three interviews during the fall-2013 semester; by providing me course document, including a syllabus, handouts, course readings, and assignments; and by allowing his class to be observed once per week over the semester.
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