

**“This is My Profession:” How Notions of Teaching Enable and Constrain Autonomy of
Two-Year College Writing Instructors**

By

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IN MEMORY

*Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäh,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich.*

--Marie Rainer Rilke, "Die Erste Elegie"

In memory of the poet (-2004), the baker (-2002), the dancer (-2006), the printer (-2006), the prankster (-2010), and all of the other "angels." And in special memory of my mother, Barbara Waller, the dreamer and maker, (1939 -1979), and my father, Gary Griffiths (1929-2013) the renegade, the yarn spinner, neon boot wearer, gin-flask tipper, guardian of so many stories, so many secrets, so many fears: you are my multitudes. I cannot contain you.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Sebastian Zöllner, my first advisor, playful friend, rocking dance lead, and most important skeptic: you make breath, itself, possible sometimes.

And to my amazing sons—Aaron, the junior paleontologist, who greets the sun each morning with more questions, and Raphael, the Buddha-toddler, who greets the sun each morning as sun, as morning, as self.

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As a young child I thought of many of my teachers as surrogate parents. Schools, themselves, were the most sacred “home” spaces of my youth. It was only when I first encountered composition studies that I came to recognize that educational spaces are often fraught, unsafe, potentially harsh, and rife with rejection for many students. That early recognition has evolved into a sustaining interest in educational access and writing instruction, in particular in the contexts of open-admissions colleges and the voices and experiences of historically “unauthorized” speakers, writers, and learners—those whose “non-standard” life experiences were so often silenced, even if unintentionally, by a system that refused the language patterns that shaped, carried, and communicated those life experiences. That trajectory was not arbitrary. It was shaped by the power of educators, from Mrs. McCracken, my first grade teacher, who came to my house after my mother died and attended my birthday parties, and by Mrs. Arnold, my second grade teacher who stood on top of the trashcan and screamed to tell the class we weren’t performing to our potentials and plastered us with lipstick kisses on birthdays. From those early beginnings, my path towards being a teacher and scholar of educational access was paved by a dozen such amazing teachers, informal and formal: my father reading *Song of Myself* aloud in the middle of the garage on a rainy day just so I could “hear it,” to Mrs. Gaede, putting Dostoyevski into my hands, Mr. Hintze reading Dylan Thomas at a whisper to draw us even closer into our classroom circle, Dr. McClure, who insisted that I—then a student in an MFA program—be her assistant in developing pedagogy workshops and mentoring. It was only after

coming to the University of Michigan that I came to realize just how unlikely my educational accomplishments and ambitions had been. Then, upon studying theories of literacy and reading the statistics of higher education attainment and completion, I realized that in some very important ways—surely not all—I had been a “they,” all along. These powerful mentors had made me feel so “authorized” that I had simply never noticed.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE TEACHING OF COLLEGE-LEVEL WRITING COURSES AT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

This dissertation begins with the premise that writing instructors at two-year colleges are highly skilled at teaching a radically diverse population of college students and that the knowledge that they have about the learning processes of those students and teaching strategies in the classroom offer crucial contributions to the institutions they serve, as well as the field of composition. However, an unbalanced emphasis on teaching as a classroom practice informed primarily by locally-situated knowledge about teaching English in two-year colleges may obscure a discussion of instructors' professional roles within their institutions and even contribute to what some have identified as ongoing, if gradual, institutional and cultural delegitimization of the profession (e.g., Alford, 2003; Alford & Kroll, 2003; Kroll, 2001).

Many researchers have recognized the unique nature of teaching writing at the two-year college (e.g., Grubb & Associates, 1999; Knodt, 2005; Lewiecki-Wilson & Sommers, 1999; Reynolds & Holladay-Hicks, 2005, 2005; Tinberg, 2005). Composition teacher-scholars Holladay-Hicks and Reynolds (2005) have described writing instruction at the two-year college as a "distinct and significant profession" from that of four-year colleges (p. ix). Their edited anthology, *The Profession of English in the 2-Year College*, highlights the unique history and evolution of the profession during the expansion of the two-year college system in the 1960s-1970s and in response to the evolving demands of increasingly diverse student populations. They emphasize the locally-situated and student-responsive pedagogies born of teaching experiences

at access institutions as instructors adapted their instruction to teach second-language speakers, high-school students, parents, full-time workers, parolees, etc., and in response to the collective needs of the communities their colleges serve. They argue that research about the teaching at these institutions must understand the profession as locally-situated and contextually-responsive. The collection emphasizes that the knowledge of the profession derives from classroom practice and that this evolution differs from the teaching at four-year colleges, where classroom practice, it is assumed, derives from theory. Finally, they conclude that the “challenge” for members of the profession of two-year college instructors of English going forward is to see themselves as “knowledge makers”—to recognize the unique expertise in classroom practices as the knowledge they make and can contribute to their own profession (p. 141).

Many of the findings of this dissertation echo Holladay-Hicks’ and Reynolds’ call for instructors to recognize themselves as knowledge makers. I am indebted to the work of Holladay-Hicks, Reynolds, and their collaborators for their overdue recognition of the unique history development of instructional practices in two-year colleges. However, though Holladay-Hicks, Reynolds, and their contributors clearly emphasize the importance of self-positioning of two-year college instructors as “knowledge makers,” they stop short from articulating *how* instructors can take up the role of “knowledge makers” in their institutional settings. Additionally, they do not define that knowledge or how it could best be engaged at the department, institution, or policy levels that most directly affect teaching curriculum. Moreover, the emphasis on the locally-situated nature of two-year college instruction unintentionally oversimplifies and reinforces a professional divide between writing instructors at two-year colleges and those at four-year colleges into a binary of practice and theory in which classroom-situated pedagogies are described as an alternative to pedagogies derived from theory. Such a

divide both inaccurately captures the knowledge of the field and is unsustainable against the backdrop of goals and values of the discipline of composition studies, which has theorized pedagogical practice since its inception.

In this dissertation, I use *professional autonomy* to help disambiguate differences between the role expectations instructors at two-year colleges perceive and how these perceptions inform the ways they assert their roles as knowledge makers in their institutions. Taken as a whole, my analysis of instructors' perceptions, responses, and asserted levels of authority suggests a need to extend current notions of teaching as classroom-based practice to a model that conceives of teaching as rhizomatic—meaning, a process of engagement within the classroom that spreads through the department, the institution, and policy-level conversations that indirectly influence curriculum decisions at all these levels. Following an analysis of a series of interviews and teaching observations, I came to identify contemporary theorization of *professional autonomy*—a cornerstone of professional identity—as a useful construct to describe how instructors' roles as knowledge makers become bolstered, subverted, or extincted¹ within their institutions and the ways these responses are made possible by instructors' own constructions of their professional identities.

Some have argued that, in order to gain legitimacy, two-year college instructors must be teacher-scholars and contribute to knowledge-making in the field through traditionally-recognized avenues, such as publications (e.g., Andelora, 2005; Prager, 2003). The findings of this study expand notions of knowledge making and scholarship to suggest an imperative to more clearly define expectations for instructors, by instructors, within their home institutions in terms

¹ In behavioral psychology, to “extinct” a behavior is to cause an individual to stop performing a behavior by restricting or removing reinforcements for that behavior.

of their responsibilities and roles in shaping curricular and institutional change. This exploration is not intended to undermine calls for increased scholarly participation of these instructors. Scholarly participation remains central to how instructors perceive themselves within a community of experts and how the disciplinary community perceives instructors in turn. Such participation may improve instructors' own senses of authority. However, the focus of this study is on how the role expectations instructors perceive influence the ways they assert their professional autonomy at the institutional level.

In sum, I find that instructors who conceive of their professional role in terms of the boundaries of the classroom also limit their assertion of professional autonomy at their institutions and their abilities to regulate and revise their own institutional situations. The findings from this dissertation suggest that administrators have an important role in shaping how instructors conceive of their teaching. However, it also suggests that instructors' own willingness to disengage from institutional-level knowledge making may contribute to their own decreased autonomy in their institutions. Instructors at two institutions in this study took a "live and let live" approach to teaching, seeing themselves as "independent contractors" of their own classrooms as one participant described himself in McGrath and Spear's study of intellectual engagement of professional instructors at two year colleges two decades ago (McGrath & Spear, 1991, p. 147).

I draw on this notion of "independent contractors" to describe the relationships some instructors had with institutional peers and administrators in terms of tensions and conflicts regarding educational goals, standards, and interests. Rather than seeing themselves as members of a community of professionals responsible for defining, regulating, and renewing their expertise through persistent critique and evaluation of their own standards and bringing those

efforts to administrators to seek the structural supports necessary to carry out those standards, independent contractors make decisions about the techniques of their practice within the local confines of a work space. As a result of the lack of active engagement among instructors about their professional expertise and their roles in disseminating and regulating that expertise, “independent contractor” instructors in this study described a general sense of distrust to policy makers, administrators, instructors outside their professional cliques. By limiting innovation to their own classrooms and instructional cliques, instructors avoided the professional disagreements and agreements that form the foundation for professional debate that undergirds regulation: theories of teaching went unexamined, and professional authority from these instructors offered limited impact on the teaching expectations and methods among colleagues and administrators. Consequently, those instructors whose teaching roles resembled the professional identities of independent contractors were least able to organize and change curricular initiatives and expectations with which they disagreed.

These findings reinforce conclusions described by existing two-year college scholars, such as Grubb (1999) and Levin and Kater (2009) that suggest that two-year college instructors lack professional autonomy and are poorly prepared to innovate instruction or improve the conditions of their own labor. They also repeat findings by McGrath and Spear (1991) and Townsend and Twombly (2007) that claim instructors assert only marginal professional autonomy in their institutions. What’s more, these findings reframe findings by McGrath and Spear (1991) who observed instructors operating within a “practitioner’s culture,” one that rarely critiqued or voiced disagreement between colleagues. Specifically, this study suggests that the stakes associated with “practitioner’s culture,” which McGrath and Spear identified as an academic crisis, may represent a professional crisis affecting instructors’ abilities to regulate and

innovate their professions. The exploration in this dissertation offers an explanation for why instructors' own efforts to emancipate their professional selves may further subordinate them to the institutions where they teach.

Professional Autonomy: a Definition

Attempts to define professional autonomy can be traced to conversations that developed in in a 1970s climate of evolving work standards, expansion of union and anti-union sentiments, and an expanded market for a workforce marked by prestige and specialized knowledge. In the simplest sense, Magali Sarfatti Larson (Magali Sarfatti Larson, 2013) defines professions as “occupations with special power and prestige” (p. x). She notes, professions are “self-governing and self-disciplining communities of intellectual workers bound by shared knowledge and shared norms” (p. 225). Professions “gain legitimacy” through their assertion of autonomy made possible through the production, dissemination, and regulation of specialized knowledge developed from those norms (p. xii). Sarfatti Larson identifies power and prestige as the benefits professionals acquire as a result of a social recognition for the specialized knowledge of a community of “professionals.” This power and prestige, in turn, allows professionals to carry out the duties associated with their profession, including regulating and updating the ways their profession is carried out via the production of new knowledge obtained through those same methodologies.

It is important to recognize that according to this definition of professional, “specialized knowledge” and “norms” are not regulated by outsiders, but rather, by the professionals themselves, so that, for example, brain surgeons research and identify improvements in brain surgery and hold their colleagues accountable through peer review, teaching residencies, and clinical observations. A professional is recognized as a member of a status community by other

professionals in the community when that person enacts and upholds the norms associated with the profession, be it surgery, research, publication, or—as the case in our study—the contemporary approaches to writing pedagogy identified and promoted by other professionals of writing instruction. In this sense, the profession of writing instructors on a large scale depends in part on the recognition of the work of all of its members by other members.

Sarfatti Larson's authoritative text on professional autonomy is one of a flare of texts that emerged from conversations about professional autonomy during shifts in economic structures in the 1970s and 80s. Engel (1970) defines professional autonomy as the "freedom to practice [one's] profession in accordance with one's training" (p. 12). Schultz and Harrison (1986) outline seven "freedoms" identified by medical professionals as components of professional autonomy. These include: choice of specialty and practice of location, control over earnings, control over nature and volume of medical tasks, acceptance of patients, control over diagnosis and treatment, control over evaluation of care, and control over other professionals (p. 340). Such freedoms are crucial to understanding professional autonomy, because they tie possible individual enactments of professional identity roles to procedures of recognized and specialized training.

Moreover, questions about what it means to be "a professional," and in particular to be a professional writing instructor at an access college, are increasingly pertinent as the economy responds to a new generation of changes, including the mass production of knowledge, globalization of economic relationships, heavy reliance on contingent, part-time labor in higher education, and ever greater focus on the educational outcomes associated with success (e.g., Banks, 2004; Hagedorn, 2010; Levin, 2001; Wagoner et al., 2009). These large scale changes and policy initiatives matter, because they put emphasis on the outcomes and accountability of

instruction in terms of completion and attainment with a goal of linking students to the real world skills and credentials needed to succeed in the “new economy.” However, interventions driven by workforce expectations and completion rates can overlook pedagogical knowledge about individualized teaching and process-based teaching methods. Increased availability to online learning, heavy reliance on adjunct instructors, and decreases in educational funding for two-year colleges collectively assert pressures on colleges to hire temporary—often poorly paid and sometimes less prepared—employment reinforce institutional practices that disconnect instructors from their professional communities. Moreover, these practices suggest that the pedagogical knowledge and expertise full-time faculty bring to their positions at these institutions are either interchangeable—can be fulfilled by any faculty hired—or not worth paying a full salary and benefits to obtain. Over time, these practices have changed the expectations for professional identity of two-year college faculty and the processes through which these identities can be asserted (Wagoner et al., 2009). Thus, it seems fitting that Sarfatti Larson has updated her much cited 1977 study, *Rise of the Professions: A Sociological Analysis* to address foundational changes in the economy and socialization of professionals in the 21st century, including those of academic professionals (*The Rise of Professionalism: Monopolies of Competence and Sheltered Markets, 2013*). The 2013 edition compares across professions, including medical professionals and university professors, to identify ways professional autonomy is enacted and constrained in the contemporary professional environment.

The first kind of professional autonomy Sarfatti-Larson identifies exerts control over *technique*, which locates autonomy at the level of activity and practice. The second enactment of professional autonomy exerts control over the *scope of service*, which extends control to the knowledge, protocols, and professional theories that shape that practice. Control over scope of

service, derives authority from *specialized knowledge/expertise* in the standards and expectations of a professional field. Scope of service, Sarfatti Larson explains, “goes beyond mere technical autonomy” and “derives from monopoly, a monopoly of competence legitimized by officially sanctioned ‘expertise,’ and a monopoly of credibility with the public.” In direct terms, a monopoly of competence describes a belief that a specialized kind of knowledge exists (say, of writing instruction) and that the named professionals—instructors—are the experts to oversee the production, regulation, and enactment of this knowledge.

In this study, professional autonomy refers to the set of freedoms instructor perceived to assert control over their scope of service that is to draw on specialized training in writing pedagogy to shape the curriculum requirements at their institutions and the professional evaluations of their departmental colleagues and their own performance of those requirements. I will distinguish this form of professional autonomy from the less impactful enactment of professional autonomy—control over technique—which I will use to describe control over the individual activities of teaching, such as classroom interaction. To maintain high professional status, instructors would ideally have a strong measure of control over both scope of service and technique and would derive their authority from their positions as experts in writing pedagogy—what Sarfatti-Larson would call “monopoly of competence”—and credibility with the public for teaching effectiveness—or “monopoly of credibility.”

Sarfatti-Larson’s notions of monopoly of competence and monopoly of credibility are the fundamental stakes when examining the professional roles of two-year college instructors, because their competence—the recognition of writing pedagogy as an expert skill—and credibility—the belief among the public that such teaching is effective—are perpetually questioned. In the current multi-tiered post-secondary education system that includes private,

public, profit, non-profit, research and teaching institution, notions of monopoly of competence and credibility offer insight into how instructors perceive their professional autonomy—their rights and freedoms to exert control over scope of service—or even how to increase their autonomy within their institutions. Instructors at two-year colleges are not university professors. Typically, though most instructors at two-year colleges have completed a master’s degree in a related field, they have not been credentialed through a recognized academic process that situates them as authorities (such as a dissertation defense) and they do not define their professional participation through research, publication, or other activities that shape the public and theoretical knowledge of the field.

Although two-year college instructors comprise a large portion of the professionals within composition and English education, teaching about half of the undergraduates in the United States, Clark (1997) has observed that their roles are most closely aligned with K-12 “teachers.” Their tenure evaluations focus on teaching excellence, which is defined and evaluated at the department and institutional level. Thus, instructors occupy a sort of hybrid position—constructing pedagogical knowledge, but only rarely influencing conversations in the discipline that evaluate their own teaching excellence. They are, in practice, only rarely “knowledge makers” when evaluated in terms of contributions to public knowledge in the field. When instructors cannot exert professional autonomy to define the criteria for teaching excellence or the procedure for evaluating it, then they risk sacrificing the enactment of those same standards. Thus, two-year college instructors operate in a no-man’s land of expertise: they have advanced training, they have the highest degree of interactions with students and the issues of access that the discipline of composition has evolved to address, and they teach post-secondary education that is publicly celebrated as a mechanism for social uplift and politically

hailed as a weapon of economic revitalization. At the same time, these instructors typically receive no specialized training beyond a master's degree and no formally sanctioned recognition of their competence through the typical channels of professional apprenticeship or professionalizing (such as bar exams, dissertation defenses, peer-reviewed publication, etc.) beyond institutional tenure. While tenure evaluations at two-year colleges have grown increasingly standardized in recent decades (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), tenure status from a two-year college typically does not transfer to another institution, even an institution of the same kind. The lack of recognition of tenure between institutions marks a clear departure from other professions, where attainment of professional status typically transfers at least to surrounding states, as is the case with lawyer bar exams, or nationwide, as is the case with university professors and medical doctors. As a result, these instructors have little monopoly over their competence and even less monopoly over their credibility with the public.

The lack of monopoly over competence and credibility leaves these instructors open to ongoing critiques about what they teach and how they evaluate learning from their peers, administrators, and the public, all of whom bring their own notions about how writing ought to be taught and what college students ought to learn as a part of their writing courses. Instructors describe resistance by colleagues and administrators to foundational pedagogical values of the profession, such as peer review, writing as a multi-staged process, writing to learn, and a need to “survive” a political backlash against professional knowledge in an attempt to resolve or remove developmental educational practices and outcomes from college environments (Lewiecki-Wilson & Sommers, 1999). Recent backlashes against pedagogical knowledge seem to originate in the late 1990s, when then governor Giuliani mandated an end to remedial instruction and open admissions at CUNY and extend to *No Child Left Behind* initiatives undermined pedagogical

expertise. While one might point to current policy rhetoric promoting free college for all as a sign of shifting winds, a complete lack of inclusion of two-year college faculty (besides Dr. Jill Biden) to the White House Summit (The White House, 2011) suggests these proposals, as well, derive from expertise outside of the profession. Tinberg and others (e.g., Lewiecki-Wilson & Sommers, 1999; Tinberg, 2005) have described the ongoing negotiation about writing instruction at these institutions, where instructors identify an expectation to emphasize utilitarian instruction, such as standardized language and grammar instruction, at the expense of critical thinking and pedagogical methods grounded in the scholarship of composition studies and rhetorical theory.

These pressures, which reinforce notions of language correctness, assume a monolithic language standard. Reinforcement of such a standard ignores existing professional standards for teaching that support students' language rights and calls from scholars to include and extend understanding of Englishes in composition (e. g., Lu, 2004; Scott, Straker, & Katz, 2009; Smitherman, 1995). Moreover, such approaches neglect a fundamental understanding of how language develops and how dialects shape and are shaped by discourse communities (Crystal, 2005, 2012; Wolfram & Thomas, 2008). Ignoring such foundational components of language knowledge has the effect of further marginalizing—if not excluding—the language practices and rights of those students already historically underrepresented in schools (Gebhardt & Gebhardt, 2013; Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999).

These pressures represent a threat to instructors' professional status, because they derive from assumptions about writing and language in public discourse that does not derive from specialized knowledge and practices reinforced by the profession. Sarfatti Larson admonishes,

professions *gain* autonomy: in this protected position, they can develop with increasing independence from the ideology of the dominant social elites. The production of knowledge appears to play a more and more strategic and seemingly autonomous role in the dynamics of these especial occupations. If professions obtain extended powers of self-evaluation and self-control they can become almost immune to external regulation. The fact remains, however, that professional privileges can always be lost. If a profession's *work or actual performance 'comes to have little relationship to the knowledge and values of its society,* it may have difficulty surviving.' Revolutionary social change should therefore have profound implications for professional practice because it affects, in both relative and absolute terms, the social status that established professions had achieved in previous regimes (Sarfatti Larson, 2013, p. xii emphasis added).

Sarfatti Larson's warning that a profession privileges may be lost when the work or performance of that profession becomes incongruous with the knowledge and values of society and subject to their regulation, rather than the regulation of professionals, is particularly appropriate for examining the situation of writing instructors at two-year colleges. The increasing pressures to teach and evaluate students based on "utilitarian" notions of writing demonstrate precisely this incongruity. These pressures disregard notions of writing pedagogy reflected in the discipline, such as viewing writing as a socially-situated activity (e. g., Bawarshi, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), language as a living, changing system of culturally-shaped word choices by a given set of people in a given situation (e.g., Curzan, 2002), etc. These pressures have been described by writing instructors who perceive expectations from to set aside innovative and theoretically-sound teaching models in favor of traditional, publicly recognized models of

instruction (Cox, 2009a). The teaching strategies born of such pressures have been observed by two-year college scholars as reinforcing simplified instructional models at the expense of higher order thinking (Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Cox, 2009b; Grubb & Associates, 1999). Subjective accounts of the effects of these pressures on instructors themselves are taken up by teacher scholars writing from the field (Tinberg, 2005). In order to understand how such pressures inform instructional choices requires an analysis of how perceptions inform actions. Such an analysis is made available through an examination of identity formation as a social and interactive process that, while mostly internal, can at least be approximated by listening to the described experiences and rationales of individuals thinking through those expectations and responses in their situated environments. For this purpose, I draw on identity theory and positioning theory, described in the next chapters, to better understand the responsibilities instructors associate with professional autonomy and how they enact that autonomy at their teaching institutions.

The professional autonomy of instructors at two-year colleges is tenuous in ways that other academic positions are not, because two-year colleges have evolved and succeeded through their ability to adapt to the perceived needs of the communities they serve and the pressures exerted by mercurial economic and political climates (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Levin, 2000, 2001). A powerful public market exerts significant pressure on two-year college curricula (Levin, 2001; Wagoner et al., 2009). As a result, two-year college instruction has always been influenced by economic trends and political agenda (Levin, 2000) and a set of writing outcomes associated with public views of writing rather than disciplinary notions of good pedagogy (Lewiecki-Wilson & Sommers, 1999; Tinberg, 2005). Tinberg, notes that increased focus on “utility” can impede professional goals for the field, such as “commitment to whole language

instruction and preserving students' rights to respect for their own language and dialects" (p. 140) and replace these with what one instructor called "spelling for secretaries" and even a questioning of the remaining value of humanities in two-year colleges (p. 141). The historic ability of two-year colleges to quickly adapt curricula to local economic needs has been a characteristic that contributes to their overall success as institutions. However, instructional models connected to these adaptations can sacrifice instructors' monopoly of credibility traditionally gained through disciplinary knowledge. Stated otherwise, as curricular goals and learning outcomes align more closely with "utilitarian" workforce expectations for writing rather than theoretically grounded understanding of writing pedagogy from composition and linguistics, "*work or actual performance [of instructors] 'comes to have little relationship to the knowledge and values of its society [public market].'*" Faculty's specialized knowledge loses its credibility with colleges and the communities of students who attend them, and instructors are effectively deprofessionalized.

Wagoner, Levin, and Katz (2009) have argued that such a "managerial and market imperative disconnected faculty from their prior professional identification with specialist knowledge and skills and re-anchored them in a corporate identification in which they had little choice but to take on company needs" (p. 103). In this description, Wagoner, Levin, and Kater underscore a primary tension between educational goals and pedagogical knowledge and the "company needs" of the colleges where they work—namely to provide large numbers of graduates with specialized credentials for the workforce. Meanwhile, they explain, that "resource constraints . . . that underpinned the managerial preoccupation with productivity and efficiency within education, undercut the quality of teaching and learning and eroded the effectiveness of education training" (p. 103). This tension Wagoner, Levin, and Kater describe between market-

induced changes to the roles of two-year college instructors and the teaching these instructors are able to enact. They suggest that the economic forces that drive institutional adaptations are the same forces undermining instruction and threatening the status of instructional knowledge.

Wagoner, Levin, and Kater (2009) argue that this problem is exacerbated by labor negotiations that prioritize wages over autonomy and an ongoing labor trend in which instructors take on increased service commitments without commensurate increases in curricular authority (Wagoner et al., 2009). As a result, two-year college instructors can unwittingly sacrifice part of their professional autonomy through a reluctance to define and extend their specialized knowledge about language practices and writing instruction in their attempt to meet the shifting demands of the public, their students, and their coworkers. They call for a reconsideration of the roles of two-year college instructors, specifically urging them to adopt more roles in administration and the shaping of their colleges and to resist pressures to take on managerial responsibilities without load compensation.

Twombly and Townsend (2008) argue that research aiming to bring faculty members above the “radar screen of higher education” may make a difference “in the work lives of two-year college faculty members or in the learning of the students they teach” by influencing both policy and practice (p. 19). However, they stipulate, “research on the two-year college faculty can do this only if it goes beyond the received, and often unquestioned, story that two-year colleges are teaching institutions and that therefore, by definition, their faculty members are good teachers who produce learning” (p. 19). Specifically, they call for research that investigates faculty and their roles in teaching and learning at these institutions. This dissertation aims to examine one aspect of this oversight by better understanding what role expectations writing

instructors at two-year colleges perceive as the responsibilities of their professional identities and how they assert the authority associated with those roles as professional autonomy.

Connecting an understanding of the “work lives” of faculty and the learning of students must begin from an understanding of how faculty navigate the one—work lives—by the other—learning of students—in particular, the tensions instructors identify between these two categories and their strategies for resolving those tensions. Lewiecki-Wilson and Sommers (1999) explain that many instructors of writing at two-year colleges perceive pressures to enact what they believe are bad teaching practices. These authors argue that the fraught positions two-year college instructors of writing hold with respect to the public and to their own profession impact instructors’ available pedagogies, noting,

In both the public’s and the profession [of composition’s] stories about open admissions education, composition figures poorly: ignored or erased from histories of the discipline; consigned to a ‘skills’ or ‘remediation’ category; or worse, publicly made the scapegoat by ambitious politicians who have no real interest in writing education. (p. 440)

In this observation, Lewiecki-Wilson and Sommers suggest that the experiences of teaching writing at two-year colleges are seen as less than, not only in the view of the public but also in the perceptions of other composition scholars from four-year universities. Consequently, the authors explain the instructors they interviewed felt segregated from their larger intellectual and public communities, left to negotiate competing pressures on their teaching on their own. Thus instructors grew further estranged from the specialized knowledge required to assert autonomy over the scope of their service: the methods of teaching, the sequencing of curriculum, and the standards for their own evaluation.

The notion that instructors at two-year colleges comprise an intellectually segregated and poorly authorized subset of the academic professorate has been observed in the scholarly literature in higher education. In his monograph, *Honored but Invisible*, Grubb (1999) takes up the conflicting role of these instructors who are generally celebrated for educating, training, and preparing generations of students and workers while their teaching strategies and expertise remain invisible to the communities they serve and to a wide audience of the scholarship of teaching. Across multiple editions of *The American Two-year college* (1977, 2003, 2008), Cohen and Brawer have described a gradual improvement of professional credentials of the two-year college instructors, including established expectations for graduate preparation and a strong commitment by instructors to the values of their respective academic discipline. However, they also note that instructors' involvement with their disciplines decreases the longer they are employed at their teaching institutions and indicate that instructors' limited exercise of power over the conditions of their own work leaves little room for individual instructors to gain recognition or for the autonomy of instructors as a group to improve (p. 458-459).

Among conversations about the two-year college instruction as a "profession," only Townsend and Twombly (2007) and Cohen and Brawer (2008) offer definitional characteristics of a "profession"—the first drawing on Sarfatti-Larson (1977, 2013) and the latter summarizing general criteria of professions with no attribution. One effect of this general elision is a latent conflation of instructors' disciplinary identities and community responsibilities with their professional identities, leaving unclear the responsibilities and rights of higher education instructors who are not directly evaluated for their contributions to their discipline via publications. Thus, when Lewiecki-Wilson and Sommers (1999) take up the "stories about open access education," they use the term "profession" to refer to the positioning of *stories* from two-

year college instructors' in the professional community of composition, but they leave unaddressed instructors' within-institution roles, responsibilities, and privileges—their professional identities within their institutions. Additionally overlooked is a question about how “figuring poorly” in professional communities of composition scholars is related to perceptions and interactions with other communities, such as the politicians they describe as making writing instructors scapegoats more generally. Simply stated, they do not address how perceived marginalization in their professional communities informs instructors' professional identities—and by extension their professional autonomy—at their institutions and within a public conversation about educational reform.

Statement of the Problem

Two-year college scholars have pointed to fragile and incomplete understanding of the profession of two-year college instructors. Even Cohen and Brawer's (2008) attention to the limited professional status and behaviors of two-year college faculty elides clear definition of what it means to inhabit a professional role and to engage that role in order to obtain or diminish status. Grounding their discussion in general notions about professionalization and autonomy, Cohen and Brawer (2008) use “profession” to loosely describe the standards for identifying responsibilities, evaluating, and—implicitly--improving the credentials of the profession. Based on these standards, Cohen and Brawer conclude that the profession of two-year college teaching is largely stagnant, if not diminishing (p. 106-107; p. 457-459). Townsend and Twombly (2007) incorporate some elements of Sarfatti-Larson's definition for “professional, such as “shared values . . . affiliations, and loyalties” to conclude that the two-year college instructor identity has “some” characteristics of a profession. However, they conclude instructors have limited freedom to exercise their professional identities. Thus, they argue that considerable rebranding of

disciplinary expertise to appeal to administrative interests will be necessary for faculty improve the autonomy of their professional roles in order to obtain both more equitable working conditions at their institutions (including more full-time contracts, funding for professional development and scholarship, and recognition of scholarly contributions, etc.) (Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Wagoner et al., 2009).

Thus the problem presents: if instructors teaching at America's most accessible higher education institutions are poorly positioned to advocate for current pedagogical knowledge about writing as a situated, social, and rhetorically responsive cultural activity within their institutions (Bawarshi, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), then how can they advance and regulate the scope of service of such knowledge? The result threatens the credibility of writing instructors at open access institutions, and has the potential to damage the credibility of the field as a whole, because in these situations it is the credibility of composition pedagogy as a specialized knowledge that loses credibility, not the faculty members themselves. Thus, the weakening of a perception that teaching writing to college students requires a specialized set of knowledge about teaching, language, and linguistics is a threat to a larger body of competencies. Identifying how the expectations instructors perceive on their teaching (from their colleagues, departments, institution, the public, or policy) shape understanding and enactment of their professional autonomy, as I do in this study, is one strategy towards addressing this problem and of empowering instructors to take on new, more influential roles at their institutions.

By using Sarfatti-Larson's definition of professional autonomy as an interpretive framework for analyzing instructors' teaching choices and rationales, I investigate performance of professional identity as a response to perceived professional expectations associated with the role expectations they perceive as "two-year college writing instructors." Insofar as instructors

are able to identify and respond to multiple and conflicting positions, they are able to respond to, modify, or reinforce existing role expectations as they perceive them from their colleagues, departments, professional associates, institutions, and public communities. By drawing on a more thorough understanding of how professions emerge and are sustained through such positions and perceptions, I aim to expand the work of Lewiecki-Wilson and Sommers (1999) and Townsend and Twombly (2007). I take up questions about the pressures instructors perceive, and I etch out a practical account of how professional identities of two-year college instructors as they are currently constructed poorly position them to serve as knowledge makers in their own institutions.

Brief Description of the Theoretical Lenses for this Project

I draw on two conceptual theories—identity control theory and positioning theory—to identify and interpret the ways faculty perceive and respond to institutional forces when teaching. “Identity” used this way is social, not biological, and refers to a comprehensive construction of “self” comprised of perceived expectations and behaviors performed in response to those expectations instead of demographic variables, such as ethnicity, race or gender. Thus, in this work “identity” refers to the socially-constructed ways individuals define expectations they perceive and behaviors they enact in order to alter or reinforce their understanding of what it means to be a writing instructor at a two-year college (Burke, 2005; Goffman, 1959; Howard, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

“Identity role” refers to a situational and contextualized enactment of identity linked to particular sets of identity expectations and behaviors (two-year college writing instructor, compositions pedagogy expert, education access instructor, student advocate). I use the term “positioning” to refer to the ways that individuals assign and take up associated identity roles

through discourse including the authority associated with individuals' roles and statuses, as well as the authority they choose to assert as a result of those associations (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009). Although "role" and "position" describe very similar social constructions, the differences speak to ways enduring roles are formed through discursive interactions and underscore the construction of social identity as a whole. I take up these definitions and distinctions further in Chapter Three.

The notions of "positioning" and "identity" are key to this dissertation for two reasons. First, they are deeply embedded in many of the assumptions that shape the discipline of composition and related disciplines, such as writing studies and rhetoric, which have, since their inception, taken up issues at the intersection of language and identity (Bartholomae, 1997, 2003; Heath, 1983; Ivanic, 1998; Kill, 2006; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Lindquist, 2004; Peckham, 2010; Pratt, 1991). In the first chapter of *Composition Studies in the 21st Century: Crisis and Change*, Bartholomae (1997) describes composition studies as,

a set of problems produced by a wider, more diffuse set of practices and desires, usually brought into play by instances of language change or variety (or by the possibility that writing might change or be various). In a sense, the history of composition has been the record of institutional and professional responses to challenged standards, challenges to a standard of writing produced by writers *who were said to be* unprepared [emphasis added]. Composition marked the people and places charged to prepare those students and/or to defend and rationalize their "unauthorized" writing. (p .11)

With this description, Bartholomae highlights the important roles positioning and identity have played in establishing the scope and focus of the discipline of composition. By using passive

voice to refer to student “writers who were said to be unprepared,” Bartholomae generalizes the identities of those who described students as “unprepared” as unknown, non-agents, or even as pervasive belief systems, refusing to name specific identities or roles that may have engaged in such labeling. In identifying as the central work of composition the challenging of standards and the preparing and/or defending of “unauthorized” writing produced by students, Bartholomae suggests that positioning also constitutes an important role for experts in composition. He notes that the discourse about college writing and of college writers positions writers as unauthorized. Whereas the language of challengers—composition specialists—attempts to reposition students as “authorized,” thus asserting authority in their roles as composition specialists to “challenge,” “[prepare],” and “defend” students and their writing practices in response to those pervasive and unnamed others. Yet it may be just this perception of authorization to “challenge” that writing instructors at two-year colleges currently perceive they do not have and which limits their roles as “knowledge makers” even within their own institutions.

Given this set of criteria, one might expect the work of instructors who challenge, prepare, and defend the most “unprepared” students, from the most diverse backgrounds, and who produce the most “unauthorized” writing would also constitute the most vocal sub-community of professionals within the discipline of composition, but that is not the case. English faculty at two-year colleges make up only a small portion of the literature in composition studies, and only rarely are those contributions taken up by members of the discipline outside of two-year colleges (Lovas, 2002). In effect, the field of composition takes the teaching of unauthorized and unprepared or underprepared students as a stated object of focus but positions those who do a significant part of the teaching of those students as unauthorized and unprepared to carry out that work.

This brings me to my second reason for identifying positioning and identity as central concepts to the inquiry of this dissertation. Instructors at two-year colleges, by nature of their chosen profession and the missions of their institutions, are best positioned by proximity alone to take up the central work that Bartholomae describes. However, they are simultaneously poorly positioned professionally to assert authority about the nature of their own teaching within their institutions and the community of professional colleagues. Heavy teaching loads and institutional expectations for service from instructors at two-year colleges not only affect their positioning within their institutions but can limit the time instructors spend participating in scholarship and connecting with other scholars in their fields (Prager, 2003). This has the indirect effect of further decreasing professional status and further minimizing disciplinary contributions (Alford, 2003; Kroll, 2012), thus affecting their positioning in their fields as well. Institutional positioning, thus, can exert a ripple effect on overall authoritative positioning. This relative absence of voices from these instructors in published scholarship means that the stories from these instructors have little impact on disciplinary conversations. However, understanding the positioning and identities of these instructor in their institutions and in the community of composition scholars is crucial to that same community, when one recognizes that more than half first-time, first year students enroll in their writing courses at two-year colleges (Reynolds, 2003).

Research Questions

I explore three questions in this dissertation:

1. What expectations do writing instructors at two-year colleges identify for their roles as teaching professionals at these colleges?

- a. What expectations do instructors perceive on their teaching from national policy conversations, from their institutions and administrators, and from within their departments?
 - b. How do instructors negotiate tensions that emerge as a result of these expectations and those the expectations they perceive from their professional community, preparation, and scholarship?
2. How do these expectations shape their roles as composition professionals² in their classrooms, departments, and institutions?

In the chapters that follow, I explore how instructors at three different colleges in Michigan navigated the expectations they perceived for teaching from within their institutions. I begin by describing the conflicting expectations instructors perceived for teaching from national and state policy conversations; institutional outcomes, non-departmental colleagues, and institutional administrators; departmental colleagues; and students. I then describe how instructors responded to these expectations. I intended this research design to help illuminate differences in instructors' teaching methods that related to the community-based expectations regarding employment and education. Instead, however, I found that instructors' teaching methods reflected instructors' perceptions of the rights and responsibilities regarding knowledge production at their sites and, as such, institutional administrators played a much stronger role in shaping how instructors took up their roles than community-based expectations related to

² Here the use of composition professionals refers to professionals who draw on specialized knowledge in their field to assert control over scope of service. In this dissertation I draw on existing notions for these roles, such as Reynolds' "knowledge makers" and Andelora's "teacher-scholars" and seek to define and theorize the identification and enactment of such roles for community college instructors of English.

attainment and employment. This initial observation led me to delve more deeply into the tensions between pedagogical rationales and institutional/departmental rationales that surfaced in instructors' conversations with me and to pursue an investigation of how instructors' identity roles shaped their assertion of professional autonomy.

In Chapter Two, I describe the ways historical conditions that shaped the emergence of the profession of two-year college instruction left the professional roles of two-year college instructors unclearly defined beyond that of teacher. I review literature from the fields of higher education and composition, including conceptual and research-driven articles that describe two-year college instructors' professional roles as poorly defined, often focusing on *who they are not*—they are not university professors. In addition I describe how contemporary economic and educational trends in higher education exert continued pressures on two-year college instruction and instructors as they respond to cuts in budgets and an ever-decreasing monopoly over the credibility of their own expert knowledge, resulting in additional decrease in professional status and autonomy, or deprofessionalization.

In Chapter Three, I describe the theoretical frameworks that I draw from to explore the research questions of this study and allow me to analyze and interpret the teaching artifacts and narratives provided by study participants. I set aside geographic and demographic features typically considered identity attributes, such as race, nationality, and sex, in order to focus on social, symbolically interactive identity. I explain ways that identity theories predict how individuals will modify their behaviors when faced with expectations or beliefs they view as conflicting. Additionally, I describe how the research design of this study enables an analysis of how instructors define their professional roles and execute particular kinds of autonomy in concert with those definitions. Further I disambiguate the concepts of positioning—the behaviors

made available by one's recognized identity and the authority assumed to be part of that identity—and footing—the assertion of authority within a given context by an individual who identifies such authority as part of his or her status, right, or duty. This distinction becomes important when describing the statuses, rights, and duties that instructors in this study recognized as part of their identities as writing instructors and the footing they asserted based on those perceived statuses, rights, and duties.

In Chapter Four, I present the methods of this study, including process and rationales for selecting participants and for collecting and analyzing data. I provide basic demographic information for the three communities where the participating colleges are situated (a city metro, a rural, and a suburban environment). I also introduce readers to the participants in the study to facilitate tracking participants across chapters and through their teaching dilemmas. I go into greater detail about the three teaching arenas (Remillard, 2005)—design, enactment, and assessment—and provide reasons why examining design and enactment in this study allowed for an analysis of instructional “identity-in-action” as instructors identified and responded to expectations on their teaching. In this chapter, I also describe the data collected for the study, including the teaching artifacts collected and interviews conducted. I also provide an overview of the iterative process followed to categorize and code data and contains the tables and figures for those analyses that help to support the discussions in the results chapters.

In Chapter Five, I present the findings from my analysis of instructors' interviews about the planning of their courses and their rationales for that planning. I draw on instructors' descriptions of their beliefs about teaching, analysis of their syllabi and course descriptions, and their interviews in which they described why they make the instructional choices they make to analyze how instructors' perceptions of teaching expectations shaped their constructions of

identity roles as two-year college instructors. This evaluation is further supplemented by my analysis of classroom observations, instructor-provided feedback on student papers, and interviews with instructors about these artifacts. However, due to the space and limitations of this dissertation, I do not delve fully into those analyses here. I describe the construction of instructors' identity roles as "independent contractors," whereby they focus the assertion of their autonomy over the teaching techniques of their classrooms and only rarely beyond. I also describe the construction of instructors' identity roles as "institutional partners" through which they assert greater autonomy, and inform the structures, curriculum, and outcome in their departments and at their institutions. None of the instructors in this study, however, asserted autonomy outside of their institutions to critique state or national initiatives they perceived to affect their teaching, as scholars and experts from other kinds of institutions often do. As educational policy initiatives ultimately inform community expectations and administrative learning goals, these policies exert important, if indirect, pressures on instructors and the ways their teaching is evaluated and regulated. By not responding to these pressures, even those instructors who exerted autonomy over the scope of service at their institutions can only be described as exerting partial autonomy.

In this chapter I also examine how instructors' responses enacted their understanding of the professional autonomy associated with their roles as two-year college instructors in order to assert control over technique or control over scope of service. I identify two identity roles instructors asserted in terms of professional autonomy: independent contractors and institutional partners. I define "independent contractors" as instructors who asserted control over the technique of teaching at the classroom level and avoided disrupting department expectations or disagreeing with colleagues. I describe "institutional partners" as instructors who asserted control

over the scope of service of teaching, including helping to construct institutional learning outcomes and departmental learning goals, revising department curriculum, investigating teaching effectiveness, and implementing research-based interventions within the department. From these observations, I argue that institutional positioning is important to instructors' professional positioning and I highlight some of the existing barriers to such positioning, including antagonism between instructors and administrators that informs some of the faculty lore that shapes and professionalizes new instructors. Additionally, I point out that instructors' own perceptions of their autonomy were poor indicators of their actual autonomy. This observation suggests that over-emphasis on classroom instruction to the exclusion of institutional partnering may leave two-year college instructors poorly prepared to identify and assert professional autonomy in ways that support and profess the teaching definitions and goals associated with professional memberships interested in teaching writing, such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and College Composition and Communication (CCC).

I conclude in Chapter Six with a review of the findings and with their implications. In particular, I identify ways that overemphasis on student-centered teaching may contribute to instructors' role identifications and a lack of attention to instructional roles and responsibilities towards expectations at the department, institution, and policy levels. I identify the important role that institutional positioning can play in developing instructors as institutional partners and I identify challenges going forward for fostering such relationships. I point to the importance of increased purposeful deliberative dialogue between instructors and administrators and increased attention to the wider roles and increasing recognition for the work of writing instructors at two-year colleges.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PROFESSION OF ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS AT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

A host of economic and political contexts make research on teaching at two-year colleges both timely and appropriate, including changes to the economic structures that support education (Desroschers & Kirschstein, 2012). a general shift in ways expectations for education are defined and communicated (e.g., NCLB and Race to the Top), and the evolving status of higher education instructors (e.g., Arum & Roska, 2010). Such research is especially appropriate for instructors of traditional academic courses, like writing, at institutions that are increasingly marketed towards immediate workforce outcomes (Tinberg, 2005). Here I offer a review of existing research on composition faculty and the professional identities of faculty at two-year colleges. I organize this review thematically, first summarizing existing discussions of the economic and political climate for two-year college instructors, next exploring two-year colleges and the “work” of composition, and finally describing professional status, knowledge, and preparation of writing instructors at two-year colleges. Taken together, these descriptions provide a review of literature about the subject of this dissertation from three perspectives—economic and political context, the stated historical exigencies of composition studies, and the current understanding of professional identity and status that inform the central questions about identity and autonomy for this study.

Economic and Political Climate for Two-year College Instruction

Several economic contexts shape the current situation for instructors. Increases in student enrollments, decreases in public funding for institutions, and focused demand for student completion combine to pressure instructors to “do more with less.” These pressures have contributed to alarmingly high reliance on technology for instruction and on part-time non-

continuing instructors, as well as an increasingly market-driven approach to recruiting, enrolling, and educating students (Wagoner et al., 2009). All of these trends contribute to deprofessionalization of writing instructors at myriad institutions, because, at their worst they negate the existence of a specialized kind of knowledge that enables and empowers effective human teaching, and at best they minimize the importance of that knowledge. These trends seem to suggest that instructors can be replaced with technology or that they are worth only minimal institutional investment that can be endlessly replenished with a supply of part-time, poorly compensated, and transient workforce. Wagoner, Levin, and Kater (2009) use the term “new world colleges” to describe the institutional effects of a market-driven educational economy that is partnered with and driven by prevailing and overlapping economic and political agendas. They underscore the tenuous positions of two-year college faculty and faculty expertise in new world colleges, because such a climate focuses on students’ as an economic market and affirms corporate identities of two-year colleges in terms of mission, funding, and instruction, all at the expense of recognizing teacher expertise.

Meanwhile, two-year colleges carry an ever-increasing burden for educating America’s college hopefuls amidst dwindling resources and persistent threats to the professional status of faculty members who teach there. Despite historic increases in student enrollments, two-year colleges have faced drastic decreases in funding from state and government appropriations in the first 10 years of the 21st century. Desroschers and Kirschstein (2012) have indicated that “single-year FTE enrollments rose an average of twelve percent, which is nearly twice the rate observed for two-year colleges in any other year during the previous decade” (p. 2). While state and government appropriations for public colleges and universities were cut substantially over the first decade of the 21st century, the 2009-2010 year saw the most drastic cuts of the ten years,

with declines as high as 15% to two-year colleges—an average \$600-\$1,000 per student spending cut—despite the fact that student enrollments increased an average of 12% that same year (Desrochers & Kirshstein, 2012, p. 3). Unlike other colleges and universities, which offset cuts in government appropriations by shifting the burden of education from the community (public funding) to the individual (private funding) in order to keep tuition affordable, two-year colleges have been forced to drastically refigure their operating budgets resulting in a ten-year decrease in funding for instruction by 11%, and academic support (including tutoring services, writing centers, etc.) by 14% in the 2009-2010 year alone (Desrochers & Kirshstein, 2012, p. 6). Manufacturing states, like Michigan, have especially experienced this trend (Churchill, 2010; Murray, 2010; “Senate cuts college funding,” 2010).

These contexts are keenly felt by writing instructors. Composition scholars have warned that institutional responses to economic and political pressures, combined with the relative invisibility of instructors teaching in two-year colleges—both to the public and from within their own disciplines—may actually contribute to the deprofessionalization of these instructors (Alford & Kroll, 2003). This confluence of trends and forces presents a problem for those committed to the study of composition and to equity education more generally, because it undermines disciplinary expertise and “good” teaching practices developed for the primary purpose of supporting student writers as they transition from one set of discourse expectations to another (Bartholomae, 1997). The effects of these pressures are felt by composition specialists at all institutions and should concern the field more generally, as these pressures threaten the specialized knowledge of the field, not simply the individual lives of these instructors.

Two-Year Colleges and the “Work” of Composition

Composition specialists—including composition researchers and instructors at the various kinds of higher education institutions where college-level writing courses are required—share a vested interest in the experiences of English faculty at two-year colleges, because they share an interest in the successes of students enrolled at two-year colleges. The success of those students—many from historically disadvantaged backgrounds—is of central value to what Bartholomae has called “the work of composition.” Moreover, instructors at four-year colleges and universities may also find those students enrolled in their own classes. Although some have questioned the real-world functionality of the two-year college academic track (e.g., Brint & Karabel, 1989; Kroll, 2012; McGrath & Spear, 1991), general education for the purpose of transfer remains a key function of these colleges. In 2004, of all graduating high school students who enrolled in post-secondary education, a third enrolled at two-year institutions (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). Although transfer rates remain low, roughly two thirds of those 2004 graduates who enrolled in two-year college indicated an intention to transfer to complete a bachelor’s degree (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). Writing instruction for these students is especially important because existing research suggests that when students’ interactions with their first-year writing instructors at open-access institutions are positive and supportive, students tend to persist towards their goals (Cox, 2009b; Sternglass, 1997). Thus, writing instructors at two-year colleges may be ideally situated to make a fundamental difference in the lives and outcomes of students in first-year writing courses, and these differences may have an even greater social impact in open-access institutions, given their commitment to serving historically disadvantaged students.

At the same time, policy initiatives aimed at workforce preparation and remediation have overshadowed some of the transfer mission of these colleges. Kroll (2012) has warned that

“neoliberal” education policies have derailed the academic/transfer function that two-year colleges have historically served, replacing “education” with “training” and removing the democratizing function with which these institutions were once associated. Kroll’s claim follows more than a decade of calls for increased attention on two-year college writing instructors in scholarly collections, such as *The Profession of English in the Two-Year College* (Reynolds & Holladay-Hicks, 2005), *The Politics of Writing in the Two-Year College* (Alford & Kroll, 2003), and *Writing a Book on the (Two-Year College) Job* (Tinberg, 2001). These texts underscore the unique professional identities, complex political positioning, and diversity of intellectual work of English faculty at two-year colleges, respectively. Along with articles and chapters written in the same vein (Lewiecki-Wilson & Sommers, 1999; Lovas, 2002; Reynolds, 2005), these monographs have called for greater visibility of the specialized intellectual work conducted by English faculty at two-year colleges. Authors have described increasing emphasis in higher education on demonstrating “utilitarian” outcomes for teaching writing (Tinberg, 2005) and have identified an ever-increasing reliance on adjunct faculty and automated scoring of writing as harbingers of the de-professionalization of writing instructors, especially those at two-year colleges (Alford, 2003).

Professional Status, Knowledge, and Preparation

If Sarfatti Larson and other sociological studies on professional autonomy are accurate, then “status” is an important component of professional identity and autonomy. While status, itself is a social construction with multiple viewpoints, the concept can be generally understood as the degree of recognition individuals receive from others for the perceived value of their contributions. Extant literature suggests that the professional identities of two-year college faculty are poorly defined, meaning who these instructors are and what they should do is not well

understood by the public (e.g., Grubb, 1999) or even by their institutions (Sommers & Lewiecki-Wilson, 1999). Among academic faculty from large, research-focused universities to two-year colleges, Clark (1997) has remarked that faculty at research universities enjoy much higher professional autonomy than faculty at two-year colleges, who he describes work in highly “managerial settings” where decisions are made top-down, similar to K-12 teachers. Townsend and Twombly (2007) point to a professional history that has positioned two-year faculty more as teachers than as professors, and note that even in publications focused on two-year colleges, faculty members are rarely mentioned (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Both Clark’s (1997) and Townsend and Twombly’s (2007) articles suggest that instructors at two-year colleges occupy a hybrid professional position in which they have reduced autonomy, high teaching responsibility, and little in the way of mechanism to regulate and update their professional environments except as a result of their original graduate preparation. Meanwhile the effectiveness of that graduate preparation exists against a dearth of research on the teaching practices and rationales of these professionals.

Several authors also suggest that instructors at two-year colleges hold a position of diminished status when compared to their peers at four-year institutions, because (1) they are only rarely subjects of research in higher education or in their disciplines, (2) are often assumed to be deficient in disciplinary knowledge and ability compared to peers at four-year institutions, and (3) are questioned with respect to the quality and rigor of their teaching by both the public and by the four-year institutions students intend to transfer (Grubb & Associates, 1999; Kelly-Kleese, 2001; Townsend & LaPaglia, 2000; Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). This lack of recognition and scholarly interest fundamentally contradicts an ongoing reliance on these faculty to teach roughly half of first-time college students and to adapt

to the shifting economic and professional expectations for their communities (Grubb & Associates, 1999; Reynolds, 2003). As a result of this positioning, instructors' professional roles are in flux, as rights may be assigned or denied, taken up or rejected by individuals or institutions that see them as superfluous to the positioned role of instructors.

More, if the roles these instructors occupy are distinct in nature from the roles of their colleagues at four-year institutions, then existing scholarship suggests the distinction is poorly articulated except in terms of deficit. Twombly and Townsend (2008) have cautioned that comparisons between four-year and two-year institutions privilege the four-year perspective, rendering two-year college instructors, students, and curriculum as deficient. In the same vein, Reynolds (2005) and others have observed depictions of two-year colleges in scholarly literature demonstrate a preoccupation with two-year colleges as sites for remediation. This remediation fixation can overshadow the college-level education two-year colleges offer and obstruct teachers' own practices as well as scholarly investigations of college-level instructional practices (Grubb & Associates, 1999; McGrath & Spear, 1991; Reynolds, 2005). These factors position faculty at two-year colleges differently from other composition instructors, including instructors at small four-year colleges, where the greatest associated emphasis is on liberal arts education (as opposed to access or remediation) and graduate student instructors, who, by nature of their status as pre-professionals and their diverse disciplinary goals, are not generally expected to contribute to shaping the disciplinary field of composition.

A review of literature from 2000-2014 using the Article Search function at the University of Michigan library and the key terms “two-year colleges’ and writing instruct*” turned up 83 articles. Only 10 of these were studies that explored some aspect of teaching writing or writing outcomes related to college-level courses in two-year colleges. Two of those took up issues of

faculty at those colleges. One of those included analysis from this dissertation (Toth, Griffiths, & Thirolf, 2013). The second reported on the engagement of two-year college English faculty with scholarship (Two-Year College English Association, 2011). The rest of the search results were book reviews, instructional notes, regional reports, and studies on writing conducted at four-year universities.

New research methodologies made available through the use of the Google Ngram generator enable a quantitative search of words and phrases existing in all books digitized in the Google Book project (currently over a million). The Google Ngram generator provides a visual graphic to demonstrate the relative use of one word or phrase compared to another, with an overall representation of each word's overall prevalence across all scanned texts presented on the y axis. A search of this corpus demonstrates some findings we might expect. For example, the term "community college" has overshadowed "junior colleges" in prevalence since Truman first invoked the term "community college" in the mid-20th century. Yet, analysis of the same corpus to the early 21st century demonstrates that even as concerns about "education access" and "education attainment" have risen to greater prominence in the texts represented in the corpus, a focused discussion of instructors and instructional methods has been overlooked. Figure 1 shows that the terms "educational attainment" and "community colleges" have experienced similar cyclical increases and decreases in use among published books over the years presented in the corpus data. Increases might be related to economic restructuring and possibly to the open-admissions movements of the late 1970s. However, a discussion of instructors at two-year colleges shows no change over these decades, representing a nearly flat line, gaining only minimal increase in prevalence after the turn of the 21st century. Thus, even if we assume that some variation in adjectives describing access institutions exist over this time—as surely they

do—the attention paid to the individuals teaching students enrolled in open-access two-year colleges have been virtually ignored, at least in the literature represented in the books digitized by Google. These results suggest that, despite periodic emphasis on community colleges and a current national goal towards educational access and attainment, astoundingly little emphasis has been placed on the roles of instructors or the methods of their instruction, leaving instruction a relatively unexplored, decontextualized black box conduit for both “access” and “education.”



Figure 1: Google NGram Results of Associated Terms

In recent years, the community of composition scholars has begun to inquire into the preparation of two-year college instructors. At the 2010 CCCC conference in Louisville, KY, instructors from two-year colleges came together for a half-day workshop to discuss the future requirements for MA programs in English, given the unique and increasing demands of two-year college instruction and the overwhelming lack of preparation most two-year college instructors receive for such demands. Now, perhaps more than ever before, writing instructors at two-year colleges merit a significant portion of the attention of the discipline (Lovas, 2002), both because the success of so many students depends on the quality of their teaching and because the discipline of composition can be enriched by more thoroughly including their voices, their experiences, and—by extension, the experiences of their students (Reynolds, 2003).

Existing literature suggests that intrinsic barriers, including how faculty members

perceive their own expertise, may inhibit instructors at two-year colleges from contributing to the scholarship of composition studies. Faculty at two-year colleges often do not self-identify as scholars, specialists, or what Mark Reynolds calls “knowledge makers” (Reynolds, 2005). Howard Tinberg has asserted that two-year English faculty internalize perceptions of themselves that have been constructed by outsiders and which relegate their potential contributions as scholars to a lower status than the contributions of faculty at other kinds of institutions (Tinberg, 2001). Examinations into these intrinsic barriers are important, because, if the self-limiting perceptions of faculty identity described by Reynolds and Tinberg are accurate, then instructors’ self-identifications may shape how instructors enact their professional roles within their own institutions, meaning that intrinsic barriers, including instructors’ devaluing of their own expertise, may impede instructors from taking up their identities and status as professionals. Thus, motivations that cause instructors to self-limit their expressions of autonomy are also of interest in this study.

At the same time, simplified distinctions between the kinds of professional responsibilities professionals in higher education overseas may also contribute to poorly developed recognition of knowledge and expertise. As Prager laments, “[instructors’] struggle to gain stature has been hampered by insistence on a special mission that exempts or prevents their faculty from connecting to the rest of higher education through scholarship” (Prager, 2003, p. 588). In part, TYCA hiring guidelines that encourage two-year college instructors to take up identities as teacher-scholars and to actively engage scholarship for the purpose of improving teaching, seems to respond to such criticisms (Buck, Fitzgerald, McKinney, Okpala, & others, 2006). However, the conceptual space between Prager’s encouragement for more published scholarship and the TYCA guidelines for teaching thoroughly grounded and established in

disciplinary knowledge, defines a large gap: the gap between the classroom and the discipline, specifically the departments and institutions at two-year colleges where instructors are more often viewed as generalists than specialists, and where notions of expertise are vaguely defined.

In order to respond to cuts in appropriations, colleges and departments have had to make difficult decisions, increasingly relying on part-time, non-tenured faculty to staff their departments (Anson, Christopher & Jewell, R, 2001; Worthen, 2001) and on automated computer programs to assess student writing. Both strategies, Barry Alford has argued, contribute to the de-professionalization of the two-year college instructor (Alford, 2003). This deprofessionalization of instructors at two-year colleges represents a challenge to the discipline of composition and the field of writing studies, because the focus of such activities—and indeed such trends in hiring and assessment—is not limited to the kind of institution but on the kind of *knowledge* needed to teach and/or assess college student writing. The implication is that teaching of writing does not require specialized education in writing or in teaching, or that specialization can be easily substituted with automated computer programs. Further, these trends suggest the acceptance of a notion that assessment can be more affordably and effectively managed through automation, thereby removing the instructor, the identities of students, and the culturally-seated socially-situated complexities that experts—those members of the disciplinary community that comprises composition studies—recognize writing to be.

Current research into the identities of faculty and current shifts in the college and knowledge economy has argued that professional roles must be taken seriously and modified if instructors at these institutions are to remain relevant. Wagoner, Levin, and Kater (2009) have argued that in order to remain useful—to maintain a monopoly of competence, in Sarfatti Larson’s parlance—faculty must expand their “role into one that expands beyond the classroom .

. . if faculty are to limit themselves to classroom teaching only, they miss the opportunity to provide expertise and direction to college plans, which decreases their usefulness to the institution” (p. 100).

To reassert their usefulness in their institutions, instructors must also recognize the authority and expertise of their peer professionals. Social recognition among professionals in a professional community and a shared set of standards for evaluating that work constitute defining criteria of feature of professional identity (Magali Sarfatti Larson, 2013; Magali S. Larson & Larson, 1979). Deprofessionalization occurs when these criteria fail to persist. Thus, a vocation becomes deprofessionalized when the rights and responsibilities associated with a professional identity are lost or no longer associated with the professional identity in question, both by members of the profession and by outsiders who grant them monopolies of competence. As I described in the previous chapter, those rights and responsibilities are maintained so long as a profession holds a monopoly of competence and a monopoly of credibility—that is so long as people recognize that the profession possesses a specialized kind of knowledge and that the professionals within the community are the individuals most qualified to implement and regulate that knowledge. Thus, notions about what it means to be a member of a profession are necessary to the perpetuation of the norms and responsibilities associated with the profession. In this section, I detail some of the efforts among two-year college instructors to formally recognize and support the knowledge building of these instructors. Jeff Andelora has detailed the history of formal professional recognition of English faculty at two-year colleges, noting that beginning in the 1990s, vocal leaders among two-year college English faculty (e.g., Howard Tinberg, Keith Kroll, Mark Reynolds, John Lovas) have worked to emphasize the experiences of two-year college faculty into the mainstream conversations of composition studies.

In 1997, 32 years after establishing seven separate, annual, regional conferences for two-year college faculty and following the establishment of two interim organizations (the National Junior College Committee, NJCC, followed by the National Two-year College Committee, NTCC), the organizing board for NCTE officially recognized the Two-Year College English Association, TYCA, as the unifying voice for the professional membership of English faculty at two-year colleges. Following this inception, TYCA board members began to take up the important work of identifying the unique professional aspects of two-year faculty by, for example, establishing hiring guidelines for two-year English faculty (Buck et al., 2006), and by including those faculty members on the board of NCTE (Andelora, 2005).

The 2004 TYCA hiring guidelines underscored the dual identity of English faculty at two-year colleges as “teacher scholars”(Andelora, 2005), knowledge of writing pedagogies as an area of specialization necessary for successful teaching, and identified service to the community, collaboration in constructing curriculum, and the ability to apply theoretical scholarship within the classroom as key qualities of two-year college English faculty. A 2012 revision draft of this document, “Characteristics of Highly-Effective Two-Year College Instructor of English” (Klausman, Angona, Pappas, & Wilson, 2012) identifies six characteristics for effective instructors of writing at two-year colleges.

1. They are exemplary “teacher scholars,” who the document describes “recognize that ongoing scholarship legitimizes their expertise” and defines scholarship in terms of publication and conference presentations.
2. They “center their classrooms on students,” meaning that they “involve students” in their own learning, that they employ a “variety of [teaching] approaches,” and that they reflect on their teaching practices regularly for the purpose of self-assessment and adaptation.

3. They “understand and value student diversity,”
4. They “collaborate with full-time and part-time colleagues to maximize student success.”
5. “develop individual areas of expertise that contribute to well-rounded academic departments,”
6. They “accept the responsibility of college and broader community leadership.”

For the final category, the TYCA characteristics statement clarifies that “in the college setting the trained instructors’ professional values and judgments are essential to making sound course, program, general education, and accreditation decisions. In the larger community setting, the highly effective instructor’s deep knowledge and well honed [sic] critical thinking abilities promise capable leadership of broadly-based ad hoc working groups.

This attempt to define the roles and responsibilities of two-year college instructors takes up some of the notions of autonomy discussed in this dissertation, and, in particular explicitly connects the characteristics of effective instructors to the programmatic and accreditation directions of their institutions. These characteristics also enumerate some of the active tensions inherent in “highly effective” teaching, namely the tension between number 2, “centering classrooms on students” and “[accepting] the responsibility of college and broader community leadership.” Namely, these characteristics leave open how instructors prioritize their enactment of their roles and responsibilities, as well as the interaction between instructional responsibilities such as involving students in their learning and “making sound course, program, general education, and accreditation decisions” or leading “broadly-based ad hoc working groups.” These characteristics, published simultaneously to the conclusion of data collection for this study, help to further contextualize the evolving nature of the profession of writing instruction at two-year colleges by responding to an identified need to define the characteristics of effective

teaching specific to these institutions. By examining just how instructors in the field identify and assert their roles, this work contributes to the ongoing attempts to define and articulate the professional roles of instructors.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMES FOR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

In order to rigorously theorize the construction and enactment of role identities among members of a diverse and evolving profession, a sufficiently rigorous and interactive conceptualization of identity is necessary. In this study I use Sarfatti Larson's conceptualization of professional autonomy to better understand the identity roles instructors perceive as expectations of their professional roles, the choices they make in response to these perceptions, and their rationales for those choices. Taken together—the interpretation of professional expectations, choices, and rationales for actions—constitute, in this dissertation, professional identity. At the apex of this intersection of autonomy and identity is the notion of specialized knowledge and the ways instructors are positioned through their social and discourse interactions to identify their knowledge as specialized and to enact the authority that knowledge affords them as autonomous professionals.

Professional Autonomy as Identity Mechanism

In the loosest of terms, contemporary theories of identity help to describe *who* individuals are by seeking to understand why they behave the way they do within specific roles and contexts. This definition of identity does not speak directly to demographics—that is participants' gender, sex, race, ethnicity, or nationality—but rather to the behaviors people perform and their rationales for those performances given a particular set of social interactions. While the sometimes observable characteristics, such as race, gender, and ability status, likely inform individuals' interpretations of their role expectations, as well as their responses, this study is interested in how instructors take up and enact a particular kind of role—that of writing instructor—within a particular set of social interactions—two-year colleges.

Positioning theory examines how subject identities are assigned and taken up through socially-situated discourse and identity narratives, such as those offered through classroom interaction and interviews (Davies & Harré, 1990, 1999). Positioning theory examines the ways discourse and texts make available particular kinds of identity roles within a given social context. The notion of “positioning” expands the possibilities for analysis of social identities by distinguishing between “actions that [are] logically possible and those that are socially possible for any actor at any moment in the flux of social life” (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003, p. 4). The distinction between actions that are “logically” possible and those that are “socially” possible is important as this study examines how instructors interpret what actions are preferred or expected within their institutions based on their interactions with colleagues, superiors, and institutional texts that help them to identify their professional roles. Such an exploration is useful when considering the professional role recommendations set forth, for example, through the TYCA characteristics white paper described above. While the professional expectations defined and described in such a document proffers a set of expectations from a profession, and even while these may be logically appropriate and agreeable, instructors negotiate the social possibilities of enactment within their departments and institutions. When the perceived professional expectations conflict with the institutional interactions perceived within the department or institution, then the professional identity of an individual is perpetually in tension, persistently negotiating expectations and the cost and benefit analysis of available responses. Thus, when thinking through identity as socially constructed and enacted, it is not the roles that are *logically* possible that are negotiated, but those that seem socially possible, those preferred by social others that shape the context of professional action. In this respect, identity theory and positioning theory are complementary lenses to identify how instructors come to identify

particular enactments of autonomy over technique, scope of service, or both, as part of their professional responsibilities and expectations.

Intellectual Origins of Identity Theory

The theoretical concept of identity used in this dissertation developed from an ongoing intellectual inquiry into personhood that views the construction of identity as social and symbolically interactive (Goffman, 1959). Symbolic interactionism seeks to understand individual and group behaviors through inquiries of identity as a set of socially-situated and interactive performances. Three assumptions about human interactions form the foundation to understanding identity as I am using it here. The first assumption states that identities are co-constructed with and through social relationships with others (James, 2011). This means that identity is a shared and social construction, rather than an observable trait. The second assumption states that individuals interpret the perceptions of others and use these perceptions to identify their own roles in a social context (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). The third assumption states that individuals assign meanings to their social experiences and to their interpretations of others' perceptions and behaviors. Individuals draw on their interpretations of other people's perceptions to evaluate and modify their identities in response to the meanings they assign (Mead, 2009). Thus, in the context of instructors of writing at two year colleges, a symbolic interactionist perspective assumes that instructors' understanding of their professional roles within their institutions—including the professional autonomy associated with their role—is shaped by the interactions they have at those institutions. The socially-situated nature of this theory of identity suggests that the professional role of these instructors may change from one setting to the next, say from their experiences in graduate school to their experiences at their

primary teaching institution. Given those interactions, instructors will modify their behaviors in order to better approximate the expectations they perceive.

Goffman's theories of dramaturgy (1959) and his identity frameworks (1974) highlighted the ways that individuals "perform" particular identity-specific behaviors in response to perceived expectations from others in their social environments. Goffman's work allows for the theoretical possibility that individuals espouse multiple, overlapping, and contradictory ways of making sense of and responding to their immediate situations. The notion that individuals negotiate competing, and sometimes conflicting, interpretive frameworks within a given social situations is crucial to the questions in this study. The first research question asks, "What expectations do writing instructors at two-year colleges identify for their roles as teaching professionals at these colleges?" Defining identity as a socially-situated, symbolic, and interactive calls first for a basic understanding of the expectations instructors perceive to be associated with the successful enactment of their roles as writing instructors at two-year colleges. In this study, expectations included discussions of two-year colleges in national policy conversations, institutional expectations communicated through administrators or accepted through tradition, department-established course outcomes, and interactions with colleagues. The notion that individuals may espouse multiple ways of interpreting and making sense of the social symbols associated with their interactions and, thus, aligning with multiple identity roles is important here, because this notion suggests bring expectations from a variety of social situations to their roles as instructors, such as those named above, and that they have the potential to perform roles differently according to the immediate social audience for their role performance.

In addition, asking the second question “How do these expectations shape their roles as composition professionals³ in their classrooms, departments, and institutions?” allows for an analysis of how these instructors interact with the knowledge they receive and create as classroom instructors and composition specialists, as well as how the claiming or subverting of specific kinds of knowledge can support or impede instructors’ professional status and even, though it is not the direct outcome of this study, a measurement of teaching effectiveness

Moreover, the notion that identity is performative is also crucial to this study. Goffman identified that individuals could modify their behaviors through sincere and cynical performances. He defined sincere performances as behavior modifications individuals made in order to meet the expectations they perceived and wanted to achieve. Cynical performances, on the other hand, were enactments of role expectations with which individuals did not agree in order to maintain social functioning (e.g., face saving) or to gain approval. In this sense, any enactments of identities or beliefs with which instructors articulated a clear disagreement can be seen as cynical performances.

Contemporary Identity Theory

According to identity theory, individuals reflect on their interactions with others and categorize themselves with respect to the expectations they perceive from others. These expectations, which may vary by group and situation, are identity “roles” (Stryker, 1968). Roles are seen as relatively stable identity enactments that are constructed by and help to maintain,

³ Here the use of composition professionals refers to professionals who draw on specialized knowledge in their field to assert control over scope of service. In this dissertation I draw on existing notions for these roles, such as Reynolds’ “knowledge makers” and Andelora’s “teacher-scholars” and seek to define and theorize the identification and enactment of such roles for community college instructors of English.

small, specialized, social networks to which an individual belongs (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The core concept here is that individuals adapt behavior in order to decrease unpleasant experiences. Harré and Moghaddam attempt to disentangle these concepts by explaining, “A position closely resembles the concept of role in that a role gives direction and meaning to the types of actions that one engages in” (p. 204). At the same time, they assert that “the concept of position is different [from the concept of role] in that positions are ever shifting within a conversation, constantly and rapidly being renegotiated. A position is dynamic where a role is static.” (p. 204). I would elaborate to the following: in so much as identities are social, dynamic, and fluid, they are constructions that comprise multiple, relatively stable roles, and those roles are developed through typified positional interactions. Thus, each discursive position offers an opportunity for instructors to identify and respond with a performed expectation. Over repeated instances of positioning, instructors begin to codify their interpretations of expectations and responsibilities into their role identities. These, in turn, may inform their identities as roles.

Harré and Moghaddam’s differentiation of position and role is useful because it simplifies an understanding of the process through which interactions lead to more stable notions of self. However, the assertion that “role” is static, while helpful, may be a bit misleading. Roles are more stable than positions, because they are negotiated over a longer period of time. However, roles, too are capable of shifting as a result of multiple, typified patterns of positioning that call for a different set of expectation. For example, we have seen the role of “mother” reinvented and troubled actively in feminist discussion as it has been negotiated through multiple repositions through discourse. Similar examples can be offered for notions of gender (e.g., Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (2002)). Similarly, the position of instructors is negotiated through each conversation with administrators, coworkers, and students but also as instructors are hailed in

discourses about two-year colleges in national policy conversations and through depictions *about* themselves that they encounter in scholarly literature. If, over many instances, instructors perceive their attempts to reposition themselves through these conversations are ignored, then they will ultimately abstain from these interactions—thus adopting a new identity role. Because each identity comprises multiple, and sometimes conflicting roles, instructors may be active scholars in their fields, engaging knowledge making in conference presentations or publication, but may abstain from directing these conversations at their institutions. In this study, such an understanding of identity helps to explain how some instructors may be heavily engaged in scholarship but may not actively discuss those roles with colleagues at their institution.

This concept of role adaptation is important, because instructors at two-year colleges have demands from multiple audiences, including students, colleagues, and administrators. When they perceive their own teaching values to conflict with the expectations of those social others, they must either (1) re-evaluate their values and adapt them, (2) perform a cynical adaptation of the behaviors they perceive, or (3) negotiate a consistent experience of what Goffman has called “frame-clash” or an experience of prolonged discomfort in the social environment. In this study, a theoretical understanding of how notions of identity and identity performance can lead to such frame clashes can help to explain why some instructors report a great deal of burnout in mid- and late semester frustration. Additionally, such theoretical framing contributes to an understanding of why individuals chose to attach to some components of their professional roles—those that cause greater comfort—than those components that perpetuate or exacerbate discomfort. Alternatively, in a case where individuals are able to change the expectations they perceive, rather than merely adapting their behavioral responses, such theoretical framing helps to explain why attempts at such change become easier to perpetuate over time.

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory proposes that the behavioral attributes assigned to a particular identity role—including status, duties, rights, etc.—are assigned and taken up through discourse and narrative. That is, individuals' perceptions of role-specific expectations are shaped by discourses that assign and describe those expectations, both implicitly and explicitly. Positioning refers to this shaping of individuals' perceptions of their role-specific expectations that contributes to the ways individuals understand their status, duties, and responsibilities.

Recent contributions to positioning theory have defined positioning as a process that involves three stages: prepositioning, positioning, and footing (Harré, et. al., 2009). According to Harré et al. (2009), prepositioning includes the assumed rights and duties attached to a particular role that may be explicit or implicit (Harré, 2009). These rights and duties are embedded in social practices or memberships and are reinforced through discourse to make particular kinds of positions available to identity roles. Specifically, positioning theory as a lens in this study allows for an examination of how notions of profession or autonomy were approached during instructors' graduate education, how their roles in their institutions are invoked or assigned through interactions with colleagues and administrators, and how their approaches to instruction are informed by conversations and texts that occur between instructors and students.

Finally, Harré et al., use footing, to describe how an individual asserts authority to exercise particular role behaviors and gains a position of authority with their audiences to be heard as an expert. The constructs of 'positioning' and 'footing' help to disambiguate between *identifying behaviors* associated with an identity role (positioning) and *asserting the authority* to enact behaviors based on that identity role (footing). Moreover, footing is distinct from positioning because it requires a negotiation regarding the authority of at least two members in a

discursive exchange. In this study, footing helps to differentiate between role performances instructors believe they are qualified to do and perhaps expected as a component of their professional training to enact and those behavioral performances they feel authorized to enact within the institution. For example, an instructor may perceive conference participation or evaluation of placement protocols to fall under his or her authority as a writing instructor, but s/he may also perceive these activities as discouraged within their institution due to lack of funding, explicit discussion, or heavy propaganda for computerized placement from colleagues or administrators. The construct of footing offers a language for articulating how instructors assert their authority, in particular in situations where their authority is unclear, such as with more senior members of faculty and administrators. When instructors perceive less footing to assert their own expertise in the field of composition pedagogy, professional autonomy is weakened.

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks provide useful and complementary lenses for examining the questions about the expectations instructors perceive on their roles as instructors, and, as an effect, the kinds of roles they most need to perform in order to experience comfort in their institutions. They invite questions about how instructors navigate expectations they perceive to conflict with other beliefs about their roles as instructors developed in graduate school or elsewhere. More simply, they invite questions about why instructors choose one behavioral performance over another when provided with two logical possible performances of the role of two-year college writing instructor, for example how professors may choose to take on some of the responsibilities of a professional identity—classroom instruction—over others—accepting responsibility for an institution.

More, examining professional autonomy with an understanding of identity as multiple and overlapping social performances of role expectations affords an understanding of a particular kind of identity—professional identity—and an analysis of how the expectations that instructors associate with their professional roles affect their interactions their working communities. Using a theoretical lens that defines identity not as a subjective notion of “who I am” but “the social rationales for why I do what I do” offers an opportunity to categorize social performances of identity and pair them with individual rationales that, taken in conjunction with the robust data of this study, offers an interpretive lens for understanding why professionals behave the way they do and, thus, what can be done to better prepare and support them, when warranted, to behave differently.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the research choices I made when designing this study and the rationale for the design. I provide an overview of the raw data and a discussion of the communities, colleges, and instructors who participated in the study.

Janine Remillard's (2005) "Arenas of Curricular Development" provided an initial conceptual model for the research design of this dissertation. This model helped me to operationalize identity and positioning as *performances* of teaching roles and situates the theoretical analyses they offer into the activity of instruction. The model organizes teaching into three arenas. These arenas include mapping, in which the guiding curriculum shapes the direction of learning over a semester or school year; design, in which course activities and assignments are planned; and construction, in which the activities are enacted through teaching and modified through improvisation (Remillard, 2005). These three arenas of curricular development are useful to this study because they distinguish between expectations for teaching, the mediation of the expectations for planning classroom activities, and the activities that the instructor enacts given those mediations. Instructors take up curricular expectations when planning and sequencing their course activities to achieve specific learning outcomes (the syllabus in our case). They then enact these activities within the classroom, adapting and modifying these constructions in "real time" based on students' responses. Conceptualizing teaching across these three arenas organizes instruction as a way of perceiving expectations (guiding curriculum), developing an identity performance to put those expectations in action by anticipating responses (design), and adapting that performance in the presence of social others (enactment).

Remillard's arena of curriculum development is useful but it was developed for the K-12 math education context. In the context of writing instruction the guiding curriculum may be inferred from textbooks, spoken and unspoken department and disciplinary expectations, and notions about the two-year college mission. In this study the mapping arena is conceived of more broadly, taking into account a wide range of expectations that instructors identify and which informs their teaching choices. For this reason, I invited instructors to identify expectations for teaching they perceived and, when present, the tensions they identified at the intersection of those expectations. Rather than assign influence to any single guiding curriculum, be they course outcomes established by the department or the department-adopted textbook, this approach invited instructors to identify perceived expectations that mediated when mapping, designing, and enacting teaching.

I used a qualitative approach for this study. Ethno-methodological approaches are the preferred methods for inquiry and analysis of individual behaviors and rationales since the inception of social theories of identity (Burke, 2006). I conducted semi-structured interviews with instructors from three two-year colleges to understand and assess how instructors perceived expectations on their teaching and their rationales for their teaching choices. I collected their course syllabi, observed and recorded their classroom teaching, and collected examples of their written feedback to students. I analyzed the data collected (syllabi, transcribed interviews, recorded observations and transcripts of classroom teaching, and examples of written feedback provided to students on their assignments) using text analysis, classroom interaction analysis, and discourse analysis.

In this chapter, I begin by introducing the participants. I then describe the research sites, including the communities where the colleges are located and the colleges themselves. Next I

provide descriptions of the writing courses at participating colleges. I then describe the data collection process, including the three arenas for data collection, which allow for analysis of instructors' design intentions and their enacted teaching. I follow that section with a discussion of the data analysis. In the data analysis section, I give details of the coding process, including the process I followed to evaluate, revise, and collapse codes over three episodes of coding. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of limitations of this research, the positioning of the researcher, and a rationale for the ethics and trustworthiness of this study.

Participants

I recruited only full-time, tenure-track faculty, as such faculty are assumed to have the strongest ties to their institutions and to their institutional contexts, due to their long-term contracts. Although part-time faculty comprise approximately 70% of all two-year college instructors (AFT Higher Education, 2009) and even though English departments, rely especially on contingent faculty in their departments (Benjamin, 1998), I chose not to include them because their intermittent employment relationship can weaken the ties that they have to the institution. Additionally, many part-time instructors work at multiple colleges at a time (Anson, Christopher & Jewell, R, 2001), which had the potential to confound an examination of perceived institutional expectations on teaching, because I assume that expectations will vary from institution to institution.

I adapted the process of recruiting participants to accommodate the research protocols of each participating college, Ridgeway College, Corner College, and Silver Lake College. At Ridgeway College, I made initial contact with the institutional research officer. The research officer then connected me with a senior faculty member, who served as a liaison between

interested faculty and me. Per my site access agreement, I recruited only faculty members who provided contact information to the liaison faculty. At Corner College, the Dean of Academic Affairs distributed the recruitment questionnaire to all full-time faculty at all campuses, which had the effect of expanding my sample study to include both main and second campuses. At Silver Lake College, the chair distributed the recruitment materials to full-time faculty at that campus, and I sent follow-up recruitments directly to faculty emails the chair provided.

Following the site-specific protocols, I invited full-time faculty at each research site to complete a brief, automated, online questionnaire about their experiences teaching, their educational attainment, and their other experiences with higher education (see Appendix 1). I followed up with faculty who had received an invitation to participate one week and two weeks after their initial invitation. I sent the initial invitation to five instructors from Ridgeway College, 12 from Silver Lake College, and 22 at Corner College, for a total of 41 instructors across the three colleges. From that initial invitation, 11 instructors completed the recruitment survey and indicated an interest in further participation: four from Corner College, five from Ridgeway College, and two from Silver Lake College.

In the end, nine instructors participated in one or more parts of the study and seven instructors participating in all its three phases of this study. At Ridgeway College, all three of the instructors I contacted initially agreed to participate in the study. However, one participant left the study prior to the first interview when his annual contract was suspended due to projected budget shortfalls. Another instructor and I failed to connect, despite a back and forth of voice messages and follow-up emails. As a result of the loss of these two participants, I invited the two remaining faculty to participate.

Due to scheduling conflicts and ongoing research in her classroom, Robin opted out of the classroom observation portion of this study, noting that her students were “tired of being observed.” Two instructors participated only with the first interview. Clarisse was excluded from further participation, because she was teaching all online courses, which did not fit the study design. Charlotte joined the study during the final month of the semester, based on the encouragement of one of her colleagues, and was struggling with ongoing health issues that interfered with her teaching. Table 1 provides a summary of recruitment and participation. All instructors were informed about the nature of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks of participating (

Appendix 2).

Participant Demographics

The resulting sample is diverse in terms of gender, background teaching experiences, courses taught, and educational degree, but it lacks racial or class diversity. All but two participants responded to a survey request to self-identify in terms of class by listing “middle class” or “upper-middle class.” One respondent called into question the social and economic definitions of class and one participant noted that she was “recently middle class” and “grew up in a below-poverty-level household”. All instructors identified as some version of “white.” All faculty held a master’s degree in composition and rhetoric or related field of English or education. Instructors listed a variety of academic specializations for their graduate-level. In Table 1 I have used the language instructors supplied when they responded to the recruitment survey.

Table 1: Participants and Demographics

Instructor	Sex	Self-identified Class	Graduate Degrees	Degree Institution	Area of Specialization	Year	Participant Arenas
Corner College, Main Campus							
Charlotte	F	Middle	MA	Oakland University	British Literature	1997	Design
Colin	M	“unclear question; income? interests?”	MA	University of Michigan	Literature	--	All
			ABD	Wayne State University	Literature	1975	
Corner College, Second Campus							
Callie	F	Middle Class	MA	SUNY Stony Brook	English	1980	All
Christopher	M	Middle Class	MA,	Case Western Reserve University	English	2000	All
			English (2000)	Wayne State University	English Composition	1999	Design
Clarisse	F	Middle	Ph.D.	Wayne State University	English Composition	1999	Design
			M.A.	Wayne	English Literature	1977	
Ridgeway College							
Remy	M	Middle	MA	Eastern Michigan University	Teaching of Writing	2006	All
Robin	F	Middle	M.A.	Eastern Michigan University	Teaching of Writing: Pedagogy	1995	Design, Assessment
Roxana	M	“recently middle class,” “grew up in a below-poverty-level household”	MA	University of Cincinnati	English and Comparative Literature	2010	All
Silver Lake College							
Sadie	F	Upper Middle Class	MA	Wayne State University	Technical Writing	1999?	All
Saul	M	Middle Class	MA	Central Michigan University	Creative Writing	1979	All
			Ed. D.	Wayne State University	Curriculum	1996	

Charlotte, Colin, and Saul had not received academic training in the teaching of writing. Roxana had been apprenticed through a graduate student instructor-training program at her graduate

school, but her disciplinary focus had been in literature. Saul had studied education and education administration during his graduate education, though not the instruction of writing, specifically. Callie had studied composition studies specifically and apprenticed with seminal figures in the field. However, she explained that there was no official specialization at her university at the time. All participants had previous experience teaching first-year, first-semester college-level writing courses. All but Saul had experience teaching developmental writing. All participants had experience teaching other writing courses offered at their institutions. Most instructors were teaching first-year, first-semester composition during the data collection semester.

Table 2: Experience, Memberships, Scholarly Participation

Participant	Years in Current Position	Course	Professional Memberships	Scholarly Participation
Clarisse	6†	Composition I, Tier 1	NCTE, CCC, TYCA	Scholarly Publishing (past), Annual attendee at CCCC, NCTE
Callie	2†	Composition I, Tier 1	NCTE, TYCA	Institutional Research on Assessment, WAC
Christopher	5†	Composition I, Tier 1	CCC, NCTE	CCCC, Achieve the Dream, WAC
Colin	4†	Composition I, tier 1	NCTE	Scholarly and Creative publishing, Co-authoring Textbook, CCCC
Charlotte	4	Composition I, tier 2		Co-authoring Composition Textbook, CCCC
Roxana	1†	Composition II	NCTE, CCC, JAEPL	
Remy	4	Composition I	NCTE	Creative Publishing
Robin	2†	Composition I / Accelerated Learning	NCTE, CCC	Michigan Developmental Education Consortium, Accelerated Learning Program, Institutional Research
Sadie	12	Composition II		
Saul	11	Composition II	AWP	AWP, Creative Publishing

Note: † indicates prior experience with classroom teaching at other institutions.

Research Sites

I collected data at three two-year colleges within the state of Michigan: Corner College (Main and Second Campus), Ridgeway College, and Silver Lake College. The state of Michigan offers an interesting setting for examining expectations of two-year college instruction, because two-year colleges have been the focus of gubernatorial initiatives for workforce retraining and renovation (e.g., Granholm Administration's *No Worker Left Behind* Program). I have used a mnemonic strategy to assign pseudonyms to colleges and faculty members who participated in this study. Names beginning with "R" refer to participants from Ridgeway (rural) College, "S" to participant from Silver Lake (Suburban) College, and "C" to participants from Corner (Urban/City) College. I selected communities looking for variation in terms of size, economics, and educational attainment. I anticipated that differences in these categories could importantly inform expectations instructors perceived on their teaching from administrators and community members. I anticipated instructors in communities with higher educational attainment rates and greater opportunities for careers would place greater emphasis on higher order abstract teaching expectations of the kind Grubb and colleagues (1999) described as rare but beneficial in the two-year college setting, for example, and that instructors, in an effort to perform their identities successfully, would profess similar values.

The institutions were relatively homogeneous in terms of their relationship and participation with research initiatives. All three colleges participated in the Achieve the Dream initiative⁴ during the time of this study. Demographic data for this chapter are taken from census

⁴ Achieve the Dream is a "a national reform network dedicated to community college student success and completion" that works with institutions to gather local data in order to

data for 2010 when available and supplemented using community profiles and economic reports from city government websites when such census information was not available or disaggregated for the sub-communities pertinent to the study.

Table 3 summarizes some key characteristics of the communities surrounding the selected colleges. The data are based on the 2010 census data and reflects most recent aggregates publicly available through censusviewer.com and city-data.gov. The communities have experienced economic strain,⁵ consequence of increasing unemployment rates and the disparity between received wages and real wages (those adjusted for cost of living and inflation) compared to the previous decade. The Silver Lake community experienced less objective strain and had more economic and professional opportunities than the other two communities.

Table 3: Key Characteristics of the Communities Surrounding the Colleges in the Study

Community	Michigan	Corner Community (Main)	Corner Community (Second)	Ridgeway Community	Silver Lake Community
Population, 2010	9,883,701	96,796	134,056	33,534	79,740
Population 2000 (change since 2000)	9,938,444 (-0.55%)	95,648 (+1.2%)	138,247 (-3%)	36245 (-7.48%)	82,183 (-3%)
Racial Composition	79% White 14% African American 2% Asian 4% Latino	90 % White 4 % African American, 2% Asian 2% Latino	77% White 13% African American 5% Asian 2% Latino	69% White 20% African American 5% Latino	76% White 9% African American 12% Asian 1% Native Amer.

generate locally-responsive, evidence-based interventions to improve the education and success of community college students (Achieving the Dream, Inc., 2015)

⁵ The median income in Michigan in 2000 was \$57,963 in actual dollars. Adjusted for inflation, \$57,963 in 2000 had the purchasing power of \$72,213.75 in 2009, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator (http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm). The documented decrease in median income in Michigan by \$12,708 actually reflects a loss of \$15,832.38 in purchasing dollars for the median income of 2009. Despite the small increase in annual median income, it must be understood that *none* of the communities in this study experienced economic growth in the decade prior to the study, even while some communities reported marginally higher median salaries during the 2009 reporting for the 2010 census.

Community	Michigan	Corner Community (Main)	Corner Community (Second)	Ridgeway Community	Silver Lake Community
Median Income in 2009 (change since 2000, not adjusted for inflation)	45,255 (-21.9%)	\$48,578 (+1.2%)	\$43,329 (-3.0%)	\$31,654 (1.1%)	\$67,668 (+175%)
Unemployment rate (2009)	14%	20%	18%	19%	10%
Percentage holding Bachelor's Degree	25%	18% ^Ω	13%	13%	48%
Predominant Industries	Transportation Equipment, Construction, Health care	Transportation Equipment, Health Care	Transportation Equipment, Health Care	Manufacturing, Health Care	Engineers, Computer Specialists, Education services, Health Care

A summary of demographic data for each college can be found in Table 4. The completion rates⁶ refer to student completion in 150% time, or three years; completion rates at all three colleges remain low (below 20%). The completion rates at both campuses at Corner College and Silver Lake College are higher than the rate at Ridgeway College. Roughly a fourth (1/4) of students from Corner College and Ridgeway have documented transfer to other institutions, with the rates of transfer from the Silver Lake College system slightly higher at one third (1/3).⁷

Enrollment demographics at the colleges do not perfectly mirror community demographics. Given that African American students are more likely to enroll at two-year

⁶ Graduation rates are insufficient data for measuring “progress” for community college students, in particular because many students move between and across institutions and rates of transfer-graduation are not readily tracked. I have chosen to include 1.5 time completion rates, graduation rates, and rates of transfer to in order to highlight the similarities and variations across institutions.

⁷ Figures do not distinguish between students transferring to other, similar colleges, and those transferring to four-year institutions.

colleges than four-year institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), one might expect the percentages of enrolled African American students to match the surrounding community. However, the enrolled percentage of African-American students varied by communities with enrollment at Ridgeway College (7%) greatly under-representing the surrounding community (20%) and enrollment (14%) at Silver Lake College over-representing the resident population (9 %.). Non-Hispanic Whites comprise only 52% of the student body at Silver Lake College, a percentage much lower than that of the surrounding community (76%).

Table 4: Demographics by College

	Corner College, all	Ridgeway College	Silver Lake College (Campus)
Total enrollment	24,376	7,729	28,042 (9,775)
Age ≤ 24	63%	55%	56%
Full-time	39%	52%	66%
Enrollment Status			
Sex	Men: 48% Women: 52%	Men: 39% Women: 61%	Men: 41% Women: 54%; Unreported: 4%
Race	White non-Hispanic: 7% African American: 7% Hispanic: 2% Asian/Pacific Islander: 3% American Indian/ Alaskan Native: 1% Unknown: 10%	White non-Hispanic: 80% African American: 7% Hispanic: 4% Asian / Pacific Islander: 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native: 1%	White, non-Hispanic: 52% African American: 25% Hispanic: 3 % Asian: 2% Native American: 1% Unknown / unreported: 8%
1-year Retention	75% full-time students; 59 % part time	61% full-time students; 49% part time students	66% full-time students, 49% part-time students
Graduation rate	14%	10%	13%
Transfer Rate	24%	26%	31%
Average 150% time completion	14%	10%	13%

Corner College Communities (Urban).

Instructors from two campuses at Corner College participated in this study. The communities at Main and Second Campus service a sprawling urban area near a major industrial city and depend on the transportation industry for their economies. Both communities had high levels of unemployment, hitting just under 20%, in 2009, and due in part to the effect of the

recession on the automobile industry. Corner College Main campus community has a population of nearly 100,000. The Second Campus community, located about 10 miles away, is situated in an expanded urban area with an incorporated population of approximately 134,000.

Approximately 18% of members in the Corner College Main community hold a bachelor's degree or higher, nearly 30% lower than the state average. In the Second Campus community, 13% of members hold a bachelor's degree or higher, making education attainment in the Second campus community equivalent at nearly half the state average. Second Campus community serves a more racially diverse population with far higher levels of enrollment of African American and Latino students. Additionally, education attainment and average salaries are higher in the Main Campus community but remain much lower than the state average.

The writing courses I observed were located in a variety of rooms, including a traditional classroom with individual desks arranged in rows, a modular computer classroom configured into several four-desk groups, and a conventional computer classroom with students seated in long tabled rows. The traditional classroom had a chalkboard, while both computer classrooms had a whiteboard at the front of the room. All classrooms had a projection screen at the front of the classroom.

Ridgeway Community and College (Rural).

Ridgeway College serves a semi-rural community around a small urban cluster with a total population of approximately 33,000. The community sits 15-20 miles from a major interstate. There, one encounters two-lane highways, a general store, and green expanses peppered with occasional strip malls and the edifices of industrial factories. Like much of Michigan, manufacturing business drives the Ridgeway economy and supplies 31% of the jobs in the community. Ridgeway community has been rebounding from a deep recession, with a high

unemployment rate of 19% in 2009, much higher than the state average. The average income for residents in Ridgeway is just above 33,500 or about 8% lower than the average for the state.

Approximately 13% of the population in the Ridgeway community holds a bachelor's degree or higher. In terms of racial demographics, the Ridgeway community is slightly more diverse than the state of Michigan, with 20% African American, and 5% Latino populations.

The main campus of Ridgeway College is located at the intersection of two local, single-lane roads. Campus buildings are connected by sidewalks with small, manicured green space between them. Names appearing on the walls of buildings describe the activities that occur within the building or bear the names of sponsors or founders. The writing courses I observed were located in a large computer room with large windows and housed in the library, located at the center of campus. Classroom seats were arranged around tables with seating for 5-6 at each table. The instructional lectern with computer, printer, and doc cam stood in the front corners of the room. Whiteboards stretched the entirety of the two connecting walls behind the lectern. At the back of the room, laptops were available for students' daily use. In short, Ridgeway College was well-equipped with technological teaching resources, perhaps more so than the somewhat rural campus environment may have predicted. Instructor offices and traditional classrooms were located in a separate building.

Silver Lake College Community (Suburban).

Silver Lake College is one campus of a two-year college system serving one of the most affluent counties in Michigan. In 2010, approximately 79,000 residents comprised the community of Silver Lake, nearly half of them holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

Transportation equipment and computer services lead the occupational fields of Silver Lake,

with a high representation of software designers and engineers. The average income of Silver Lake residents in 2010 were about 50% higher than the average income of the state of Michigan.

Silver Lake College campus is situated just off of a major interstate. On the other side of the freeway exit, one quickly encounters the businesses and bustle of urban sprawl, but the campus, itself, is removed from that commotion, nestled among sloping hills, a wooded area and green space. The central part of campus, where most instruction in academic majors seemed to occur, featured a centrally-located cafeteria, library and bookstore, as well as several closely connected buildings where general education course were taught. Motion activated doors in the campus bathrooms are just one example of the modern feeling this campus conveys. The classes I observed were taught in large computer classrooms with approximately 30 desktop computers against the foundational walls and intersecting rows with computers on desks throughout the room. Offices were arranged throughout the same building where instruction took place, with some of them accessible only by stairs.

Writing Courses at Participating Colleges

All three colleges offered a two-semester college-level writing sequence, but there were variations on that sequence. Corner College offered a two-tiered option for fulfilling the two-semester sequence. Students had the option of enrolling in an eight-credit-hour sequence that incorporated an hour of instruction on grammar, mechanics, and usage each week, or in a six-credit-hour sequence that had no additional grammar instruction mandated by the department, depending on their placement recommendations using Compass. The academic dean explained that this two-tiered system was designed to meet the diverse educational needs offered by the two-year college mission, with the 6-credit sequence intended primarily for transferring students

and the 8-credit sequence for vocational education. However, no such distinction existed in course syllabi or registration materials.

At Ridgeway College, instructors were in the second semester testing an intervention into their basic writing sequence modeled off of the accelerated learning program modeled by Peter Adams at the Baltimore Two-year college add. This teaching intervention paired developmental writing courses with first-semester college-level writing courses. Although the accelerated learning course was not part of the observational focus of this study, the experiences related to implementing the accelerated learning curriculum and the philosophy behind it surfaced frequently in Remy and Robin's interviews and informed their thinking about their institution.

At the time of this study the first-semester writing course and the developmental writing courses at Silver Lake College incorporated in-class writing tutors to facilitate students' acquisition of "academic literacy." However, this model was being revised as a result of administrative changes at the time the study was conducted. In fact, faculty members were engaged in contract negotiations that resulted in removing the teaching of developmental writing from the English department. This decision opened the doors to changing hiring requirements for instructors teaching developmental writing, decreasing or removing the requirement for graduate training in English or education.

In recruiting for this study, I aimed to minimize differences across sample courses by selecting instructors teaching equivalent courses. Whenever possible, I selected instructors who were teaching first-year, first-semester writing. Where that was not possible, I selected instructors who were teaching first-year, second-semester writing.

The goals for first-semester, college-level writing courses described in course syllabi varied across colleges and among instructors. Some instructors emphasized narrative writing,

while others emphasized argumentative writing. The second-semester, college-level writing courses at all three colleges incorporated the teaching of research strategies, analytical writing, and MLA citation in their descriptions of second-semester writing courses. The culminating project for the second semester writing course at all three colleges was “the research paper.”

Data Collection: Artifacts and Interviews

I collected the following artifacts as examples of instructors’ enactments of their roles as teachers: syllabi from first-year writing courses, classroom observations (also video recorded), and copies of students’ papers that included instructor feedback. In order to identify and understand instructors’ rationales for teaching choices made during design and enactment, I also conducted three interviews with each participant. I paired each interview with artifacts to guide our conversations. The first interview I conducted with instructors asked about their course planning and their rationales for assignments using syllabi as a textual anchor for our discussion. I asked open-ended questions such as “tell me about this section of your syllabus.” The second interview dealt with instructors’ in-class enactment of their teaching, using video-recordings of classroom observations to structure the interviews. The third interview centered on the feedback instructors provided to students on writing assignments completed late in the course. An overview of data collected and organized by teaching arena can be found in Table 5

Table 5: Summary of Artifacts and Interviews Collected by Teaching Arena

Teaching Arena /Stage of Study	Artifact	Interview
Teaching Design	Syllabus, course descriptions, schedule of assignments (when available)	Design Interview
Teaching Enactment	Classroom observation, video recordings of observation, field notes, and handouts	Enactment Interview
Teaching Assessment	Student papers with instructor feedback for a single assignment	Assessment Interview

Data Analysis

In qualitative, ethno-methodological studies, analysis and interpretation go hand in hand. One cannot think of research strategies such as interviews or observations as the mere culling of data for the purpose of generalizing findings. Instead, one must think of qualitative, ethno-methodological studies as an interactive and interdependent collaboration between researcher(s) and participant(s), an interaction in which local meanings emerge through mutual understanding and co-construction (Arendell, 1997; Scheurich, 1997). Within the method of qualitative interviewing, meaning is shared and constructed between participants. Consequently, identity roles necessarily inform how meanings are constructed. In interpreting interviews, the function of the researcher is always a dual one—both a participant in the co-construction of meaning and as analyst, removed from the situation for the purpose of identifying interactions that facilitated specific meanings, and making explicit to herself and to the research audience the overlap between these roles (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Such an approach offers advantages in terms of how research participants are positioned and supports the theorizing of complex social dynamics. The results, however, are intended to inform an understanding of situated relationships and form a starting point for hypothesis-building for ongoing and additional work. In the following sections I describe the iterative process I used to assign codes and to interpret the meanings between codes generated.

Coding and Comparative Analysis

I used constant comparative methods to analyze the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195-228). Over the course of the analysis, the names of individual codes and the connections and groupings I made changed several times (see e.g., Appendix 10). Through this approach I sought

to articulate more clearly the ways instructors responded to specific kinds of tensions they identified.

Table 6: Overview of Analysis by Teaching Arena

Teaching Arena	Data	Methods	Number of Codes
	Syllabi	Open coding of text	6
Design	Interview	Open coding of interviews; Selective coding of tensions / perceived pressures	31
	Classroom observation	Open coding of observation videos, field notes	17
Enactment	Interview	Open coding of interviews; selective coding of responses re: positioning	13
	Student Papers with feedback	Open coding of layered text using PDF insert comment function and Excel to record frequencies, per student and per instructor	32
Assessment	Interview	Open coding of transcribed interviews	16

Analysis of Syllabi. To analyze the course syllabi samples provided by instructors, I first identified the common features across syllabi, looking for patterns among instructors. I found six common kinds of text on the syllabi: (1) behavioral policies and management, (2) procedural and how to, (3) grading criteria, (4) course tools and materials, (5) descriptions of assignments, and (6) definitions or criteria of college level writing (CLW). There was a heavy predominance of behavioral policies in class and procedures for submitting papers, contacting the instructor, and missing class. Categorical codes for syllabi can be found in Appendix .

Analysis of Design Interviews. During the design interviews, I invited instructors to identify components of their syllabi that they considered their “own,” as well as the components they included either directly from the department model syllabus or because of perceived expectations from the department. Initial open coding of the design interviews included categories for tensions, teaching goals, college missions, perceptions of students, identity frames and clashes, teaching strategies, pathways to teaching, and influences on teaching. In all, this analysis generated over 175 codes. Upon second analysis, I condensed some of these categories, for instance collapsing distinctions between perceptions and beliefs, in an effort to make

categories more stable and descriptive. In this study, I focused on three categories, influences on teaching, experiences of tension, and teaching goals (see Table 7,

Table 8, Table 9), because they seemed to refer and overlap with one another in ways that suggested interactive relationships. For example, an instructor might identify graduate preparation that focused on teaching writing process as a rationale for resisting instruction that focused on modes, but then explained a perceived an expectation to teach according to a narrow taxonomy of writing “modes,” such as narrative, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, or argument, from their department . Thus, while I did not code specifically for “professional autonomy,” I coded for instructors’ descriptions of their specialized knowledge, the norms they interpreted from that specialized knowledge, and constraints they perceived on their ability to assert that knowledge, which together spoke of their professional autonomy.

Table 7: Codes for Influences

Code Name	Description	Frequency across cases
1. Experiences with Students	Experiences with students influence teaching	46
2. Named Scholars or Writers	Named scholars or writers as influences on their teaching	29
3. Student needs-perceived	Students’ needs as an influence on their teaching	29
4. Colleagues	Named colleagues’ opinions and conversations as influences on their teaching	25
5. Other scholarly activities	Named scholarly activities as influences on their teaching (e.g., conferences)	19
6. Graduate Preparation	Named experiences, mentoring, and readings from graduate school as influences on	13
7. Department	Named department expectations and climate as influences on their teaching	11
8. Administration or Institution Expectations	Name expectations from the institution or institutional colleagues as influences on their teaching	10
9. Apprenticeship	Names close relationships with senior instructors/professors as influences on their teaching	6

Table 8: Codes for Tensions

Code Name	Description	Frequency across cases
10. Department	Departmental values and goals are in conflict with their teaching goals	21
11. Students	Students’ goals for learning are in tension with teachers’	16

	teaching goals	
12. Administration	Teaching goals perceived from administrators are in conflict with teachers' goals	11
13. Standards	Described conflicts between student-centered teaching and upholding standards	10
14. National	Described conflicts between expectations on teaching perceived from national policy-level conversations and teachers' goals for teaching.	9
15. Time	Semester length is described as constraint or barrier to successful meeting own goals for teaching, outcomes for course, and student-centered teaching intentions	7
16. Colleagues	Colleagues' goals and beliefs about teaching writing are in conflict with participants' goals for teaching.	5
17. K-12 prep	K-12 goals for writing education are in conflict with college writing expectations	2

Table 9: Teaching Goals Codes

Code Name	Description	Frequency across cases
18. Critical thinking	College writing is to develop critical thinking	10
19. Individualized goals	Teaching goals are individualized to student ability, learning styles, and goals	5
20. Academic discourse	Develop students' abilities to take on and enact academic discourses	5
21. Mechanics or grammar	Resolving structural errors	5
22. Modes	Understanding and use of modes	5
23. Process	Awareness of a specific writing process	5
24. Overcome fear	Resolve students' fear of writing/improving confidence	4
25. Engagement	Engage students in learning as a rewarding activity	3
26. Analyze writing	Teach students to analyze writing	3
27. Reading	Teach students to read with comprehension	3
28. Research paper	Teach students to write a research paper	3
29. Understand rhetorical situation	Teach students to identify and understand rhetorical situations	3
30. Argument	Teach students to compose persuasive arguments	2
31. Think about language	Engage students in conversations about language	2

After analyzing the design interviews and identifying conflict around the expectations for teaching from the administration and from the public, I narrowed my analysis to the areas wherein college level writing was defined or outcomes for the course were listed. I used instructors' own descriptions of course goals and outcomes, the tensions they identified between the goals they identified for college writing courses and those they perceived on them from

stakeholders, such as colleagues, department guidelines, administrators, community members, etc., to guide a discussion of the conflicts instructors negotiate when designing their courses

Analysis of Enactment Arena Data. I began my analysis of the classroom observation data by identifying the ways instructors enacted teaching in the classroom with students. I noted the kinds of activities they assigned; the allocation of group, individual, and lecture time; and the content focus of these activities. I used “activities” to refer to the kinds of components instructors used to organize their classes. Then, using the interviews as the primary data for qualitative analysis, I assigned codes that captured the rationales for specific kinds of instruction included in the table, as well as any stated tensions and constraints that appeared in the design interview coding.

In addition to identifying how instructors organized their courses using the kinds of activities they incorporated into their teaching enactments, I also kept notes about the “foci” of their teaching enactments. That is, I recorded the ways that instructors’ teaching enactments seemed to draw on their notions about good teaching, specifically the activities that reflect those notions. In my observations, I only recorded those activities that instructors enacted during the observed class period. Therefore, prevalence of each activity enactment does not reflect foci of teaching enactment throughout the semester (e.g., Christopher did not have his students engage any meta-writing during the class that I observed, but he regularly asked his students to write evaluations for their own writing upon submitting their work).

During enactment interviews, I invited instructors to offer their rationales for activities observed during class, including why they included the activity, the teaching goal, and the relationship of the activity to the arc of learning instructors imagined over the course of the semester. This resulted in 13 codes. The first twelve codes refer to rationales given by instructors

for specific behaviors. The final code refers to descriptions of students' lives that inform teaching approaches or rationales for variations in those approaches (see Table 10).

Table 10: Codes Summarizing Instructor Rationales for Teaching Enactment

Enactment Rationales	Description of Category Code	Frequency across Enactment Interviews
1. Knowledge of Students	Instructor draws on knowledge of specific student or class or previous experiences to offer rationale for teaching enactment	36
2. Teaching beliefs	Instructor draws on notions of good teaching to offer rationale for teaching enactment	20
3. See students getting it	Instructor explains that lesson plan could be adapted to be quicker or slower based on the perception that students were "getting it."	12
4. Scaffolding	Instructor describes way in which class activity or strategy helps to scaffold student learning of a concept or lesson	9
5. Constraints-time	Instructor describes time as a constraint that informs what she or he does during class time	8
6. Forces-institutional	Instructor describes forces, pressures, or expectations he or she perceives from the institution that inform his or her teaching enactment	7
7. Demystify English or Writing	Instructor describes that students have unrealistic beliefs about English or writing as innate or easy and need these beliefs demystified and explained in ways that make sense to them, given their lived experiences.	6
8. Fun	Instructor offers "fun" as the rationale for teaching enactment (and instructors' or students' need for it)	6
9. Computer classroom	Instructor describes rationale for teaching enactment in terms of the technology offered by way of having a computer classroom	4
10. Critical thinking	Instructor describes rationale for teaching enactment in terms of developing students' critical thinking	4
11. Cross purposes	Instructors describe student goals for learning and their teaching goals as at "cross purposes"	4
12. Scholarship	Instructor describes rationale for teaching enactment in terms of their interpretation of scholarship	4
13. Life situations	Students have complicated lives and life situations that inform their learning differently than students at other kinds of institutions	3

Analysis of Written Feedback. I analyzed assessment data in two stages, first the feedback on the student papers and then the interview with that artifact. To analyze the artifact, I conducted a page-by-page analysis of instructors' marks and feedback on all student papers

provided during data collection and compiled these frequencies into a table by feedback strategy and paper grade (see Appendix 14 and Appendix 15). In order to assign a code to all editorial marks and instructional comments from instructors, I first scanned all papers into pdf files. Using the “review and comment” features in Adobe Acrobat 9, I highlighted and assigned descriptive codes to all instructional feedback and edits (see Figure 2). I then reviewed and revised assigned descriptions to enable greater consistency across cases and codes. In Figure 2 the description assigned in the textbox indicates this code is category “lc,” or “language choice,” and the editorial directive is to “cut unnecessary words,” which, I coded under the axial category “conciseness.”

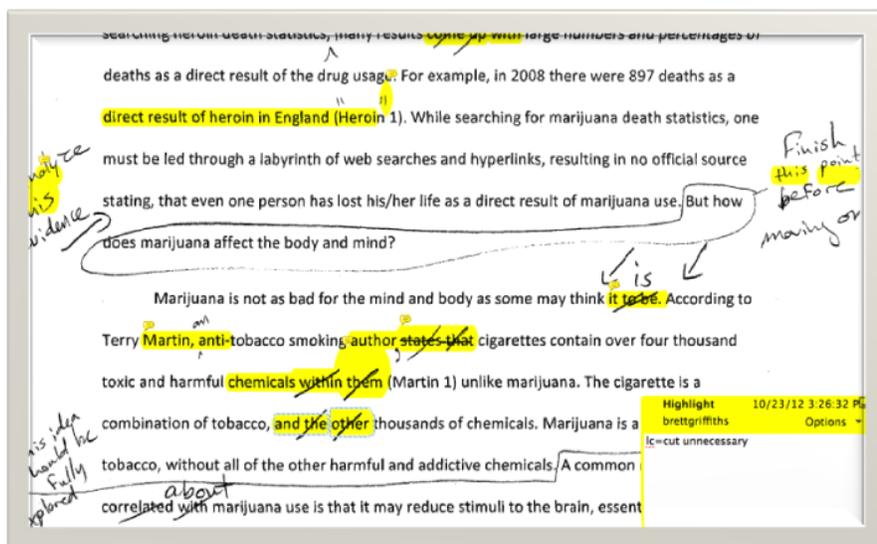


Figure 2: Coding of Instructional Feedback. This image represents a short excerpt of student text with instructor feedback. The instructor feedback is handwritten on top of or in the margins of the typed student text. The highlighted marks indicate coded text. Associated with each coded passage is a comment balloon (one of which is expanded to view in this model). Each comment balloon contains an assigned code and axial description. For example, the marginal text above the main example would be coded as “mode: command” and “focus: encourage development.” The expanded example has the code “lc: cut unnecessary.” In this example, “lc” stands for “language choice” and the command to “cut unnecessary” would be coded as “conciseness.”

Straub (1996) has argued that the dichotomous categories, “directive feedback” (instructs students what to do) and “facilitative feedback” (offers support without direct instruction, i.e. “formative feedback”), establish an artificial and unproductive distinction that assumes that instructors, when using facilitative comments, are less guilty of usurping students’ texts and imposing instructors own “idealized texts” onto student writing. Instead, he suggests analyzing the foci and modes of instructional feedback. When describing “focuses” of feedback, Straub invites analysts to examine what the subject of the feedback is: “Do they deal with global matters of content, focus, and organization? With the larger context of writing instruction, for instance, the rhetorical situation, the student’s composing process, or the student’s ongoing work as a writer?” (p. 233). When describing modes, Straub gives possible examples of “advice,” “command,” and “question.” He notes, “By charting a teacher's predominant focuses and modes of commentary—in a set of comments or, better yet, across a series of responses—we can get a good impression of his or her responding style” (p. 233). In analyzing feedback on samples of student writing, I have followed a similar taxonomy to the one Straub suggests, using code categories of “modes” to describe the ways in which instructors delivered their feedback and “focuses” to describe the subject of their feedback. The taxonomy I have developed allows me to construct a best “impression” of the “responding styles” of instructors and to understand, from their interviews, their rationales for those response styles.

I used the following categories to capture modes of feedback: (1) praising student writing (e.g., You do a nice job when you), (2) asking questions (e.g., How so?), (3) giving directives (e.g., Move this sentence) and making suggestions (e.g., You might consider), and (4) describing the rhetorical effect or linguistic content of students’ writing (e.g., As a reader I’m thinking). I sought to identify how instructors communicated their own pedagogical values and knowledge in

the written feedback instructors provided to their students, as well as how they incorporated the expectations they perceived on them, including those that they described as conflicting with their own professional knowledge about teaching.

Thematic categories for the focus of instructors' comments included content, grammar, mechanics, and language choice. Content codes describe feedback focused on global issues like logic and evidence. Grammar codes describe comments focused on language use and correctness. Mechanics codes describe comments and editorial marks intended to correct nonstandard spelling, punctuation, and formatting. Language choice codes describe clarity issues that stem from language rather than logic, encouragement to simplify sentence structure, and engaging descriptive language (e.g., "good description" "cut 'very'—unnecessary").

Analysis of Assessment Interviews. Table 11 summarizes the codes I assigned to the rationales instructors provided to describe their approaches to student assessment.

Table 11: Codes for Assessment Rationales

Code Name	Code Description	Frequency across cases
1. Experience with student/rapport/background	Instructor describes feedback in terms of previous experience with students, knowledge of student's sense of humor or life experiences	39
2. Revision and process	Instructor describes feedback in terms of student's revision process or following an assigned process from class	24
3. Students' experiences limit them	Instructor describes feedback in terms of student's knowledge or experience limitations that shape the potentials for the paper content or evidence.	11
4. Department guidelines	Instructor describes feedback in terms of guidelines or expectations from the department or master syllabus	8
5. Time-workflow-resource	Instructor describes feedback in terms of how much time they had and how many papers they needed to grade in that time period.	8
6. Balance critique and praise	Instructor describes the rhetorical goal of balancing praise with critique	6
7. Models	Instructor describes feedback in terms of models provided or examples from class	6
8. Feedback earned	Instructor describes feedback as something that is earned by hard-working students and not by those perceived to be less hard working.	5
9. Students give up/drop out	Instructor describes feedback in terms of student	5

	investment / lack of follow-thru at the end of the semester	
10. Student expectations	Instructor describes feedback in terms of what s/he believes students expect	5

Tensions and the Theorizing of Autonomy

Professional autonomy was not the focus of my initial analysis, nor was it included as a component for etic coding. Because I initially sought to understand how institutional context affected teaching, I was looking for interactions between community education attainment, instructor's perceptions of the college mission, and their rationales for teaching. Instead, I encountered descriptions of teaching goals tied to graduate preparation, scholarship, and generalized notions of teaching. These were interrupted, however, by descriptions of barriers to teaching described in terms of perceptions of expectations from administrators, students, and colleagues. I was unable to understand how so many instructors identified similar barriers and did not seem to be working as a team to reshape those barriers. Instead, most instructors devised workarounds for the barriers. Instructors referred to these independent strategies as evidence for their teaching independence. Each level of coding seemed to highlight and underscore tensions between instructors' goals for teaching, informed by their pedagogical training and experience (i.e., "specialized knowledge") and the constraints instructors navigated when carrying out the activities represented in these codes. This led me to explore more deeply notions of independence and autonomy and to revisit the data with the current research questions in mind.

I noted ways that instructors' descriptions of their course syllabi evenly split the layout for the course, in to two categories of "mine" and "required by the department," with the numbers and kinds of assignments, textbook, and outcomes ascribed to "the department," and pedagogical approaches, such as "modes" assigned frequently to the department, despite heavy

dispute by the faculty members interviewed. Closer analysis showed that the most frequently assigned categories for classroom enactment rationales (namely, see students getting it) and written feedback (knowledge of student) focused on individual interactions and classroom autonomy.

I began to revisit instructors' descriptions of their "independence" and their self-labeled "what we do" that was distinct from how they believed their departments had positioned them and my own coding, which demonstrated a great deal of flexibility and variation between what individual instructors "did" in the classroom. I then revisited my original written findings of classroom enactment, where I found instructors described the least amount of tension with department and institutional expectations, and focused their rationales on their perceptions of students. Within the assessment data, instructors' stated rationales for their feedback resembled their rationales for their classroom enactment, but the coding of the artifact data suggested different alignment, with categories for mechanics and grammar outnumbering codes for content and thinking greatly. This was an anomaly when compared to the stated tensions instructors described during the design interviews and the observed tensions between the feedback instructors gave and the rationales they articulate for that feedback.

This complexity in the data—the repeated tension between what instructors said they believed they should do and the constraints they identified when doing it, combined with the mismatch between how they talked about their teaching goals and how they communicated those goals to students via their feedback, caused me to revisit my initial framework for analysis. Once again, I delved into the data, attempting to identify a pattern between the stated goals and rationales. But any pattern I could identify at one college did not hold up—at least not entirely—at another college.

I returned to graphic depictions I had used in my early analysis when trying to understand exactly how the tensions instructors identified informed their teaching (Figure 3) I listened to the interview recordings and drew connecting arrows between categories each time a particular pressure was named. I then began to triangulate between the institutional variations among the codes, the direct evaluations from faculty that they had a great deal of independence, and the observation analysis that independence was rarely enacted at Corner and Silver Lake College, though it was the foundational assumption behind the research and intervention in the curriculum sequence at Ridgeway College. Most simply put, instructors located most tensions and constraints in their relationships to their departments, but they articulated rationales for adapting to these tensions in their interactions with students.

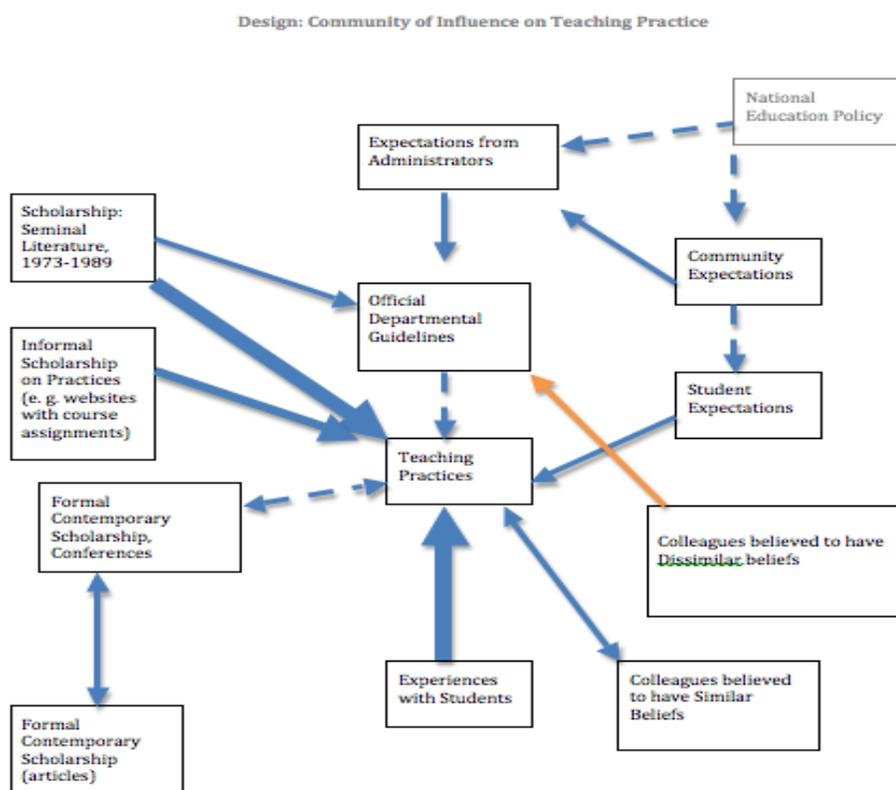


Figure 3: Map of Tensions and Expectations

In Figure 3, I use arrows to note the pressures on the expectations described by instructors. The direction represents the way instructors described the pressure in terms of source and direction. The thickness represents the strength of the pressure, thus those pressures identified multiple times across 3 or more interviews are represented with thicker lines. Dotted arrows represent implicitly articulated of expectation and influence—those described by one or two instructors or alluded to in conversations but not articulated as clear pressures or tensions. The yellow arrow represents a set of outwardly cast assumptions about pressures—that only those faculty with whom a participant does not agree are able to affect department direction and administrative policies. The single two-way arrow between conference participation and scholarly articles represents the belief that these inform and shape one another, thus access to one serves as implicit access to the other. Note that experiences with students and knowledge from seminal literature form the strongest influences on instructors' sense of their teaching expectations. In addition, informal interaction with scholarship via websites and shared experiences with like-minded colleagues affected the teaching choices instructors made. The teaching beliefs of different-minded colleagues were described as influencing course outcomes (in yellow) and so came to affect participating instructors' teaching through the pressures of having such outcomes on their teaching when they disagreed with the outcomes themselves.

This analysis helped me to see that instructors described a great deal of pressures on their teaching, but they described few places where they exerted reciprocal pressures, except in their teaching of students, their conversations with colleagues. Even department outcomes were described as external pressures by most instructors on which they could effectively exert no pressure. This led me to the orienting assertion that instructors identified and asserted autonomy in relation to their students but not in response to forces within their departments and institutions.

In order to help make sense of this observation, I began to delve into existing theorizations of professional autonomy. Those definitions, described at the beginning of this dissertation, helped me develop a theory for how instructors assert their autonomy in relation to their perceived roles and institutional supports.

Limitations

There are eight limitations with this study. First, the low initial response rate from instructors constituted a considerable limitation for this study. As few instructors expressed interest in this study, I incorporated all interested participants who qualified. This small sample can likely be assumed to be more engaged in inquiry in instruction and in participation in research through their own self-selection. Thus, in terms of the findings of this dissertation, we might consider these instructors as models to be more engaged than many of their counterparts.

Second the faculty in this study represented a range in terms of teaching experience, all had been teaching at their current institution for 15 years or less. The resulting sample did not include instructors with greater seniority at those institutions. This constituted an important limitation, because instructors frequently identified senior instructors whose values strongly informed the current direction of the department, especially values about traditional grammar instruction and the use of modes that instructors in this study identified as defining and persistent tensions in their work. Not having senior faculty in this study may have limited a possible historicization of current department attitudes and policies. At the same time, as noted above, the instructors who volunteered for this study represented a self-selected sample of instructors interested in the original question of this study and, arguably, in inquiry into instruction at their

institutions, in general, thus representing a fairly engaged and attentive group of instructors in their own right.

Additionally, no racial minorities participated in this study. While the sample was representative of two-year college instructors in general, my conversations with participants have suggested that participation by faculty members who are racial minorities would likely have highlighted additional or even different tensions. Thus, readers should keep in mind that all instructors in this study were white, mostly middle class, with some from working class and poor backgrounds. Those from working class and poor backgrounds described their own backgrounds as influencing their understanding of student needs and motivating their decisions to teach. Similar motivations may have been described by instructors from historically disadvantage racial or ethnic minorities, and, given a lack of participation in this group, tensions that emerged in this study, which do not address race, should not be seen as exhaustive in this regard.

A fourth limitation of this study design is that I conducted only one observation for each participant. My goal here, however, was not to understand how *consistently* instructors enacted their teaching across the semester or the range of strategies they drew on over time, but on how their notions about teaching became enacted within the context of the institutions where they taught and in response to their in-situ interactions with students. When possible, I observed instructors' longest class meeting times, so, for example, when the sample course was offered one time a week for three hours, I attended and recorded the three-hour class, in order to get the most comprehensive snapshot of the ways instructors enact their teaching approaches.

A fifth limitation of this study resulted from a lack of shared discourse between participants, their colleagues, and the researcher. For example, instructors used course goals, outcomes, and objectives interchangeably. They did not distinguish between the criteria for

grading and the goals of the course. In general, questions aiming to understand variations in instructors' teaching goals and the criteria for assessment split into abstract (goals) and objective descriptions (criteria). While specific tensions existed between these categories within each individual instructor's conversations, variations in how instructors understood these terms across interviews and institutions existed. Additionally, instructors used terms like "literacy," "discourse," and "fluency" interchangeably to refer to the acclimation of students to an academic community. This flexibility in language made question-by-question comparisons difficult to navigate, with some instructors (e.g., Sadie and Saul) modifying answers to some questions from the first interview during later interviews. In order to address these concerns, I used language of coding to pull some of this language together. Thus, when one participant describes the fluency needed to help students adapt to the language of the college, I used "discourse community," a disciplinary term, to capture students' descriptions even though the instructor herself did not use it. I also verified with this instructor that this was the term she meant after the interview and coding. Moreover, when coding interviews from Sadie and Saul, both of whom modified their answers about constraints and challenges at their institution and revisited components about their course planning late in the study, I used design interview codes to capture and account for these revised answers.

A sixth limitation of this study resulted from the range of strategies that instructors used to design their courses and assess their students. This variation made comparisons across instructors' teaching approaches difficult, in particular when comparing feedback on assignments for different genres, of different lengths, and with different grading criteria. In order to address this variety, I identified the prompts provided to students in terms of genre, and I carefully noted the differences in expectations in length, use of outside sources, etc. Additionally, when coding

for feedback on assignments that ranged from three to twelve pages, I used per-page frequencies to get a sense of how commonly instructors offered particular kinds of feedback per page, rather than within a paper as a whole.

Finally, a seventh limitation of this study is a component of nearly all research of this kind; I needed to establish trust between myself and my participants before many of them felt they could tell me about the some of their constraints and experiences of conflict. During our initial interviews, instructors seemed to want to make a “good” impression for themselves, their students, and their schools. They quickly described perceptions of two-year colleges and two-year college instructors and instruction as non-prestigious, lacking in rigor, and undervalued, and they began their first interviews emphasizing the similarities between our institutions, as well as the teaching benefits available at their colleges presumably not available at mine. In early interviews, they stressed the similarity of their students to students at my university and emphasized the similarity in the kinds of teaching they do to the kind of teaching in university courses at the same level. In later interviews, they emphasized the under-preparedness of students, low reading levels, and the complexity of their lives. Instructors also at times asserted that they performed their work more intently and ethically than instructors at my flagship university. That said, as participants began to trust me and my research intentions—to trust that I did not come with an intention to assault their efforts or to over-theorize their lived teaching context—they identified more constraints and learning challenges, and to describe those to me. By the end of the study period, instructors opened up about additional tensions and challenges. In addition, I have stayed in contact with many of these instructors and they have consulted me about negotiations with their colleagues and administrators.

Finally, as an exploration of identity construction and enactment within a specific social environment, the findings in this dissertation focus on the experiences and perceptions of faculty members. Throughout our conversations faculty instructors described and interpreted the actions, goals, and intentions of administrators. It was instructors' interpretations of administrators that informed my analysis and theorization of professional autonomy. With the exception of one interview, conducted off-the-record with an associate dean, no in-depth data was collected about administrators' stated goals or about their perceptions of faculty or teaching. As the focus of this study is to understand how instructors' professional identities and enactments of autonomy are shaped by their socially-constructed identities—thus informed by perception and not “reality,” if such a thing exists—this study cannot speak to the actual policies, goals, or expectations of administrators at any of these colleges .

Positioning of the Researcher

I brought several subject positions to this investigation and to the analysis of artifacts and interviews. I am an instructor of college-level writing, a tutor for graduate-level scientific writing, a doctoral student at a research university, a primary investigator, a former instructor of writing at a two-year college in a semi-rural and working class community, a white female, and a former two-year college student. These subject positions both complement and confound my role as a researcher.

As a former two-year college instructor of writing, I brought some “street credibility” to my role as a researcher that helped to temper some of prevalent skepticism about “out of touch” academics. I told instructors that I had experience teaching full-time as a tenure-track instructor at a two-year college in Michigan that served a semi-rural and predominantly working-class

community during the aftermath of the loss of the area's primary employer. At the same time, my affiliation with a research university seemed to engender curiosity from instructors and from students that allowed for a greater degree of collaboration in terms of conversations about the goals and purposes of this research, the evolving roles of participants in collaborative, ethno-methodological research, and research as an academic and intellectual endeavor (especially in conversations with students).

As a doctoral student in a research institution, I have the potential to represent a subset of the "they" who, as participants in my pilot study described, do not understand the complex kinds of teaching instructors at two-year colleges do or as a proxy for the many authors of academic research who overlook and undervalue two-year college instructors. The perception described in the literature that two-year college instructors are seen as somehow "less than" is an important aspect of the positioning of the instructors of this study, and it is an important aspect of the context that I believe shapes and limits the instructional approaches of faculty at these important sites for higher education access. Aware of this perception and of the constraints of time and workload that may prevent them from writing up their own research, I positioned the study itself as a collaborative investigation and engaged several of the participating instructors in reflectively thinking through some of their experiences as they related to the questions of this project and reflected and responded to some of the findings. I maintain contact with most of the instructors in this study, some of whom have served as readers on publications that have come from this dissertation and others who have attended presentations on the data at a national conference.

At the same time, some of my motivation in pursuing this study comes from concerns about college-level writing instruction at two-year colleges based on literature that describes this instruction as overwhelmingly focused on skills-based learning (e.g., Callahan & Chumney,

2009; Grubb & Associates, 1999).and based on my own observations as a student and later an instructor at two two-year colleges. Those experiences and observations, juxtaposed against my experiences as at other kinds of learning institutions led me to question ways that the assumptions of and expectations for two-year college education may limit the potential for these colleges to engage fully the higher education access mission proffered by the moniker “America’s Democracy Colleges”. Recognizing the important role that first-year writing serves in students’ long-term success and graduation in higher education (Cox, 2009b; Sternglass, 1997), I was motivated to study teaching practices, understand teaching rationales, inquire about patterns and expectations, and, based on the results of the study, advocate for the conditions that would support these instructors in implementing their best teaching practices.

Ethics

During this study, I aimed to uphold standards of research ethics professed in our field. As such, every effort was made to reduce risks to participants. Participation in all parts of this project (including recruitment, observation, interviews, and member-checking) was entirely voluntary. Throughout this dissertation, I have used pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants, and I have redacted names of Alma Maters, home communities, etc. At the same time, the small sample size and the community demographics for each school make it difficult to entirely protect participant identities. I have informed instructors about the size of the study, informed them of their pseudonyms, and have offered them opportunities to read drafts of papers that have been sent for publication in academic journals or have appeared at academic conferences.

I have remained in contact with several members of this study. I have provided feedback to one participant writing a statement of purpose for graduate school, offered limited consulting to another faculty member engaged in an initiative to support the professional contracts and standards at one institution. I have also followed up by offering assistance to students who have now transferred to my university at the behest of participants in this study. Given that research initiatives can be seen as opportunistic and exploitative operations during which data is collected and the “researched” condition are left unchanged, I have made attempts to serve as a resource and a support for the fine work of the participants in this study while remaining at the periphery of their expert practice. Moreover, I have included feedback from these instructors in the revisions of publications from this dissertation and in the end of the results chapter of this dissertation. This member-checking and continued contact with instructors as a colleague and consultant means that I am persistently engaged with their work and verifying with them that I am fairly representing their experiences.

To that end, participation in this study also seemed to offer some benefits to instructors. Several instructors reported that participation in these interviews motivated additional teaching reflections, new conversations with other colleagues, and increased interest in scholarly participation. It is possible that collaborative studies, like this one, offer the potential to both engage and support this important sector of the composition studies profession.

Trustworthiness

The inclusion of my participants’ perspectives and member-checking help me to safeguard my analysis and assertions from what Tillie Olsen calls “trespass vision,” or that of an outsider looking (Royster, 2009). In order to ensure trustworthiness of our interactions and

analysis, I shared with instructors my own teaching experiences, in particular those at a two-year college, and we developed rapport as teachers with shared interests in student-centered access-oriented education. During interviews, I tested orienting assumptions with instructors. For example, I might ask, following a narrative from an instructor something along the lines, “other instructors have described a similar phenomenon. What do you think causes that?” After they provided their interpretation, I might offer my nascent observation, and we would talk through those ideas, co-constructing meaning and understanding throughout the process.

I shared early findings and orienting hypotheses with participants. By and large, instructors supported my analysis and findings. Robin wrote, “Your dissertation is fantastic. I think your work is exhaustive, comprehensive, and fascinating. When I read research about poverty, I’m always reminded of how much work we educators have to do. Thank you for more food for thought. I am also fine with the integrity of my comments.” Roxana wrote, “I am completely fine with the portrayal of Roxana in both pieces. I think you’ve captured the pain and the pleasure of two-year college teaching really well, and articulated my own struggles and triumphs beautifully.” I carefully considered the feedback from instructors. Wherever possible, I incorporated their feedback and suggestions in this dissertation. Upon reading earlier iterations of this dissertation, one instructor urged me to put greater focus on the ways instructors fail to professionalize through scholarship. While my data did not actually support her notion that faculty were unengaged, her suggestions to look more deeply helped me to ask questions about why instructors’ scholarly participation was apparent to me and not to them. Why did I know who had attended a recent conference when colleagues in the same department did not? Callie, responding to an article published with minor findings from the dissertation responded, “I enjoyed reading the article. It was interesting and well-written--a great combo! And I can easily

say that my views were represented fairly.” Colin encouraged me to more aggressively pursue the conflict between administrators and instructors, asking,

Are you willing to say that one large segment of CC faculty do not theorize their discipline or their pedagogy? It’s ugly to say this, but my experience is that this is the case. Because they cannot theorize their resistance, the resistance tends to focus on adjusting tactics rather than proposing alternative strategies.

While the data across campuses failed to provide evidence for Colin’s overall assessment and his encouragement that I push my claims further in that direction, I believe his sense of this conflict at his campus provided a valuable lens for thinking through the tensions I viewed arising between instructors’ disciplinary knowledge and their perceived autonomy to exert control using that knowledge. I had more insight into how instructors theorized their pedagogy, even when those theorizations were not evident to instructors observing one another. In general, the feedback I received from faculty participants supported my analysis and conclusions and helped to develop this version of the dissertation as well as existing publications from it.

CHAPTER FIVE: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

In Chapter One I introduced professional autonomy as a defining criterion of professional identity and a quintessential criterion for creating and sustaining professional status. I drew on Sarfatti Larson's (2013) work to distinguish two kinds of autonomy: autonomy over technique and autonomy over service/knowledge. To recap, autonomy over technique refers to control over the ways professional protocols and activities are *enacted* within the professional setting. Autonomy over scope of service refers to control over how knowledge is produced, how knowledge shapes technique or practice, and how professionals are evaluated with respect to that knowledge, thus evolving what constitutes contemporary specialized professional knowledge. Drawing on scholarly literature that has described and defined the ways professions are created and sustained, I explained that only professionals who have autonomy over their scope of service can sustain their professional status or gain additional authority in their fields.

In order for professionals to take up and enact particular kinds of autonomy, they must identify those autonomous acts as central to their professional roles. In the third chapter I introduced the theoretical frameworks of identity and positioning as lenses for understanding what role expectations instructors identify, and how they come to identify those roles. To recap, socially-symbolic interactionist theories of identity view identities as multiple, indicating that individuals perform specific roles—like the role of a two-year college writing instructor—in response to their perceptions of other people's expectations for that role. In this study, the role of two-year college writing instructor may be understood differently according to social situations, such as encounters with administrators and different-minded colleagues at instructors' teaching institutions, encounters with students, and encounters with like-minded colleagues.

I introduced “positioning” is a way to understand how role expectations and perceptions are communicated through discourse, such as speech and text, including, as we will see, in this chapter the texts that inform instruction, such as national policy conversations, department syllabus templates, department-adopted textbooks, conversations with colleagues, etc. Positioning theory is a natural supplemental lens to understanding identity role performances of autonomy, because it describes ways that possible identity positions are solicited or rejected through discourse. I used these complimentary theories together in order to help disambiguate between authority and knowledge instructors may have and ways they use their authority and knowledge in their professional environment.

In this chapter, I describe the multiple layers of expectations instructors identified on their teaching and how they responded to those expectations. I aim to highlight ways that instructors who adopted an independent contractor identity selected particular responses that focused on classroom instruction at the expense of engaging larger more encompassing conversations. I also describe the ways that instructors who adopted roles as semi-autonomous institutional partners did so and what positioning made those roles more available. This chapter begins with larger expectations, such as national policy, and moves gradually towards the classroom expectations influencing instructors’ responses. I conclude this chapter by describing a tentative model for shared autonomy and the strengthening of professional identity through implicit and explicit professionalization of instructors, drawing on examples observations of effective autonomous positioning.

I begin by providing an overview of the findings for the entire chapter. I follow with a section that explores findings about professional identity and expectations. In that section, I describe instructors’ perceptions of and responses to national policy expectations and

institutional expectations they perceive. Next, I identify two kinds of systematic responses to institutional expectations, independent contractors and semi-autonomous institutional partners including examples from the analysis. I organize the presentation of findings regarding departmental expectations in similar fashion. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the findings and major discussion points for the chapter that follows.

Overview of Findings

Through the collective analysis of teaching artifacts and transcripts of interviews, I identified a consistent self-perception among instructors as professionally disenfranchised, intellectually adrift from their disciplinary knowledge home bases—the universities and graduate education institutions that informed their teaching ideals. They were navigating a complex and shifting landscape of political pressures and changing student needs.

Within their classrooms and in their interactions with students, most instructors drew on specialized theoretical and experiential knowledge of writing pedagogy to respond to teaching situations, thereby asserting professional autonomy over the domain of the classroom. The knowledge instructors brought to their teaching was largely informed by their graduate school experiences and other professional development. The knowledge each instructor emphasized was unique, but for the most part, the shaping of the knowledge itself was attached to their membership in a larger professional community and an ongoing professional conversation. Callie drew heavily on Peter Elbow's work and viewed her teaching mission to improve students' writing confidence by encouraging them to write about their own experiences. Colin drew on Freire, and he viewed as his teaching mission the empowerment of students to engage questions about the construction of knowledge and power in American culture and—when found to be inequitable—the roles they could take to disrupt the construction of knowledge, and by

extension, the structure of power. . Christopher focused on the teaching of argument, with an emphasis on thesis statement and evidence. His notions about his role as an instructor were shaped largely by the professional preparation he received as a graduate student. As a two-year college instructor, he viewed his teaching mission to prepare students to be lifelong learners, and as part of this, he aimed to prepare them to be readers through the use of engaging texts. He sought out additional professional development in workshops with composition specialists at two-year colleges, like Katie Hern. Roxana turned largely to an epistemology of discourse communities and language performances to teach her students how to perform the activities that would make them successful in college. Her teaching mission was strongly influenced by her experiences as a college-aspiring student living in poverty. Her experiences of community members and college instructors teaching her how to be a college student, including how to navigate the many bureaucratic processes of college attendance, led her to view teaching in a two-year college in terms of close membership and coaching, not only in writing but in the kinds of cultural and identity performances students would need to reach their long-term professional goals.

Despite these richly informed and diverse teaching missions, instructors perceived limited authority to address teaching situations and constraints outside the confines of their classrooms, at the institutional level and beyond, except when actively positioned to take this role, for example by administrators. In many situations individual instructors implemented effective teaching within their classrooms by subverting or resisting the institutional and departmental expectations they perceived to conflict with their specialized knowledge of teaching. Only rarely did instructors work to change the conflicting expectations, themselves. Nevertheless, most identified no sustaining sense of professional home or community.

Instructors defined themselves in terms of their interactions with students—through their teaching strategies and tactics and their classroom experience, but not through overarching professional positions or philosophies. These identity constructions seemed to distance instructors from other instructors at their institution whom they perceived as having different teaching values, from administrators, and even from the discipline of composition when that discipline was perceived to be out of touch of the teaching situations of the colleges where instructors taught.

These instructors negotiated multiple, competing frameworks for making sense of teaching expectations at their institution. These expectations were shaped by their graduate student experiences⁸, the multiple (and sometimes contradictory) missions these institutions serve, experiences with their disciplinary, and their own experiences teaching. Meanwhile, these instructors also navigated a series of tensions in order to both enact teaching that aligned with their pedagogical beliefs and knowledge while upholding perceived, department guidelines, and differences among the pedagogical philosophies of faculty. When negotiating these overlapping and sometimes conflicting sets of expectations, instructors made pragmatic choices about where and when to assert their professional autonomy. Thus, they often prioritized interactions and experiences with students at each stage of teaching. Next instructors most commonly reached for core beliefs about teaching informed by their interaction with foundational assumptions of composition as a discipline and the scholars who help direct the discipline. However, they only rarely drew on these to shape curriculum or to push past the constraints they described as inhibiting effective teaching. Instead, they asserted expert knowledge of teaching primarily in

their relationships with students and within the classroom, rather than towards colleagues, department directors, and administrators. Seven of the instructors in this study asserted professional autonomy partially—exerting control over the techniques of their teaching but did not regularly assert, reinforce, or protect standards for how pedagogical expertise is recognized, valued, or renewed in their department.

In most cases, instructors' notions of themselves as individual educational crusaders without a tribe—without a professional identity—left them poorly positioned to respond to college initiatives they identified as harmful to student learning and to shape and regulate the norms for their own standards of instruction. While instructors actively asserted control over the technique of their own teaching, they only rarely asserted control over the scope of their service, including college initiatives, curricula, and standards of teaching evaluation. Thus, many instructors performed two different kinds of roles in their institutions, that of the expert in their classrooms and that of the contracted employee in their institutions. Most instructors who did assert service over scope of service were actively positioned by administrators as experts of writing pedagogy, charged with responding to curricular and institution-level concerns. Some examples suggest, however, that administrative positioning was not singularly responsible for instructors' assertions of autonomy. In some cases, instructors' strategies for responding to conflicts they perceived between their own teaching knowledge and conflicting expectations they perceived from others was to enact two sets of roles: one as a teaching expert in the classroom and one as a good worker in the institution. This led instructors to distinguish between what they actually did in their classroom and what others thought they did. In many situations, instructors acknowledged they actively enacted performances of roles they believed were expected in order

to encourage these perceptions, and did so using, for example, professional texts, like the syllabus or quiz to achieve these performances.

In this chapter, I describe the two main findings of this study, and I elaborate on the implications of those findings. As a primary finding, I identified two kinds of overarching role performances instructors enacted with respect to professional autonomy. I refer to these roles as “independent contractors” and “semi-autonomous institutional partners.” Although these role performances were not absolute—each instructor took up and enacted role behaviors that may have resembled the other group—these categories describe typified role performances across the course of this study.

In the simplest sense, independent contractor instructors negotiated conflicts by enacting autonomy over the procedures and teaching techniques within the scope of their classrooms (technical autonomy). They viewed the classroom as the parameters of their contractual freedoms, much as a plumber views the piping as the focus and limitation of his certified expertise. The “independent contractor” instructor does not seek to modify or interact with the larger system—the institution, itself, because the work, expertise, and autonomy are contractually bound to the local project, which for instructors is the classroom. On the one hand, this view of instructional responsibility can result in highly student-responsive teaching, and such excellence marked the teaching of many instructors in this study. However, instructors who took this role could also bury the expertise of their own instruction by performing “as if” they agree with the status quo, while working to subvert or elide expectations within the classroom. This has the result that instructors rarely bring their expert teaching experiences to bear in a critical evaluation of the validity of the expectations they perceive or to modify the forces that

create the expectations. The instructors who took enacted roles as independent contractors were Callie, Christopher, Charlotte, Colin, and Sadie.

In contrast, semi-autonomous institutional partners enacted autonomy within their departments, and sometimes in their institutions, to change curricula and inform institutional direction. I use the term “semi-autonomous institutional partners” to describe identity roles in which instructors sought to modify the expectations themselves by partnering with colleagues or administration to change the curriculum, the textbooks, and/ or the learning pathways at their institutions.

Semi-autonomous institutional partners collaborated with their administrators and colleagues in other departments to develop college degree goals that were consistent with their teaching goals. They imported teaching approaches from other institutions and conducted their own, locally-based research to arrive at best situated practices when trying to improve the student outcomes at their institutions. Semi-autonomous institutional partners advocated with next-level administrators for teaching practices and drew on scholarly engagement, typically with conferences, to make their cases. Three instructors took up semi-autonomous institutional partner roles within their institutions: Roxana, Remy, and Clarisse.

As a corollary to this primary finding, I observed that the identity roles instructors enacted seemed to be a function of the expectations they perceived at their teaching institutions and the freedoms and supports they perceived to fulfill those expectations. Instructors took on identities as “independent contractors” because they perceived their central role to be teaching-focused and student-centered and they viewed interactions with their institutions, communities, and national policy conversations to distract them from that primary purpose of teaching. Thus, instructors intentionally took up roles as “independent contractors” as pragmatic responses to a

wide array of conflicting expectations on their teaching. As I describe below, Sadie, Colin, Christopher, Charlotte, and Callie all described experiences during which they had approached departmental colleagues, institutional colleagues, and lead administrators with suggestions, new scholarship, or concerns and perceived their input was ignored or unvalued. Thus, by focusing on the classroom and their interactions with students, instructors explained that they could exert local control their own teaching within a system that did not seem to value their input. They frequently explained the difference in terms of what “they want” and what “we do,” indicating that the domain of their classroom was under their independent control. However, the result was that independent contractors often sacrificed autonomy over scope of service—control over curriculum, college outcomes, or policy conversation—in exchange for greater autonomy over technique—strategies in the classroom. This had three consequences. First, focusing teaching innovation and adaptation at the level of the classroom and avoiding conflicts at the department and institutional levels, resulted in decreasing instructors’ potentials to inform institutional curriculum and learning outcomes with their expertise. Second, this lack of control over the direction of their curriculum increased the perceived constraints instructors described, in particular where earlier efforts to advance curricular change had been rejected. Finally, this behavioral pattern, as a group, led instructors to be less engaged in public demonstrations of their professional credibility and competence, thus threatening a further decrease in professional status within their institutions and the policy conversations about access education.

Alternatively, when positioned as experts and designers, instructors could—and did—offer important contributions to improving institution-wide outcomes. I call this role identity “semi-autonomous institutional partners” because, though none of the instructors in this study attempted to contribute to or shape policy conversations at the state or national level as part of

their teaching roles, several did make significant contributions to the research and evolution at their institutions. These contributions allowed instructors to steer curriculum change to reflect their own teaching values and expertise. In these examples, institutional positioning of faculty was a key factor for engaging instructors as autonomous professionals. The positioning instructors experienced while students during graduate education contributed as a secondary, less recognized, factor to instructors' perceptions and enactments of their autonomy.

Less anticipated was the secondary finding that instructors were generally poor evaluators of their own autonomy. Their descriptions of independence and freedom at work—which largely focused on freedom to select textbooks or create prompts with minimal or no observational oversight—responded largely to institutional restrictions they believed influenced their teaching. Such independence did not include ways their teaching knowledge or experiences could affect institutional instruction. This observation led me to find, ultimately, that perceptions of independence within institutions vary widely from actual professional autonomy, such that instructors perceived both greater and lesser control over their teaching than they actually had. Taken together, the two identity roles instructors in this study enacted and instructors' poor evaluation of their own professional autonomy lead me to conclude that many of the role choices instructors enact in an effort to maintain control over the techniques of their teaching in the classroom can actually diminish their control over their scope of service at the institutional level. This suggests that instructors' own understanding of the expectations for their roles as teachers may motivate them to sacrifice autonomy over service in favor of autonomy over technique in order to maintain job stability, and it underscores some of the ways that traditional teaching expectations inform the implicit, if not explicit, expectations for job stability.

Professional Expectations and Identity Roles

Instructors identify and negotiate a set of competing expectations from the national, institutional, and departmental levels. These expectations are also informed by instructors' experiences with students and their knowledge of the discipline. Instructors in this study derived national-level expectations about their roles from presidential speeches that specifically identify two-year colleges as the focus. At the level of the institution, emails and interactions with administrators and colleagues outside of the department, as well as second-hand descriptions about administrators shape instructors' perceptions of their institutional roles. McGrath and Spear have referred to these second-hand descriptions as "lore" (McGrath & Spear, 1991). At the department level shared course documents, recommended textbooks, and conversations with departmental colleagues shape instructors' understanding of their roles. At the classroom level instructors' experiences in their graduate education and their experiences with students shape the enactment for their roles. Their teaching values develop from knowledge of the discipline that is gained through their graduate education and interactions at conferences and supplemented through interactions with online resources. Most instructors perceived conflicts between the expectations they perceived from national-level policy conversations, their institutions, their departments and the teaching values they gleaned from their graduate experience.

Expectations and College Missions

All of the instructors in this study identified the two-year colleges where they worked—and the system of community colleges more generally—as having multiple missions. They identified workforce development as the mission most recognized by the public, and they aligned themselves more readily with the transfer mission. Christopher identified a goal to help students

become “lifelong learners” and to improve their overall reading abilities as parts of his primary teaching missions. However, he did not see workforce preparation as a poorly conceived mission by itself. Instead, he, alongside his colleague Callie, sought teaching strategies that would help connect students’ academic and occupational goals through the learning goals they had for their courses—increased confidence, improved writing adaptability, improved reading ability, etc. For Colin, this relationship was much more fraught, where he not only identified workforce training as the primary goal of administrators and students, he saw his purpose was to disrupt this goal, seeing workforce education in binary opposition to “critical thinking.” Sadie exemplified a much more complex relationship with the college mission and her own teaching goals. She identified the needs of students as profoundly foundational and identified basic writing support—sentence-level work, grammar, etc.—to be the most crucial. At the same time, she identified workforce education as a form of direct exploitation of students, and simultaneously she viewed increased calls for college attendance and completion as an inappropriate national expectation that required college-level degrees for positions that in her view should not need college education. At the core, she viewed her teaching mission to prepare students for the language-based negotiations they would have to make on their own behalves in their apartment contracts, custody agreements, and legal negotiations. Thus, she viewed the teaching of free-writing and narratives as a luxury her students could not afford. Still, in her goal to make students aware of power hierarchies and the abuses of everyday rhetoric through assignments that investigated, for example, corporate advertising and workers’ rights, she found these goals trumped each semester by her perception that her students needed more attention on grammar and the sentence.

Clarisse and Saul described much less tension between their teaching missions and the missions of two-year colleges. Clarisse was fond of quoting, for example, a comment she had

heard at a conference in an earlier year: “if we don’t do our jobs,” she said, “kids don’t eat.” This direct economic correlation between students’ educational success and their economic outcomes had a focusing effect for Nancy. Rather than take issue with the element of the college mission focused on workforce education, she recognized that her students came from a variety of backgrounds and included traditionally-aged, often academically prepared students, as well as poor, sometimes unprepared, and occasionally second-chance students who were using college as a pathway away from a criminal life. Thus, her teaching mission was to serve all of the college missions. The tensions she identified, as a result, revolved around the participation and expectations for teaching among her fellow faculty members, rather than the institution as a whole. In this way, Clarisse seemed more at peace with the multiple missions than her colleagues. Every instructor in this study recognized the missions of their colleges as multiple, as serving students from all backgrounds, as needing to “meet students where they are” and to prepare them for where they are going. However, as I have shown in this chapter, for many this recognition was in most cases meant instructors lived in a persistent state of conflict between the kinds of teaching they thought students should receive and the kinds of teaching they believed they could or should enact.

National Policy Expectations

Instructors at all three institutions identified two main expectations in educational policy conversations at the national level: to prepare students to join the workforce and to educate underprepared students through courses sometimes called developmental, basic, or remedial education. In general, instructors drew on presidential speeches, including State of the Union Addresses and locally presented speeches to identify national expectations for their teaching.

Instructors identified in these conversations an expectation for two-year colleges to “fix” the economy by preparing “new workers” (Charlotte).

Although instructors described feeling grateful for increased national attention on their institutions, they disagreed with the teaching expectations they perceived in such conversations. Instructors articulated two sets of criticisms about those expectations. The first set of criticisms focused on a perceived overemphasis on workforce education. The second identified the expectations as simply too broad given the preparedness of students. Instructors viewed the representation of two-year colleges through these media as “strange” (Callie), “disappointing” and “limiting” (Christopher), and “worrisome” (Charlotte). They noted that such perspectives disregarded the two-year colleges as educational sites that engage and develop intellectual “rigor” (Saul, Roxana), with Remy using the metaphor of “double-A ball” to capture public perceptions of two-year college teaching. Remy’s metaphor of “double-A ball” suggests segregated leagues, in which the professional league, either the American or the National Baseball Leagues, represent an idealized example of the sport with a wide reaching audience—the metaphorical stand in for university education. The double-A ball league, or minor league, typically employs less talented players or players that are waiting to be “sent up” to play in the major leagues, thus having a sort of pre-professional or paraprofessional status. Instructors explained that the national focus on workforce education and education attainment elided what they saw as educational imperatives, including critical and abstract thinking (Sadie, Saul, Colin, and Roxana). Christopher explained,

I think it was the State of the Union Address. I mean, it’s great that two-year colleges are getting some publicity but the idea that – I forget the exact number – but that our goal is

to train a hundred thousand people for jobs. I mean certainly there's that component, but I don't know if that's really what we're here to do. (Christopher, 1)⁹

Here Christopher identifies with specific goals outlined by the president and recognizes part of the mission of his college is to prepare students for the workforce. However, Christopher clearly identifies workforce preparation as a single component of the colleges' mission, which he suggests is broader, if not actually different. Callie also associated an emphasis on workforce education with President Obama's administration.

And that's certainly how Obama sees two-year colleges—that two-year colleges are going to be places where we're going to train the workforce, and where that leaves people in the humanities, I'm not entirely sure (Callie, 1)

Callie identified the current emphasis as part of a trend towards seeing two-year colleges as sites for workforce training and away from transfer preparation. She described this trend as a linear progression away from distinguishing between “junior colleges” and “technical colleges,” which she explained allowed for two-year colleges to serve as “starting points” for “all areas of higher education.” Callie noted that this trend, which she identified as beginning in the early 2000s, was particularly “strange” for English instructors. Callie suggested the goals she associated with her discipline, such as helping students to identify their authentic voices and use writing as exploration, came into conflict with the singular workforce focus. This underlying conflict between disciplinary expectations for writing courses, which instructors like Callie tied to notions of liberal arts education and critical thinking, and workforce focus, which instructors

believed promoted singular focus on correctness, was raised across interviews as a central source of individual and cultural discord across the institutions.

Colin, also at Corner College identified national influences as problematic, but he explained the futility he perceived of engaging conversations at the national level, “I feel like if I could make [Arnie Duncan and others] sit down and read Freire or something like, that they would stop their nonsense. Of course, they wouldn't”). Thus, while Colin recognized the influence national policy on the institution where he taught, and by extension on the institutional expectations he perceived on his teaching, he resigned himself that nothing could be done about it.

In these examples, it is clear that the instructors perceived expectations from national policy conversations to focus on workforce education and that they connected this expectation specifically to speeches made by President Obama. Instructors characterized these expectations as too narrowly describing the role of two-year college education, thereby leaving unaddressed community education and academic preparation for transfer. At the same time, they argued that the expectation to prepare students for the workforce, alone, was problematic because it oversimplified the complex needs of the students expected to join that workforce. Charlotte explained,

So [students] get in my classes. They can't read; they can't spell; they don't know how to think critically. So they have this expectation—the president, and not to put it all on him, but you know what I mean—They have this expectation that suddenly we're going to take this very poor raw material and miraculously transform it into something when they spent the last twelve years doing nothing, when the system has not demanded that they learn to read; that they be tested for certain levels of knowledge. (Charlotte, 1),

For Charlotte, the expectation to prepare students to join the workforce was unrealistic given the extreme deficits she identified in her students and which she associated with gaps in their primary and secondary education.

Sadie expressed a similar concern, noting that neither her institution nor the students enrolled there were sufficiently prepared to meet the workforce education and college education attainment expectations she perceived. Sadie described the national policy agenda aimed at increasing educational attainment as potentially harmful, in part because it delegitimized vocational education and, at the same time, undermined the academic mission of two-year colleges. Given dwindling institutional resources and cutbacks to available instructional supports, Sadie described what she perceived as a need to reevaluate “college education” in terms of separate kinds of “tracks” that would clarify expectations and mitigate perceived pressures by students that college education is required.

At the national level people talk about how there needs to be a technical track, because there is an expectation that college is a right, you know, like high school is and should be a right over a requirement. But college is not [a right] but employers are treating it like it is. So students are showing up going I, I need an A. So there needs to be a new path nationally, you know, our culture needs to start accepting it. . . not everybody belongs in college. . . We have all of these euphemisms. You know, students were challenging or, no you know some folks are sweet and wonderful humans and are not that sharp, you know? Or have learning disabilities. Yes we accommodate learning disabilities but if reading is a nightmare and painful for you, you know, college is a bad place to be. (Sadie, 2)

Here Sadie takes issue with more than her perception of national expectations to critique cultural attitudes and current policy agenda intended to improve college attendance. She forwards a view

that the college-for-all zeitgeist may be ill-advised, noting that college should not be a requirement for certain kinds of employment and that the pervasive expectation on students to attend college unfairly positions some students in highly unrewarding contexts. In part, Sadie identifies the kinds of knowledge she associates with college instruction—critique and analysis—and the kind of knowledge she believes her students bring. She seems to imply that a failure for some students to complete their community college courses need not reflect poorly on instructors or on students, but is simply a factor of differing levels of intelligence and potential.

There are two salient characteristics about the concerns and critiques offered by instructors based on their perceptions of national-level expectations on their teaching. First, their expectations draw directly on speeches and referenda offered at the national level. Public conversations from national discourse about post-secondary education and specifically referring to two-year colleges shaped their understanding of their expectations. This is to say that none of these descriptions came from policy conversations that instructors had participated in through professional memberships, listservs, letter-writing, etc. The second is that, despite their discomfort and their critiques, none of the instructors expressed a perception that their role as instructor could or should engage conversations at the national level. Instead, they identified trends in policy conversations about education at two-year colleges, identified them as real pressures on their teaching situations, and described that they chose to “ignore” those expectations in order to focus on designing and enacting their classroom teaching. As a result, instructors positioned themselves to receive expectations from national conversation but not contribute to them; the flow of information and expectations was unidirectional.

For example, after describing pressures and expectations he perceived from the 2012 State of the Union Address and from the community surrounding Corner College, Christopher described this as his response:

So how the larger conversation informs what I think about teaching writing at a – I don't know. I guess I just take it as it comes. I think a lot of people sort of devalue. . . . The experience or devalue the profession of teaching in a two-year college, that somehow that is less noble or worthy than doing something somewhere else. And I really don't care what they think, so, I just do my own thing. (Christopher, 1)

Given that their primary response to these expectations was to “ignore” them, instructors participated in what could be thought of as a broken communication circuit, receiving expectations and neither repurposing their courses to meet those expectations nor offering feedback into the conversation that such expectations were problematic. In essence, instructors ignored identity roles they associated with the national conversation and claimed identity roles within their institutions. Although this identity choice successfully removed for instructors the discomfort of trying to reconcile vastly different expectations with their own classroom practices, it also had the effect of making them passive interlocutors with those national conversations. Still, these national-level expectations had the potential to set the purpose and goals of administrators at their colleges. Thus, in an effort to side-step the discomfort associated with identity disturbances created by an incongruent set of social expectations, instructors also side-stepped an opportunity to assert their unique authoritative footing as teachers into the debate about education at the national level.

Expectations from the Institution

Interpretations of teaching expectations at instructors' own institutions varied, as did their responses to those expectations. Instructors at all institutions recognized teaching as the main expectations of their instructional roles, with some noting that they also provided service to their colleges by serving on boards or committees. Some instructors identified participation in regional or national conferences on writing pedagogy (Roxana, Clarisse), developmental education (Robin, Remy) or educational leadership (Saul) as important components of their role. Remy and Sadie were grateful that they were not required to attend conferences. Robin noted that she did not attend conferences when the dates conflicted with the teaching semester. Clarisse noted attendance at CCCC each year served as a "shot in the arm" (Clarisse, 1) for her professional identity and her morale, but she lamented the lack of an institutional review board and funding to support more substantial scholarship at her institution.

Instructors at Silver Lake College and Corner College perceived their administrators as holding similar expectations as those they identified at the national level. They viewed themselves as positioned outside of the conversation about institutional change, often left out of institution-level conversations, and they described that their teaching expertise was often ignored. The title of this dissertation comes from an interview with Sadie, in which she explained,

I don't know what to say. I mean, I know what [students] need. The students don't know, the administration doesn't know. It's only me, but I guess to some degree that's what I'm saying. I think there should be some interaction here, but this is my profession, this is what I went to school to do. . . I suppose a lot of what I try to do is to sell [the idea that she is able to teach writing] to students.

In this example, Sadie describes the sense that she is working alone—that it is “only me.” In addition, she emphasizes her perception that her specialized knowledge—what she “went to school to do”—is undervalued by students and by administrators. During this portion of the interview, Sadie described what she saw as a shift in education with students treated as customers and administrators as business traders. She made an analogy to medical care, in which she insisted such an approach to health would result in patients getting care they want, not the care they need, and would—ultimately—lead to an unhealthy population.

In some cases, instructors conflated expectations from national conversations, the public, institutional administrators, and colleagues at their institution (Christopher, Colin, Callie, Sadie). This was evident in their use of the pronoun “they,” as will be seen in the examples below, to refer collectively to national policy makers, administrators, or other stakeholders’ descriptions of expectations. Instructors at Corner College and Silver Lake College viewed administrators as out of touch with instructors, the goals they associated with good writing programs, and the needs of students. In these descriptions, instructors explained that administrators did little in their bureaucratic role to enable or support their professional activities. Instructors saw themselves as teaching in spite of administrators rather than in collaboration with them. Narratives that supported this perception comprised a central component of instructors’ stories repeated by multiple. These shared narratives fomented anti-administration sentiments at Corner College and, to a lesser extent, at Silver Lake College. In response, most instructors at both Corner College and Silver Lake College took on roles as independent contractors, enacting their teaching authorities primarily in their classrooms, where they critiqued and modified perceived expectations in response to their own understanding of the field, their perceptions of students, and their teaching values.

Instructors at Ridgeway College, on the other hand, described administrators as partners who solicited instructors' expertise to respond to institutional problems. Ridgeway instructors were eager to describe research interventions with which they had participated and conversations they were having about their teaching, their rationales for their teaching, and the scholarship that undergirded that teaching with their administrators.

Identity Responses at the Institutional Level

Faculty responses to the positioning they perceived at their institutions resulted in two overarching sets of role responses: independent contractors and semi-autonomous institutional partners. In the next sections I describe these role responses.

Independent Contractors

Within the gap instructors identified between their teaching goals and the expectations they perceived from administrators, most instructors at Corner College and Silver Lake College perceived their teaching expertise and experiences to hold little authority in conversations with administrators. Callie explained that the administrator responsible for hiring in the English department at Corner College lacked an understanding of expertise needed to teach developmental writing courses, even though such courses have low completion rates and cost a great deal of money to the colleges to maintain.

Within my own institution I'm sorry to say, that our Associate Dean has believed that teaching remedial is easier, and so he gives the brand new adjuncts who've never taught before the remedial class, *as much as we persuade him, or try to persuade him, that, really, it's probably hard, that you want, you know* [emphasis added]—[very qualified instructors] I think that's part of the misconception, that it's not that hard if you just drill

enough, and also that people are going *to be fixed* [emphasis added]. And that's not a two-year college thing, that's a freshman writing thing. That somehow we're going to fix these people and it's going to change (Callie)

In this passage, Callie identifies that she and other English instructors in the department have tried to “persuade” the associate dean that teaching developmental (remedial) writing courses requires disciplinary and pedagogical expertise. However, she emphasizes that these efforts have not resulted in changes in hiring or schedule assignments. She ties this problem to a general misconception that she associates with developmental education at all higher education institutions—that drill-based instruction teaching can “fix” students who arrive to college underprepared. Aside from the various potential merits of Callie’s argument, what is important to recognize here is that Callie describes her expertise and the expertise of her colleagues as undervalued by administrators at Corner College. Additionally, she generalizes this lack of value to ways colleagues at other colleges and community members treat composition instruction, in general, preempting her comment with the following,

You could tell [from employment application letters] that there were some people who were willing to teach at a two-year college if that's all they could get, but it's sort of a slumming thing. That's not really a perception. It's just that part of that whole prestige thing. . . .that what we do is less, but that's part of the whole comp thing, too. That comp is less than, you know, we're talking about great books or whatever.” (Callie)

Here, Callie describes two ways in which she believes the professional status of two-year college writing instructors suffer. First, she notes her perception that people outside the profession, even applicants to positions within the profession, see the work of teaching at two

year colleges as “slumming.” Second, she notes that “the whole prestige thing,” –assumed to be low—is a component of the disciplinary relationship between composition and literature.

Additionally, it is of interest that here and elsewhere, the ways the word “fix” indexes a set of intentions she associates with the expectations for instruction of first-year writing for students to “stop making mistakes” in their writing. Examining the language closely, however, Callie’s description of fixing extends not only to students’ writing but to the students themselves. Thus, in her description of the overwhelming misperception she sees regarding first-year writing courses is the expectations that these fifteen-week courses are charged with removing from students any inherent character or learning deficits they bring to their environment. This term arose across interviews, with Charlotte, Colin, and Christopher all using the same term to signal an oversimplified version of learning that would lead to the elimination of “error” in a standardized written dialect of academic English. The use of the verb “to fix” to mean “the role of” or “the antithesis to” teaching highlights a lack of consensus between instructors about their goals worthy of additional analysis. Christopher noted that he did not perceive that one semester of “freshman comp as fixing many things that people have come to expect to fix things” explaining his belief that the semester should be spent introducing students to processes of writing and tools for they can take to future writing situations. . In contrast, Sadie used “fix” as an analogy to explain the ways the specialized knowledge of other kinds of professionals have greater credibility with the public. While explaining her rationale for a section in her syllabus that encouraged students to leave behind previous writing experiences and to follow the approach she uses, Sadie explained, “you don’t do that with your tennis pro. You just sort of say, ‘fix me.’ That is what I am here to do.” Here, Sadie’s use of “fix” served as a verbal marker to transition from why she wants students to disencumber themselves from past learning

experiences and into the ways students, in her view, bring an unwillingness to do the learning of the course unless they believe that learning will be actively and directly measured. Thus, she posited that such resistance is not experienced by a professional tennis instructor, even while the stakes, arguably, for writing in college may be higher. While this study did not engage in sustained discourse analysis as a method for analysis, this deeper examination of the single word “fix,” albeit brief, hints at a potentially greater problem of lack of shared discourse between instructors about instructional goals and methods.

Sadie identified the same problem at Silver Lake College, where administrators had begun to redesign a college response to developmental education. She explained that instructors there had offered to share with administrators the data from their departmental research on enrollment and outcomes of their developmental writing courses—their knowledge over the scope of their programmatic service. Sadie said that the offer to share data was made on two occasions, during the initial data collection and analysis done by her colleague, Sid, and again when the administration began to divorce developmental education from content areas of instruction. Sadie and Saul interpreted the institution’s intention as relieving the institution from the burden of requiring disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge for instructors teaching developmental writing. Although this was a condition of instructors’ employment contracts in the content areas, Saul and Sadie expressed their concern that this hiring requirement could be easily removed from the labor contract of a detached, developmental education department, because full time instructors in the new department would fall under new—yet to be established—hiring expectations.

A colleague of mine sent an email. He went to some, you know, “administration wants to talk about developmental learning” [meeting] and he had PowerPoint and [Sid] is whip

smart and he was absolutely the right person to go and he's like, "do you know we already have this?" you know? And like [they asked] "is there any data?" and Sid's like, "I have it," because he actually does the data and he understands it because he is smarter than all of us and the administration is like "what? There is data?" We kind of thought we could just say this." (Code: enactment: conflict with administration; cross-purposes)

In this narrative of the experiences of her colleague, Sadie identifies the way she believes that administration has ignored instructors' specialized knowledge, who were not invited to the meeting initially and Sid's specific knowledge, who gathers the assessment data in the department. She makes apparent that Sid has gathered data on student learning in developmental learning and that these data were not solicited by administrators when they first met to discuss changing the institutional structure and course curriculum related to developmental education. Although Sid attended the meeting with administrators, it was Sadie's perception that he invited himself and that, following this conversation, the collection of data Sid offered was ignored.

Sadie's description of her colleague's conversation with administrators was a theme that emerged across all three of her interviews, as upcoming changes to developmental education at Silver Lake College emerged as a major concern. Her perception was that the administrators were working to change the developmental education curriculum. The intention of these changes in Sadie and Saul's view was to restructure the course sequences, so that future instructors would fall under separate labor contracts from disciplinary faculty. Existing contracts with faculty who taught within disciplinary departments required candidates to hold at least a master's degree in their content areas. Sadie and Saul perceived that the establishment of a new, developmental department would adhere to no such hiring restrictions. However, instructors were not consulted

as the experts on instruction of writing or of developmental writing and their attempts to assert footing with the administration, at least in Sadie's view, were ignored.

Similarly, indirect stories about administrators were a shaping force in interviews with instructors at Corner College and Ridgeway, with instructors calling on narratives from past and present colleagues to describe instructors' experiences achieving tenure (Callie). These stories contributed to instructors' overall understanding of their own professional identities and served as rationales for not asserting their expertise and to their sense of tensions between their own teaching goals and administrative goals even in the absence of direct experience.

The conflation of national policy conversations, perceived expectations from administrators, and perceptions of colleagues described above had the additional effect of positioning instructors in an "us-them" dynamic. In this dynamic, instructors who shared particular teaching philosophies and goals viewed themselves as an isolated and threatened pedagogical cohort whose values were at risk from the educational goals of administrators and the rest of the community more general. Colin illustrated this conflation from one set of ideological detractors from another in this exchange, in which I asked Colin about the purpose of two-year colleges.

Colin: Well, what they think their purpose is to create -- I mean, this is not true, but I believe this—is to create trained, docile, obedient workers, and that they illustrate the difference between education and training. So I mean, that's kind of what I think they're up to.

Brett: So when you say "they," are you talking administration, or are you talking -- who would be "they" in that sentence?

Colin: I think, especially like a place like Corner, which is really supported by its community, it is a two-year college, and it really embodies the middle class/working class beliefs of its community; and the people who come, see education as job training, it does a pretty good job of doing that. It winds up having a notion that education can be standardized, that they like transmission models of education. So I don't think that they all got together and decided to exploit the working class; but I think that they are embodiments of that larger aspect of culture. So that's what they're up to, whether, I mean, I don't think they're evil at all, and that's the big thing they're up to. What I think they're up to is something different. (Colin)

In this exchange, Colin begins to respond to my question about the purpose of two-year colleges by personalizing the purpose of the colleges to the purposes taken up by the particular “they” associated with the colleges. He then identifies job training as the primary purpose expected of the two-year college and then clarifies that what he thinks they are doing—colleges, presumably, as this statement contrasts with the previous one—is “something different.” Here, Colin personifies two groups, the first a group that includes administrators and community members who, as a “they” group have the goal of preparing workers and the second group a “they” that stands in for what colleges ought to be doing or what instructors like him are doing to push against that expectation. Colin then uses “it” to refer to Corner College specifically, and explains “it has a notion,” which, again, personifies the college in terms of human perceptions and values that the college itself cannot espouse, conflating the college missions with the administrator values, who appear again as “they” in the final clause of the sentence.

I coded the above section as both “perceptions of two-year college mission” and “tensions: administrators” and this overlap seems to underscore the ways in which questions

about missions—teaching purposes and institutional missions—are caught up in notions of “ours” and “theirs,” as if some part of being an English instructor is inherently at odds with the mission. At the same time, Colin’s inability to specify exactly which “they” he invoked in this usage demonstrates how pervasive these notions of “other” influences and expectations are. Similar overlaps occurred in conversations with Sadie and Christopher, where overlaps referred to administrators and policy makers. This slippage of pronouns and lack of clarity regarding the agency and intentions of this general third-person group of identities leads to a set of two uses for the word “they” who are each “up to” something different—an identified conflict with blurred interlocutors navigating a set of educational purposes without a clear common place from which to begin their negotiations. This kind of pronoun slippage occurred across interviews with faculty from all three colleges, but it was especially prominent among instructors at Corner College and Silver Lake. Those instructors often moved from discussing responses of administrators to discussion of national expectations and, more commonly, broader public expectations from an unidentified third party audience that sometimes included, but did not necessarily always include, voting members of the college’s community.

This frequent conflation between administrators, national policies, other colleagues, and the voting community sometimes led instructors to take up a generalized “us” vs. generalized “them” antagonism that was difficult to tease out in terms of actual pressures and potentially agentive teaching responses. For example, in Sadie’s interview excerpt above, all descriptions of interactions with administrators were second-hand—retold to her by Cal, who attended the meetings. Similar kinds of stories about past experiences with administration occurred frequently across interviews at both Corner College and Silver Lake College, where instructors had a veritable warehouse of second-hand narratives about failed communication with administrators,

including, for example, Callie's description of the "many times we tried to tell [the dean]" about the complex demands of developmental teaching.

At the same time, instructors seemed aware of an entrenched cultural perception of instructors and administrators as adversaries, and they seemed to want to distance themselves from this cliché in education. Thus, Colin, above, emphasizes that he does not see administrators as "evil" or conspiring. Similarly, Sadie indicates,

"I am always suspicious of my colleagues who have this, you know 'the administration is out to get us' [mentality] and I'm like what *are* they out to do? You know, because it doesn't seem like they want to look after the students. They don't seem all that fond of us [instructors]. . . . I am trying to look out for [students], where I think the administration is a little more, you know, like their subcontractor. You know, they are trying to hook business up with the parts they need." (Sadie)

In this excerpt, Sadie describes herself as "suspicious" of the antagonism she recognizes between instructors and administrators, but she is no less suspicious of administrators. In the subcontractor metaphor she applies, she describes the administrators' relationship with students as one devoid of human recognition or interaction, reducing students to "parts" rather than human learners.

The combination of a conflated set of "they" expectations and a rich resource of second-hand experiential accounts fed an "administration folklore" that, while quite possibly shaped by actual experiences and helping to solidify faculty groups, had the effect of fomenting distrust among instructors for administrators, even for those instructors who had no direct experiences with administrators. As such, instructors at Corner College and Silver Lake College described conversations with administrators as futile, *a priori*, and did not attempt to assert their footing as

professionals with specialized knowledge in conversations about institutional curriculum. Colin explained it this way, “You know, they make their decisions, but what we do in the classroom, you know, that's a different story. Yes, [curricular decisions] tend to be top down” (Colin). This quote by Colin sums up the responses of the independent contractors in this study: administration can make their decisions, but we are going to find ways to do what we think should be done in the classroom.

Thus, independent contractors’ perceptions of antagonism between administration and faculty led instructors to assert less autonomy over the scope of service—the norms and regulation of teaching standards—and, instead, to implement small changes within their own classrooms, such as renumbering or renaming assignments, critiquing modes, ignoring textbook recommendations—control over the teaching technique—in order to avoid stirring up perceived conflicts at their institutions.

Semi-Autonomous Institutional Partners

One finds a very different set of perceived expectations held by the instructors at Ridgeway College. Instructors at Ridgeway perceived their input to be both solicited and valued by administrators. There, administrators had included instructors in the drafting of new college-wide graduation goals for general education courses—thirteen in all. Each department, in turn, adapted a number of these goals into the outcomes for their courses. College-level English incorporated two of these college-wide graduation goals in their writing courses: writing clearly and collaborating in small groups. These invitation and expectation to collaborate with institutional colleagues and to revise their departmental curriculum positioned instructors at Ridgeway College to identify their roles as experts and to assert greater autonomy at their institutions. Additionally, individual instructors described that administrators encouraged them to

interpret the selected graduation goals for student explicitly through the lens of their own pedagogical philosophies and to articulate that understanding to students, colleagues, and administrators as part of their syllabus and tenure reviews. Thus, discursive transparency about educational goals was encouraged between all members of the college community, including administrators, instructors, and students. Early in our interview, Robin used the term “autonomy” to describe the ways faculty shared their expert teaching knowledge to help meet institutional goals. She described,

The department has a lot of autonomy. The experts of the department seem to be trusted as long as, for example, when we tried the [accelerated learning courses]. We have such great [institutional research] department here. It’s amazing. And the numbers [that measure the initial outcomes] are phenomenal. So once--as long as they’re [administration is] seeing results--of course, this is, the [accelerated learning courses] are so new but as long as they’re seeing results then we tend to ramp up, so to speak. So I would say I don’t--there’s not as much tension here with those issues as there were but [a different two-year college and university where Robin taught] comes to mind. . . . That’s the best way to put it. (Robin)

Robin makes four points in this extended excerpt from our discussion. First, she identifies the department as a singular unit that has “autonomy.” She further refers to department instructors as “experts” who are “trusted” by the institution, as long as they are able to demonstrate “results” to administrators. Robin indicates that her department members have access to an institutional review process where department members can propose research in their department and gain support with the implementation of that research. Robin also identifies a specific initiative taken by her department, one that we discussed at length in our interviews.

Through that initiative, instructors at Ridgeway sought out alternative approaches for teaching developmental writing.

As a result of their exploration of alternative approaches to teaching developmental writing, department sent faculty representatives to the Accelerated Learning Conference in Baltimore to learn more about local implementation by working with Peter Adams and others (e.g., Adams, Gearhardt, Miller, & Roberts, 2009). After consulting with the rest of the department and college administrators, those instructors began to work on a proposal for revising the curriculum in the developmental and college-level writing sequence at Ridgeway College. Robin explained that the idea to research and implement the accelerated learning program originated from faculty. While the institutional administrators started the conversation by stating that “something” had to be done about low completion rates among developmental writers, the onus was on the first-year writing and developmental writing instructors to engineer and implement that “something.”

Robin’s description demonstrates ways that Ridgeway College instructors are positioned as experts, so they can draw on their knowledge about teaching writing to identify, modify, and implement research interventions within the department that help the institution reach mutually agreed upon goals for student learning and completion.

Although she did not participate in the experimental implementation of the new accelerated learning program, Roxana described a high expectation to continue her engagement with composition scholarship through the development and reflection of her teaching philosophy wiki. Additionally, while Ridgeway College lacked the budget to send all instructors to conferences for ongoing professional development and engagement, Roxana explained that those who did attend were expected to report their experiences and observations from conferences they

attended to their colleagues formally in the format of a mini-conference summary session or presentation. Moreover, Roxana identified leaders in the department who could advise her on day-to-day teaching dilemmas and who further supported her engagement with contemporary scholarship. The goal of these relationships, as she saw it was to support her development of a more rigorous teaching philosophy. Although Roxana identified a strong reliance on the teaching of the “modes” in the Ridgeway department, which she found problematic when compared to her teaching preparation at her graduate institution, she explained that she could draw on her expertise and preparation—and share it—in her department. As part of her tenure review process, she was asked to articulate her understanding of scholarship and her teaching practices in terms of the broader goals of the department and institution and support her goals with scholarly research. This practice seemed to reinforce her specialized knowledge as a source of authority for teaching choices. Similarly, Remy explained that he was able to challenge grading policies that did not allow for open-revision portfolio grading by sharing published research in composition with his associate dean. In this negotiation, Remy drew on his teaching philosophy and the scholarship that informed the development of that philosophy during his graduate education to gain approval for the use of an open-revision grading portfolio.

In each of these cases at Ridgeway College, instructors perceived themselves as engaged pedagogy experts and, as part of their roles as instructors, they assumed the responsibility to modify the teaching situation and expectations at their institution. Administrators for their part supported all of these approaches to improving teaching by providing resources to support their investigation and by soliciting faculty responses to problems identified at the institution. All of these examples support the notion that administrators were willing to listen to instructors’ specialized knowledge and, when able, to support their goals with funds and encouragement.

This lies in direct contrast to Sadie's descriptions of faculty research being ignored and a failure to include the English department faculty at Silver Lake in conversations about the reorganization of developmental writing. Similarly, it lies in contrast to Corner's emails that discouraged faculty participation in research (Colin) and Callie's description of faculty encouraging the dean at her college to recognize the specialized knowledge required for the teaching of developmental writing, all pleas of which, she described, were ignored.

This relationship with administrators was unique to Ridgeway's instructors; their scholarship was actively encouraged and there were efforts to include them in the development to college learning outcomes. At Ridgeway, instructors were specifically positioned as creators of curriculum and developers of outcomes. The only instructor outside of Ridgeway who leveraged her specialized knowledge of writing pedagogy to advance change in her department was Clarisse, who leveraged her dissertation research—genre theory—to argue for the adoption of a new textbook. There are insufficient data, however, to conclude whether Clarisse's successes occurred because she asserted additional autonomy or because, in response to the status of her degree, others positioned her to assert greater autonomy, or both.

Expectations within Departments

Instructors at the three institutions identified similar learning outcomes for their first-year writing courses, with second-semester courses having clearer and more consistent outcomes than first-semester. However, tensions arose around perceived teaching expectations related to teaching philosophies, learning outcomes, departmentally-approved textbooks and the teaching philosophies they appeared to support, the number of required assignments in each course, and the inclusion of traditional approaches to grammar and mechanics instruction.

Instructors at all institutions identified working with secondary sources and familiarity with MLA citation and style formatting as the core outcomes of second-semester, first-year writing courses. They referred to these courses as the “transfer course” indicating that student success in second-semester college-level writing was the course most concerned with preparing transfer students and meeting the expectations of university transfer agreements. However, even in a writing course that garnered so much consensus regarding outcomes, instructors identified different core goals for second-semester composition, including recognizing and imitating disciplinary writing (Roxana), working with statistics and statistical methods for assessing validity and reliability (Saul), and shoring up “basics” like paragraph and sentence structures (Sadie).

Within first-semester, first-year writing courses, instructors’ goals also varied. Helping students to identify expectations and overcome fears (Callie) as the primary goal of her first-year writing; assisting students to identify the kinds of writing they are most naturally good at and their own learning strategies (Remy); helping students to structure and support experience-based arguments (Christopher); validating students’ experiences and the difficult nature of learning (Robin); beginning research methods with secondary sources (Colin). These instructors clearly brought different assumptions about writing and learning, with Callie and Remy focusing on students’ experiences and talents, and Colin and Christopher emphasizing audience experiences and the logical flow of critical thought. Meanwhile, Robin drew on both of these foci offering deep empathy to students about the process that bridges that divide. Thus instructors brought a variety of viewpoints to their teaching of first-year first-semester writing, ranging from intrinsic goals like increasing confidence to abstract analytical goals, like critical thinking and the development of research methods.

In general, teachers had conflicting expectations with respect to teaching orientations within their institutions. However, the ways these conflicts manifested varied by institutions. For example instructors at Corner College described pressure to adopt specific teaching orientations and experienced tension around planning their courses in light of those expectations. Instructors at Silver Lake initially described a great deal of individual control over their teaching approaches in their first interviews. In the second round of interviews I learned that a large-scale restructuring of the Silver Lake department happened without instructor input. By the third interview and in subsequent conversations, Sadie and Saul described an experience of being overtaken and their expertise undermined during the creation of a new department to handle developmental education.

In this section, in which I describe expectations instructors perceived from their departments and their responses to those expectations, I want to be clear that disagreement between faculty about how to best teach writing is not the focus. Although I will describe those disagreements, I do so in an attempt to accurately portray the diversity across faculty and their experiences of conflict in their teaching. The key mechanism I want to examine what actions instructors took *in response* to those conflicts and how those actions enacted professional roles as independent contractors or as semi-autonomous institutional professionals. I examine which instructors miss the opportunity to draw on their specialized knowledge to assert authority in their departments shape curriculum and which seize opportunities to set the knowledge goalposts in their departments. Instructors responded to expectations they perceived from departmentally recommended and available textbooks and the curricula those texts endorsed, official course learning goals, and course sequencing components, such as required number of assignments.

Independent Contractors

Although instructors at all of the institutions in this study could point to lack of consensus about the learning goals for first-year writing, what is especially noteworthy is how few of them engaged conversations with their departmental peers about achieving some kind of consensus. This is not to suggest that there must be consensus, but that avoidance of such conversations has the potential to impede critical exchange and pedagogical development, that is, to reinforce the culture of anecdote previously described in this dissertation. In departmental conversations, as with institutional conversations, two teaching identities emerge. Independent contractors avoided disagreeing with colleagues, identified like-minded colleagues with whom they felt comfortable sharing their views on teaching goals, and restricted the assertion of their expertise on teaching to the classroom. As a result, they sacrificed opportunities to initiate important discussions in their departments about the learning outcomes for their courses and to steer department curricula. Semi-autonomous institutional partners, on the other hand, collaborated with departmental colleagues to define and modify department curriculum and institutional outcomes.

Learning Goals and Outcomes. At stake for independent contractors was the issue of independence versus what Colin called “standardization” of the teaching process. Independent Contractors celebrated the notion of academic freedom and the great deal of independence they had to enact curriculum in their classrooms with little interference and few observations once they had achieved tenure. However, the independence that instructors celebrated—and sometimes called autonomy—differed from professional autonomy as defined here. Instead of offering a strategy for establishing norms, regulating practice, and improving overall quality of teaching, instructors’ tendency to locate their instructional innovation and professional expertise in the classroom led them to forego conversations with colleagues that may have served to move

their departments forward through healthy critical debate and reexamination of teaching outcomes and pedagogical models.

For Sadie, conflicts arose around the defining of course criteria and agreement over the genres writing college courses were intended to develop:

There's some disagreement. I'm thinking of one disagreement that we often have just in our little department about – I'm sort of thesis obsessed. Like if an essay doesn't have a thesis that everything comes back to, well then what are you doing? It seems like there could be rambling. But one of my colleagues pushes the idea that there can be much more interesting explorations, which is probably true, and they're able to try other things if they aren't constrained by coming back to a thesis at all times. And I'm thinking, "get a diary for that sort of explorative writing." . . . So choosing what things that we're each considering as hallmarks of excellent writing is a little bit tricky. (Sadie, 2)

The way Sadie navigates her disagreement with her colleague about the "hallmarks of good writing" offers a demonstration of how an instructor may choose to ignore disputes about teaching goals within a department rather than engage colleagues in a conversation about shared professional norms. Sadie's teaching orientation focuses largely on structural writing approaches, including traditional and explicit thesis statements (as opposed to narrative themes or implicit thesis arguments) topic sentences, and the use of the Standard English dialect. She associates this pedagogy with increasing students' use of logic and their critical agency in literacy activities such as interacting with landlords as well as their future professors. Even though Sadie is concerned that a teaching approach that focuses on personal themes in writing will fail to prepare students to perform the "hallmarks" of traditional, formal academic writing, she does not engage the conversation as a point of professional debate that can help steer the curricular goals of the

department. Instead, she takes the detached perspective that she can do what she wants in her classroom, and leaves the other instructor to do the same—each classroom operating as an independent contractual space for individual instructors to exercise their teaching rather than detached components of a collaborative educational initiative.

One might argue that Sadie's choice here underscores a particular notion of autonomy: Sadie trusts the training of her colleague and thus does not intervene or debate teaching methods. However, I want to suggest that what Sadie actually exercises here is a form of independence, a control over the techniques of teaching in her own classroom and the acceptance that others will teach as they desire in their classroom. The theorization of professional autonomy presented in this dissertation depends on instructors exercising control over their scope of service—the knowledge, protocols, and professional theories enacted in the profession—and thus, participate in regulating the norms of the profession. Given that Sadie believes the other instructors' teaching methods do not adequately prepare students for the precise outcomes associated with the course, her lack of engagement with a dispute over the norms and protocols actually sacrifices part of her professional autonomy. The definition of professional autonomy in this dissertation encompasses control over scope of service, not just control over technique of practice. Thus, to exercise autonomy in this case, would be to engage in debate and critique of competing goals for the college-level writing courses in order to regulate and update professional standards and norms for teaching.

For Saul, the debate in the department at Silver Lake College centered on the inclusion of “style” in the department grading rubric faculty designed. All adjuncts are required to use the rubric to evaluate papers, but full-time faculty had the choice to use or adapt as they saw fit. He noted that there is no clear way to teach style. Additionally, he noted that in his work as faculty

assessment coordinator, which offered him an opportunity to evaluate student writing with professors at the college outside the English department, he found that none of the other professors had a clear sense of how to evaluate writing style. Despite the lack of consensus on what constituted style, no subsequent departmental conversations helped to resolve the lack of consensus. Nevertheless, “style” is a category on the departmentally-sanctioned rubric. Though full-time instructors were unable to come to a common interpretation of style, they kept style as a category on the rubrics used by adjunct faculty.

I identify two salient implications for autonomy when thinking about faculty responses to the criterion of “style” described above. First, when considering that professional autonomy requires professionals to regulate and update norms of professional behavior, a failure to engage and attempt to identify consensus about the meaning of “style” and how to evaluate it constitutes a lack of attention to the norms and procedures of the field. Second, requiring adjunct professors to use a rubric with a criterion they cannot define, and thus cannot regulate, establishes a lack of enduring self-regulation of the profession more broadly—beyond the full-time faculty professoriate. In effect this limits professional autonomy by avoiding the responsibility of evaluating standards and regulating those standards according to current and specific professional knowledge generated by the discipline.

Moreover, Saul, drawing on his doctorate in education and his experiences as an administrator, identified quantitative reasoning and the fundamentals of statistical sampling as core components of teaching research in second semester first-year writing. He said that the lack of quantitative methods in the majority of research writing courses was an important oversight, but he recognized and lamented that most of his colleagues in the English department lacked specialized preparation in the analysis and presentation of statistics. While Saul identified these

components to be crucial to teaching students how to analyze and present their research papers, he did not take up a conversation in his department about the advantages of presenting quantitative methods to their writing students, solicit their perspectives on teaching research writing, or initiate training in statistical methods for his colleagues.

Colin identified a major source of tension in his department regarding an emphasis on what he called “transmission education” in which, he asserted, students were provided rules of writing but were not asked to engage with the concepts of their writing critically or to see writing in terms of the social interactions it enacts. Colin used his classroom space to develop what he identified as students’ abilities to recognize ways that “knowledge is socially constructed” and ways that the construction of knowledge is informed by power dynamics. One strategy Colin employed in his first-semester, first-year writing course was to have students conduct internet-based research in order to analyze knowledge construction in digital spaces. Rather than use the modes to teach writing, Colin helped students identify problems, set up definitions for those problems, and generate responses. During my time in his classroom, I observed the heightened level of engagement of his students and their developing interest in how language and knowledge are co-constructed through public media and how those media are further co-constructed by the cultures in which they occur.

However, because Colin believed his colleagues would disagree with his teaching approaches, he only discussed teaching with two other instructors whom he viewed as like-minded. He distinguished himself and his like-minded departmental colleagues from other instructors at Corner College on both campuses, saying,

I think you've got another group, and I think it's common at our place, who have taught in high school before and see this as an extension of high school. You know, they like to do

five paragraph papers and things like that, they'll spend two weeks teaching MLA citation formats and all that kind of stuff. So I think that's a very different group.

Colin's perception that there are two *kinds* of instructors—those that are like him and those that are a different group, whom he aligns with high school teaching—inhibits him from engaging in whole-department conversations about teaching goals and outcomes, rejecting and critiquing invitations made by other instructors to share teaching philosophies and to help assess the normative grading outcomes in the department. At the same time, however, Colin has taken a stronger interest in composition pedagogy scholarship. During the study, he co-authored a textbook with the like-minded instructors and began attending and presenting at national conferences on composition pedagogy. The same was true of Christopher, who began attending CCCC that year, but who stated that he could not have the kinds of conversations nurtured at CCCC with his colleagues at Corner College. Notably, these instructors both lamented the same lack of engagement by fellow faculty and assumed the other to be in that “other” group of faculty members they did not engage.

Thus, even while Colin was cultivating conversations with other composition professionals and repositioning himself in order to better engage and contribute to composition studies, he rejected an opportunity to engage similar conversations with his expanded colleague network in his own department. As a result, the other members of the English department did not benefit from learning about Colin's exciting and effective approach to teaching argument, and none of the other participants in the study referred to Colin's efforts to create a textbook for the unique curriculum at Corner College, though they frequently lamented the existing textbooks. The efforts to develop the textbook did not initiate a conversation among colleagues at the two campuses about the goals and strategies of teaching. Moreover, because of this lack of sharing

and a stated distrust of other colleagues, Colin never learned about his colleagues' similar discomfort with outdated approaches with teaching, their own novel initiatives to teaching, or their own interest in improved scaffolding of research writing strategies in first-year composition courses at Corner College. As such, the faculty as a group sacrificed an opportunity to achieve consensus on new directions for their department, to revise learning goals, or to update the department recommendations for teaching, recommendations that all of them identified in their interviews as outdated, written by a previous—though still currently employed—generation of composition instructors. This example distinguishes between scholarly participation with one's professional membership and authoritative positioning as a professional within one's institution. While the professional membership no doubt benefits from Colin's increased role in our community, his institution remains largely unchanged by his increased scholarly participation.

In terms of professional identity, several things were happening for Colin at this time. First, he had begun to engage in conversations within the professional community of composition studies via the CCC conference. Coming from a background in literature, this was his first introduction to the larger community of scholars behind the textbooks and passed-along wisdom of teaching he had encountered and created through his own experiences. His opportunity to present at CCCC positioned him as a member of that group, and he returned and increased his participation in subsequent years. Meanwhile, his co-authors positioned him, the project leader, as an expert in composition knowledge and pedagogy. However, at that very same time, an administrator at his institution had sent an email discouraging scholarly participation in publishing. Finally, when other colleagues contacted Colin and invited him to help establish new course goals and outcomes, he rejected the invitation, seeing it as threat to his classroom independence and an attempt to standardize instruction at all levels of teaching. In the end, the

textbook was not published and it was not shared with other colleagues. Colin continued to update his teaching practices in the classroom, but at the close of this study he stated he was not interested in further engagement with administrators or colleagues at other campuses. Thus, despite his many efforts to change the institution, his concern that institutional forces would limit his own freedom in the classroom led him to back off such efforts and focus on initiatives with his students.

Faculty at Corner College saw the expectation for all students to write five essays sometimes as interfering with good teaching and the development of quality essays. Both Christopher and Callie explained that they had to rush through the teaching of elements in order to incorporate all of the essays. Instructors noted that they used department templates and master documents to identify the key expectations. Callie's belief that instructors were required to assign five writing prompts seemed less definitive when she noticed language changes in the department's model syllabus, "that's not in the master syllabus anymore. . . . So I may go to four." She went on to explain, "even though it's sixteen weeks and I'm used to fourteen, it just feels like we don't have enough time." Christopher expressed similar concerns and noted that he sometimes adjusts the expectations for the number of papers required within a single semester, depending on where students are in their learning. He noted that this initial syllabus always lists the five essays, but as the semester unfolds he shortens one assignment or combines an assignment into a hybrid version of two prompts. Colin ignores the requirement to have students write five essays outright, in favor of assigning four staged writing assignments that comprise a single extended research paper process. Scaffolds to the writing assignments include identification of a problem, project proposal, and final research paper, as opposed to categories

such as narrative, comparison/contrast, cause and effect that his colleagues agree are the expected assignments.

Another set of perceived teaching expectations from the department at Corner College focused on a requirement for one quarter of class time to be spent conducting grammar instruction, which Christopher, Callie, and Colin interpreted to mean traditional “skills and drills” grammar instruction, and which all of them rejected as good pedagogy. Christopher explained that he rejected

The idea that sometimes the grammar trumps everything else or it's not really grammar—it's mechanical errors. And so some of them I do and some of them I ignore and some of them I take with a grain of salt . . . I guess I try to subvert that process when I can. And that's really the biggest thing is just some of the emphasis on, I don't know, the busy work. . . (Christopher, 1)

Christopher uses the term “subvert” here to describe his own strategy for negotiating teaching expectations within his classroom. Because on the first level he disagrees with the social assumptions about language that inform this requirement and because he believes grammar drills are poor pedagogy, he attempts to engage in a kind of traditional grammar mutiny, but because he does not want to create conflict among his colleagues or raise critique for his own teaching, he keeps this mutiny to the quiet level of his classroom. Christopher went on to describe a division in his department at Corner College Second Campus with respect to the “grammar trumps everything” approach:

By and large, there are a few of us that think that's crazy but there is definitely emphasis especially where there's a credit given to that purpose that these students should not be writing comma splices and run-ons, so I kind of informally in my mind now track at the

beginning, Okay, here's this group of essays, essay number one has 50 comma splices, but I don't really do like any like error instruction, like "this is a comma splice. You should not do this kind of thing. Correct these exercises." We just do the language project and in the last essays there'll be maybe in a bunch of papers, two, or three. So it does, like, limit it here. That and instead of teaching errors and instructing about errors I do sentences like here's how to write a simple sentence and here's how to write a complex sentence, and using those sentence types like here's how you should do things, not here's how you should not do things. (Christopher)

In this excerpt, Christopher distinguishes between the like-minded colleagues and the rest of the department. He describes the way he has attempted to adapt what he perceives as an expectation to teach grammar through direct and traditional strategies by incorporating the Language Project activity, in which students develop an imaginary, symbolic language and a grammar to make that symbolic language work. Christopher explains he has adapted from Stanley Fish's sentence building concepts (Fish, 2011). He argues that this strategy has the effect of decreasing the errors in students' writing more effectively than error instruction and grammar exercises. However, he begins by acknowledging that there is a departmental "emphasis" that he finds "crazy." However, like other instructors described in this section, Christopher asserts his professional authority within the classroom with his students and avoids disagreement among non-likeminded colleagues. In the classroom he modifies the expectations he perceives in order to improve student learning. The "crazy" expectation, itself, he leaves unaddressed at the level of curriculum, official course outcomes, and departmental professional development.

Similarly, Sadie underscored the lack of collegial engagement at her institution this way,

We do occasionally visit one another's classrooms and take some notes but no one has, at any point, said you could do this differently or this thing that you are doing is not good and maybe that's because I'm so fabulous. But it could also be that, to a large degree, that's sort of seen kind of a formality that we do for the administration because once we've kind of decided to keep you like I'm not sure what kind of criticism instructors get. Because I mean I listen to what other people say. There have been instructors here who we've thought are not doing your job. But I never said anything. (Sadie, 1)

In describing classroom observations as a “formality” done for the administration, Sadie underscores classroom peer evaluations as a kind of performance conducted, again, for the purpose of meeting expectations by administrators. It is not seen as an opportunity to reflect or engage classroom practices or improve instructional approaches across the department.

Textbooks and Teaching Orientations. Although full-time instructors at all of the colleges were allowed to select their own textbooks, each college had departmentally-approved textbooks. Full-time faculty who were not yet tenured (Roxana, Callie)—and some of those who were (Christopher, Colin, Charlotte)—perceived departmental pressure to use the approved textbooks. Adjunct instructors were explicitly required to use the textbooks, as well. A primary source of tension at Corner College emerged in response to departmentally-approved textbooks, which were organized around the teaching of modes. Colin, Christopher, Callie, and Clarisse all expressed dissatisfaction with what they perceived as a departmental orientation towards teaching modes. They defined the modes as narration, comparison/ contrast, cause/effect, argument, and analysis, and they described their perceived expectation that each “mode” be taught as an isolated writing form—not to be blended or combined with another form. They supported this perception by noting that the only textbooks approved by the department for use

in composition courses were modes-based books, by citing required language on the course syllabus that identified these modes, and by referring to conversations (direct and indirect) with colleagues that reinforced these expectations.

Christopher and Clarisse described their department as behind current trends in composition pedagogy, with Christopher noting, “I mean we’re still technically stuck to the modes and patterns of modes. We’ve got to be like one of ten colleges left in the country that still [teaches the modes].” Here Christopher classifies the teaching of “modes” as something outmoded with the word “stuck,” and further underscores this phrasing by describing his college as one of the last to “still” use modes for writing instruction, suggesting that other colleges have found more contemporary approaches.

Callie explained her experience with the modes this way:

I’ve never taught the modes before, in all these years. This is the first time. This is the first time I’ve done it. I mean, I knew there were books out there. I knew there were people teaching it, but I was never at a place where we were doing it. So, I’m trying to teach the modes.

Here Callie describes how foreign from her own teaching strategies the teaching of modes felt to her, despite her over twenty years of experience teaching at various kinds of higher education institutions. Although she says that she is “trying” to teach in this way, she also indicates that she will abandon the modes once she has achieved tenure. Thus, teaching the modes is an identity performance that allows Callie to demonstrate her membership to the department, but it is also one she intends to abandon in favor of teaching methods that better match her values. She notes, “I think once I’m off probation I’m just going to stop, and *I’m going to say, ‘we covered the modes in this way,’* [emphasis added] but I’m going to stop.” Interestingly, Callie indicates that

she will stop teaching the modes upon achieving tenure, but she does not indicate that she will stop *performing* a teaching of the modes. Instead, she indicates that she will explain to her departmental colleagues that she has “covered the modes in this way” but that her stated intention is to stop teaching them. Here, Callie’s intention to continue saying she is teaching modes when, in fact, she plans to stop, is an identity performance maintained, ostensibly for the departmental colleagues who adhere to such teaching methods. Here, Callie identifies achieving tenure as her motivation for incorporating the modes into her teaching while she is on probation. However, she also clearly indicates an intention to continue to perform as though she is teaching one way when, in fact, she aims to enact different teaching strategies. Callie offers a first example of instructors in this study taking on professional roles as independent contractors by limiting the focus of their knowledge to the techniques and specifics of their teaching while foregoing opportunities to assert their expertise into the direction of the department and development of curriculum.

In terms of identity, Callie feels secure in her belief that modes are unnecessary to effective teaching. Because she believes that teaching of the modes is required, she indicates she will perform as if she is teaching them. Her positioning does not offer her the authority to resist the teaching protocol directly, even though she has studied alongside seminal scholars in the field and her teaching has been directly shaped by those interactions. Thus, while she clearly has expert knowledge to draw on from her academic preparation and over twenty years of teaching, she does not draw on that knowledge to challenge the teaching strategies emphasized by the department. Instead, she indicates her plan to perform as if she is carrying out one set of teaching strategies while actually enacting a different set in her classroom. Thus her role as a pedagogical expert is enacted within the classroom and not asserted with departmental colleagues or

administrators to challenge the departmental and institutional expectation she perceives to teach the modes.

In a very similar response, Christopher looked for ways to adapt the modes into his teaching in a way that fit better with his notions about teaching:

A lot of our students haven't had the idea before that these certain things do these certain things. That's fine. But I try to mix [the modes] a bit and some people will not accept [mixing] as a valid approach whatsoever. So there's always tension in the department about the modes. [Design: influence colleagues, tension: colleagues]

Here Christopher explains that he sees some advantages to incorporating the modes into his teaching, but he also indicates his perception from departmental colleagues that he ought not mix the modes when teaching, or, by logical implication, that writers ought not mix modes, such as narration and argument in their texts either. In both Christopher's and Callie's descriptions, one notes instructors' attempts to understand the potential benefits and teaching rationales behind the departments' strong alignment with teaching writing modes. However, for both instructors, adhering to the expectations they perceive from their department interferes with their core beliefs about how writing happens and how it should be taught. Colin identifies the same core problem but is much less conciliatory in his explanation, describing his experience this way,

My first goal is that I have to do something that serves my notion of what works; that I can't, like, I can't really teach the modes. I know how to fool people into thinking that I'm doing it, but it's something that I just won't do. I mean, I'm going to be dead one day, and I don't want it to be a whole list of compromises -- and that's giving away my age and everything, but I know it's naive, but I'm doing this stuff because I think it matters.

Colin uses stronger language to refer to his performance of teaching the modes that he perceives

he is expected to teach, using the term “fool” and then following adamantly that teaching the modes is something he “just won’t do.” He sees teaching the modes as a central “compromise” to his beliefs about what constitutes effective teaching, and this is a compromise he is unwilling to make. However, he is willing to *perform as though* he is teaching the modes, by including them in his syllabus and then describing how the modes will be used in his classroom. His syllabus also incorporates some reservations regarding the tools of instruction:

[This course] uses “modes” to help you master this approach to writing. Modes are artificial types of writing such as narration, description, process, comparison, and argument. The terms are handy labels for different parts of effective writing. Our assignments will use emphasize [sic] these various modes, but you must recognize that in the real world of employers, scholars, and researchers, the modes don’t exist. They are building blocks for the complex skills you’ll develop in later classes.

In this portion of his syllabus, Colin actively critiques the use of modes in the classroom even while he indicates they are useful tools that help students “master” the course approach to writing. He achieves this critique by first putting *modes* in the rhetorical device of scare quotes to indicate that they are a subject of inquiry, skepticism, or questionable definition (e.g., “scare quotes,” Avanesian & Swales, 2010). He then indicates that while modes offer “handy labels” they, like all models in the scientific sense, do not map perfectly onto “real world” of employers.

In these examples instructors modified the expectations at the classroom level without addressing the perceived conflicts within their departments regarding those expectations. Meanwhile, instructors often performed as if they supported the department’s pedagogical alignment, for example by incorporating expectations in formal course documents and avoiding disagreements in faculty meetings. Because faculty limited their performance of their “actual”

pedagogical beliefs to the classroom, there was a perceived consensus with norms that was simply inaccurate. In this way, they did not raise points of disagreement or seek consensus about ideal roles or outcomes with their colleagues. Keeping these differences and agreements invisible contributed to a perception among individual instructors that their dilemmas around perceived expectations were unique. This perception of individual struggle or pedagogical uniqueness reinforced a notion that change at the department level was difficult or impossible.

As we will see next, positioned quite differently, instructors at Ridgeway College were more likely to describe collaborations and interventions at their department level that informed institutional approaches and outcomes.

Semi-Autonomous Institutional Partners

I use the term “semi-autonomous institutional partners” to refer to the kinds of professional identities enacted by instructors at Ridgeway College and, to a lesser extent, by Clarisse at Corner College. Semi-autonomous institutional partners worked with their institutions to develop or modify course outcomes and teaching strategies. At Ridgeway College instructors were directly encouraged to engage scholarship and to call on that scholarship to articulate their teaching philosophies, and enact interventions to improve the outcomes for their developmental writers. Clarisse initiated a review of adopted textbooks at Corner College and persuaded the department to adopt a new text that incorporated genre theory.

In principle these instructors were not vastly different from their peers in the study. They each brought a distinct set of goals and preferred teaching practices to the planning of their courses, to their classroom teaching, and to their evaluation of student writing. However, at Ridgeway College instructors had been invited to participate in the development of the learning outcomes for the complete college curriculum and to develop within those outcomes the goals

for writing courses. Further, Ridgeway College required instructors to articulate how they interpreted those learning goals to their departments and to their students. Thus, at Ridgeway College instructors were positioned by administrators to take a much more assertive and visible role in identifying their own teaching philosophies and in explicitly identifying and shaping learning outcomes in their departments, all the while being encouraged to incorporate their own pedagogical strategies to that project with intention.

Roxana explained that her teaching and mentoring experiences in graduate school led her to design her second-semester writing course around the development of a research question and a series of short assignments, including abstracts and annotated bibliographies that helped students carry out the work of writing a long research paper. She described that her colleagues assigned “small assignments” focused on learning the modes, which was a teaching approach she questioned. As a new faculty member, Roxana’s department required her to articulate how her teaching approaches put into practical applications the scholarly theories that influenced her and to indicate how she synthesized her understanding of multiple theories into practice. Thus, rather than evaluating her tenure based on her students’ uses of commas and standard grammar, she was evaluated on how she drew on expert concepts in the field and applied them to the learning goals of her course, thus both recognizing and reinforcing her specialized knowledge.

At the same time, Roxana found that her graduate teaching experiences had not prepared her well to teach some of the developmental writing concepts her students at Ridgeway needed to learn. She managed this by seeking out instructors with specialized knowledge in developmental education for advice on strategies and scholarship that would help develop her ability to teach those less prepared students. In the Ridgeway College environment, instructors seemed more aware of the teaching practices, including the strengths and weaknesses, of their

colleague instructors. While they recognized differences between instructors, these differences fostered a conversation about the learning goals and the strategies for reaching those goals, given their consensus about those goals.

In addition, as instructors in the department of developmental education and the English department collaborated on strategies to implement their accelerated learning/stretch writing sequence, instructors in both departments sought out the advice, data, and findings of departmental research conducted by Robin, Remy, and their collaborators at Ridgeway College. Many of these instructors held appointments in both departments. In this way, an intervention developed at the department and intended to serve the institutional level, served both departments and facilitated active conversations about evolving pedagogy and improving outcomes for their most at-risk students. Thus, the active recognition and reinforcement of one another's specialized knowledge contributed to overall development of the curriculum at the program, department, and institutional levels.

While the new learning outcomes and the collaboration required to produce these strategies helped to position instructors at Ridgeway College with more autonomy, the strategies were not a panacea for all conflicts between faculty. Just like their colleagues at Corner College and Silver Lake College, instructors at Ridgeway sometimes brought diverse beliefs about teaching effectiveness to their institutions. These diverse beliefs sometimes interfered with instructors' abilities to regulate their own professional standards. Remy explained that faculty had abandoned collaborative grading practices years before the development of new college degree outcomes, because consensus was not achieved among instructors, which resulted in instructors becoming "upset" and unable to "sit down across" from one another to have these conversations (Remy). He bemoaned this loss because the collaborative grading sessions had

helped him become aware of his own teaching tendencies. He explained that the negotiations that arose surrounding grading and the criteria for good college-level writing in each course were important elements that helped to hone his thinking about teaching and about assessment.

However, disputes were not limited to conversations about outcomes and regulating professional practices, which taken alone represent important components of professional identity for instructors. They also affected material resources available to implement professional practices. Following the successful implementation of a research intervention that increased outcomes for developmental writers, students' completion rates for completion of their developmental writing courses surpassed those of college-level writers. As a result, the department was engaged in disputes about the allocation of financial resources between the developmental writing program and the college-level English program. Thus, while the instructors at Ridgeway enacted greater autonomy over their departments by asserting their footing in the department through the assertion of recognized expert knowledge, they were unable at the time of this study to come to terms with overall teaching goals and priorities for faculty development or student outcomes when issues of what Robin called "turf" were at stake.

Clarisse's role enactment, on the other hand, is a discrepant case in this study. She offers an example of an instructor working within a system where instructors reported their expertise to be poorly valued by administrators to build her reputation as an expert and to draw on that identity to affect change in her department. Being unsatisfied with the dominance of instruction in modes and a lack of diversity among adopted textbooks, Clarisse volunteered to direct a committee for textbook review and encouraged the college adoption of a genre approach to teaching writing. Unfortunately, following this adoption, the other instructors in this study remained unaware of the expanded option for their courses and of genre theory more generally as

a pedagogical approach.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have argued that an examination of the expectations instructors perceive, how they respond to those expectations, and their rationales for those responses offers a way of identifying and understanding how they take up and assert professional autonomy as a function of their roles as professors. Across these cases, all instructors asserted their autonomy over the notions of what counts as knowledge and learning within their classrooms and with their students, but none of the instructors took those roles into conversations about state or national policy or even to question or effect department or college procedures that may influence the learning of working class students or those navigating the complex material effects of poverty. Even Colin, who asserted a great deal of autonomy with his like-minded colleagues, at a national conference, and within his classroom, performed “as if” he implemented the teaching expectations he perceived, even while he worked against them in his classroom policies. I identified institutional differences among instructors regarding the ways they drew on their professional knowledge to assert autonomy in their departments and programs. While instructors at Corner College and Silver Lake College limited their pedagogical interventions to the level of the classroom and avoided disagreements among colleagues, instructors at Ridgeway College engaged in deliberations that resulted in the construction of shared learning outcomes for the institution, the department, and of a research-based intervention to improve the success of students enrolled in developmental writing. At Ridgeway College administrators invited the participation of instructors in these conversations, and, while identifying specific institutional goals, they “left it up to the experts” (Robin) to determine how to make those outcomes achievable.

Coda

Instructors' responses to findings presented in this dissertation and to a first published article offer some hope for greater assertion of professional autonomy over scope of service. Upon reading earlier versions of these findings, Colin and Charlotte organized with other faculty at Corner College to persuade the college to expand its support for writing instruction. They drew on published position statements and existing scholarship from the field to support their case. This initiative gained the support of the college president, received strong material support from college sponsors, and charged instructors with developing the instructional protocols for the new resources. Colin, Charlotte, and Christopher have become regular attendees at conferences on writing pedagogy and describe bringing home learning from those experiences to their departments. Colin has also described plans to reach out to collaborate more with faculty from Second Campus in response to descriptions of antagonism between the campuses. Moreover, Callie has reengaged with conversations in the profession. Having canceled some of her subscriptions to scholarly journals, such as *Journal of Basic Writing* and expressing some concern about the current quality of writing and relevance of current published scholarship, she decided to renew her membership to NCTE. While it is unclear if this reengagement will lead her to assert greater autonomy in her department, she indicated her decision to reengage grew out of her participation in this study:

The article came at an interesting time, as I've been weighing whether or not to re-join NCTE. When I was at [Liberal Arts College], every faculty member had a pile of cash available for memberships and subscriptions and travel (I think it was \$750 each year), plus a general fund one could apply to for more travel money. Now, at --- I get nada, and

I'm not sure when I'm spending my own money, whether it's worth \$100. I think you've convinced me to re-up for another year. (Callie, email following study)

Finally, after discussing initial findings from this study, Sadie also expanded her role in her institutional community. While she did not engage scholarship more directly or engage with administrators more assertively, she began to take an active role in the political campaigns for college board members, canvassing for candidates with teaching experiences or background in education theory.

Robin and Remy continue to implement the accelerated learning program at their campuses, and they reach out to colleagues at other two-year colleges in Michigan to share their experiences and to help establish similar initiatives. They still avoid such participations when they conflict with scheduled teaching time, prioritizing the experiences of their students over the expansion and sharing of their specialized knowledge. While such a choice may seem logical—even appropriate—it nevertheless further separates instructors from the conversations associated with professional membership and instructors' opportunities to participate in and regulation of the specialized knowledge of the profession.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this dissertation, I used the theoretical constructs of social identity and identity positioning to understand how instructors adapt and perform identity roles in response to perceived expectations from social others. Adapting Remillard's (2005) notion of curriculum design, I aimed to understand how instructors design and enact their courses in response to the curricular expectations they perceive. I analyzed instructors' stated rationales about teaching to better understand how they navigate conflicts between the teaching expectations they perceive. My analysis suggested that instructors, quite readily adapted their teaching to the student needs they perceived. However, more salient from this analysis is the suggestion that adaptations in the classroom often go undocumented, even under cover or "off grid," within departments and institutions. Thus, these components of instructors' individual teaching practices rarely inform department and institutional funds of knowledge and instructors rarely drew on the knowledge used to make such adaptations to effect curricular change at the department or institutional level.

The findings from this study suggest that professional autonomy is an important mechanism of professional identity enactment for English instructors at two-year colleges. In essence, this study suggests that in order for English instructors at two-year colleges to assert professional autonomy over their scope of service—to have control over questions of curriculum, outcomes, and teaching methods—they must see themselves and be seen by others as professionals with specialized knowledge. Only when instructors recognize their professional status and have that status recognized by others are they able to assert control over both technique and scope of service. These findings should motivate an active inquiry into the positioning of knowledge about teaching writing and specifically the status of knowledge held by instructors at two-year colleges. When this knowledge is undervalued or invisible to instructors,

their institutions, or their professional communities, the overall positioning of writing instructors at two-year colleges and, by extension, those who teach at other kinds of institutions, is weakened within their institutions. As a result, the long-standing goals of instruction with which composition has for so long been associated—what Bartholomae called “the authorizing of unauthorized writers”—is similarly weakened. Thus, there is a considerable advantage to the field of composition studies to view the positioning and autonomy of these instructors as a barometer of intellectual and professional health of the discipline.

Using the construct of professional autonomy and the theoretical lenses of identity and positioning, this work offers an explanation for why instructors’ own efforts to emancipate their professional selves can unintentionally weaken their own authority in the institutions where they teach. Moreover, these findings imply that instructors can take up greater professional autonomy when positioned as experts.

In addition, this dissertation offers an example of how cooperative research between large universities and two-year colleges can bring instructors out from the invisible positions so many researchers have described them currently occupying (Grubb & Associates, 1999; Townsend & Twombly, 2007) and suggests implications for increasing communication about pedagogy between faculty at two-year colleges and the discipline of composition, as well as between two-year college writing instruction faculty and administrators.

This chapter begins by recapping the theoretical terms of this dissertation with a section on identity, positioning, and professional autonomy. It follows with a discussion of the construct of self-positioning within the institution, which complicates the enactment of professional autonomy as a mechanism purely driven by perceptions of others and focuses on the self. The third section, knowledge and scholarship, explores the ways that instructors’ interactions with

knowledge and scholarship are informed by their definitions of teaching and suggests ways inter-institutional collaborations could give instructors a greater voice—and membership—in their professional communities, which leads into the section that follows about the limitations of practitioner’s culture as a an identity framework or statistical designation. The chapter moves into more speculative spaces in the final two sections, one that explores additional implications about professional autonomy and, finally, a section identifying next steps and future research questions.

Identity, Positioning, and Professional Autonomy

Identity theory anticipates that individuals in a persistent state of conflict would either adapt their beliefs about themselves and their roles in order to resolve that conflict or remove themselves from the source of discomfort. In order to negotiate these conflicts, instructors in this study employed four strategies:

1. Asserted their own beliefs at the level of the classroom,
2. Decreased their experiences of disturbance within the institution by appearing to agree colleagues and institutional expectations,
3. Aligned with like-minded colleagues to discuss those conflicts, and
4. Imagined new techniques for modifying the classroom to overcome perceived constraints.

However, these strategies, while assisting instructors to negotiate conflicts did not advance their professional autonomy—they did not result in a sustainable response to the discomfort itself. In fact, when limited to the classroom, their responses often undermined their professional autonomy, as instructors did not assert their expert knowledge as a qualification for steering department curriculum or for reaching institutional goals. Professional autonomy offers

a fifth response—a mechanism of sorts—to acknowledge and engage such discomfort by drawing on established specialized knowledge of the profession to alter the conditions that neglect the specialized knowledge of the field and thereby contribute to deprofessionalization and individual experiences of discomfort.

Classroom-level adaptations made by independent contractors failed to resolve the essential conflicts instructors perceived, because the sources of pressures remained unchanged. This finding suggests a likely pattern in which instructors persistently experience some level of tension between their own goals for teaching and the conflicting expectations they perceive. When implementing teaching interventions at the level of the classroom, instructors are able to shift the experience of discomfort through the increased sense of teaching agency. However, as this agency is always limited to technique and not to scope of service, instructors embark on a pattern of discomfort-modification-conflict-discomfort-modification, in which they respond to experiences of discomfort shaped by their experiences of their departments, institutions, and umbrella policies affecting education by introducing adaptations within the classroom. This is true even when instructors implement different strategies for modifying their teaching in response to the conflict.

Instructors in this study seemed to perform as independent contractors when they perceived their knowledge about teaching to be undervalued or ignored by their colleagues or administrators. Independent contractors did not engage in conversations with colleagues or administrators about evolving curricular structures or learning objectives when they anticipated those conversations would lead to further conflict. Thus, they rarely drew on their own knowledge from educational preparation or years of classroom experience to modify teaching at the department or institutional levels. Importantly, most independent contractors described past

attempts to shape curriculum or institutional directions, but, seeing those efforts as futile, they focused the bulk of their energies on their classroom teaching. Their roles as independent contractors circumscribed the assertion of their professional expertise within the perimeter of the classroom, evading or “subverting” department and institutional expectations by performing those expectations for public audience, for example via department texts and performing different behaviors in their classrooms and with students. Seen through the lens of identity theory, these instructors disengaged from the social experiences that created discomfort and increased the salience of their identity roles as “teachers,” in which the “classroom” became the defining social space of their identity within their institutions. This response arguably helped instructors resolve perceived conflicts between competing sets of teaching expectations, manage burnout, and remain committed to the teaching of their students. However, attempts to subvert or evade perceived conflicts in expectations had the undesired effect of maintaining conflicts and decreasing instructors’ professional autonomy within their institutions.

The findings suggest that the ways instructors take up and enact professional autonomy in their roles at their institutions is directly connected to how they view the worth of their own knowledge, how they define teaching, the institutional expectations they perceive, the value they place on their own specialized knowledge. How instructors interacted with institutional expectations and norms was driven by instructors’ understanding of their roles as teachers, focusing largely on their interactions with students over interactions with curriculum or outcomes. Instructors at all three colleges identified the curriculum at their colleges as out of date or out of touch. They explained teaching expectations had been shaped by the administrators and senior instructors and were emboldened through stagnant institutional histories. At Corner College, this history put the dominant focus on sentence-level concerns and traditional

grammatical methods of instruction at the expense of outcomes associated with critical thinking, lifelong learning, process, or persuasiveness, the latter foci comprising the narratives of ideal teaching goals described by participants in this study. At Silver Lake, instructors perceived a great deal of teaching independence but drew on the practices instantiated in existing departmental documents, such as standard syllabi and rubrics. There, though instructors described a great amount of individual freedom, they identified little consensus among faculty about outcomes. At Ridgeway College, while instructors worked together to develop learning outcomes, individual teaching methods were valued when paired with scholarship affirming those teaching methods. At the same time, institutional history perpetuated conflicts associated with funding “turf” and grading procedures, such as group portfolio norming of grades. Nevertheless, when Ridgeway instructors identified scholarship in their field to defend their individual practices, the institutional administrators and colleagues recognized their authority, which enabled the assertion of professional autonomy. This enabled a partial autonomy—greater than the autonomy of instructors at Corner College or Silver Lake College—despite the difficulty instructors had engaging one another in the critique necessary to collectively regulate and revise the knowledge of the field.

Instructors at all colleges identified their teaching adaptations as reaching students, meeting the students “where they are,” and as teaching “critical thinking.” They drew on their graduate student experiences to defend those choices. As a result, in most cases in this study, instructors focused on teaching adaptations that directly affected students, including changes to syllabi, course texts when possible, assignment style or number, and deadlines. Instructors attempted to resolve additional conflicts, such as department orientations to learning or

administrative positioning of faculty, by adapting, critiquing, or subverting expectations at the level of the classroom.

By locating interventions at the level of the classroom with an emphasis on the scope of teaching techniques, these instructors took up roles as “independent contractors.” While this strategy helped decrease discomfort among instructors who perceived high levels of conflict between themselves and their colleagues and themselves and administrators, it did not intervene at the source of those discomforts, and thus did not change the conflicting expectations perceived. This constraint contributed to a decrease in instructors’ monopoly of credibility over the specialized knowledge of teaching, allowing others to maintain control over the scope of their service. This unwitting abdication of professional control was invisible to instructors, because, as they explained it they could “do whatever” they wanted, so long as they pretended—performed identity roles that suggested—they were doing something different for the audience of their colleagues and administrators. Thus, rather than advocating for an awareness of specialized knowledge, and evaluation of its current state and value, and a regulating process for improving and developing that knowledge to the situations their colleagues and institutions were more generally facing, they performed to the expectations shaped through the credibility of non-professionals, such as the public, non-teaching administrators, etc. While independent contractors described their actions as enabling them to teach more effectively and efficiently enact their pedagogical beliefs in their classrooms by avoiding critique from their colleagues and administrators, it also limited their control over their scope of service. As a result, efforts by independent contractors to empower better teaching practices that attempted to evade or subvert perceived expectations had the unintended consequence of decreasing their overall professional autonomy within their institutions.

Goffman's concept of multiple, co-existing and competing identities helps to explain how instructors were able to assert two distinct, and sometimes competing, identity roles, drawing on expert knowledge and experiences to assert their professional footing through the pedagogical techniques they enact in the classroom while asserting a distinct professional role—that of independent contractor—among colleagues and administrators. Absent clear and direct positioning to act otherwise, the salient identity for instructors was that of the independent contractor. Such an identity role was reinforced by the institutional activities—through threats to tenure, as described by Sadie, or undermining of scholarly identities, as described by Colin and Clarisse,—. Meanwhile, in the context of interactions with students, the salient identity for instructors remained the role of teacher. This role predictably drew on a distinct set of rules for social engagement based on notions about teaching, students' needs, and teaching responsibilities.

These findings suggest that the field of composition studies has done a good job preparing writing instructors to view their students as complex learners and to value student-centered teaching. However, these findings also point to a relative inconsistent understanding of what specialized knowledge instructors have or how they should enact that knowledge within teaching institutions. The ways independent contractors understood their roles as two-year college instructors was situated and compartmentalized, with instructors frequently asserting professional autonomy with students most frequently but only rarely with colleagues and administrators. Thus, instructors performed to the expectations they perceived associated with long term job stability and not “rocking the boat.” When taking up the role of independent contractors, instructors drew on their knowledge of writing pedagogy and their values about learning to disrupt, avoid, or subvert institutional expectations they identified as harmful to

student learning. In this way, instructors could perform their work within the expectations of their professional membership while avoiding the discomfort that arose in response to perceived conflicts with those expectations outside of the classroom. However, this approach removed instructors from the responsibilities and the benefits that come from bureaucratic support and shared professional norms and regulation. Because instructors defined their teaching identities in terms of interactions with students and the techniques of their teaching craft, to the exclusion of the specialized kinds of knowledge required to renew, regulate, and manage those techniques across curricula and departmental expectations over time, they limited their own potential to resolve these conflicts at the department and institutional level.

Self-Positioning within the Institution: A Complication

The cases of Clarisse and Roxana complicate the role of administrative positioning by introducing self-positioning and associated, yet unaddressed issues of resource allocations. When Clarisse offered to direct the textbook review committee, she took on work that no other colleagues were engaged in and of which no other colleagues wanted to be a part. Her own dissatisfaction with the department-adopted textbooks prompted her to head up the inquiry into appropriate textbooks and ultimately to the adaptation of a new textbook. Thus, Clarisse offers an example of an instructor who—absent administrative positioning—drew on her professional autonomy to assert change at the programmatic level. What supported Clarisse's ability to identify and assert this autonomy in this way is unclear, though it may arise from her more extensive grounding in the field gained through her doctoral work. Thus, Clarisse positioned herself to assert professional autonomy within an institution where such specialized knowledge had gone largely unrecognized and where she was not positioned as an expert. However, what is lacking in Clarisse's example is a recognizable impact on the department. While Clarisse's work

succeeded in changing the official program requirements, other instructors were unaware of her contributions, and modifications to the curriculum were only partial. They continued then—and several years later—to describe their frustration with textbook requirements that, in fact, no longer existed.

Clarisse's example offers insight into ways instructors may individually position themselves to assert greater professional autonomy, but it also underscores the important role that recognition plays as a component of professional identity. In our model, a professional can only wield the credibility of her specialized knowledge when such knowledge is recognized by others. Failing that recognition, the professional loses credibility, and as a result, her efforts have decreased potential to shape scope of service. She becomes, in another word, deprofessionalized, not because she lacks specialized knowledge, but because she has lost monopoly of credibility from her surrounding community and the recognition from her peers. Thus, the knowledge itself, and its potential to steer both technique and scope of service, goes unseen. Clarisse's contribution to program change went unrealized because colleagues failed to recognize the change and/ or to tie it to a reinforcement of specialized knowledge in the field.

In some ways, the TYCA Characteristics document takes as its mission a direct recognition of the expertise of instructors and, could, under the right circumstances contribute to a reprofessionalizing of two-year instructors. Specifically, the document's explicit call to instructors to draw on current scholarship and their experiential knowledge of teaching as "teacher-scholars" identifies a set of role activities two-year instructors can and should engage. These include reflecting on their teaching, engaging scholarship, and sharing their knowledge with the professional community. Perhaps even more relevant to this study, the sixth point of the "Characteristics" document strongly encourages instructors to draw on their "credentials" as

experienced instructors and members of a professional community with shared scholarship to “accept responsibility for their institutions.” Far from a vague reference, the “Characteristics” document directly identifies the knowledge of instructors as crucial to developing sound “course, program, general education, and accreditation decisions.” As a member of the community conversation that first drafted this set of characteristics, I am aware of the intensity with which the concept of “expert knowledge” was debated, with some two-year instructors articulating that they maintained little credibility in their institutions and could exert even less control over questions of programming and accreditation. I, along with Kory Ching, cited in this dissertation spoke separately to the group about the importance of recognizing as a specific skillset the “generalist-specialist” instructional repertoire. Whereas instructors elsewhere may have a deeper understanding in a specific area, the generalist-specialist is always adapting and reacting to new teaching situations—situations that many professors in 4-year institutions may have little experience recognizing or interpreting. It seems that much of the goal of this document is to officially recognize these attributes and to attach to them a set of specific and actionable roles for instructors to reprofessionalize.

This raises a question, of course. The bulk of this dissertation has examined how identity roles are shaped in response to situated interactions—to the perceived expectations of administrators and the public, specifically. The premise has been that individuals modify their actions in an attempt to meet the expectations of their interlocutors. However, in most cases, the regular interlocutors for independent contractors in this study were not two-year instructors from other colleges engaged in conversation through their national membership, but rather two-year instructors engaged with colleagues they identified as out of touch with current scholarship and administrators who they perceived to ignore, if not reject, their knowledge. The question this

raises is two-fold. First, what action is necessary to motivate instructors to re-engage with the professional membership that is working to repopulate these monopolies of competence and credibility? Second, are there ways in which identity theory, understood as a set of interactive, not stable, shifts in role performances, could allow for a reinvention of the ways roles are formed? This is to say, if instructors were to take on the roles advocated by the TYCA Characteristics document, would their interlocutors grow to expect different—more professional roles from them? As a corollary, to what extent is such a question a valid one, given that such an engagement would require increased material supports for engaging the profession and an individual recognition of a lack of true autonomy, which most instructors in this study lacked.

One aspect that makes identity and positioning theories such useful constructs for thinking about the identity construction and enactment is that the theories themselves suggest the potentials for change, the possibility of alternative outcomes: if one member of a social interaction changes her expectations and makes this change clear, the other individual has an opportunity to modify identity role *in situ*. Because identity roles are shaped through multiple and overlapping social interactions, such a change would not result in an immediate transformation of roles, but it could, through multiple social interactions, shift the roles into different ones. We see this kind of change in identity roles between a parent and a new adult child, for example. Thus, a freedom offered by identity and positioning theories as they are applied to this study is the possibility for change over time through the intentionally modified interactions of readers with two-year instructors and administrators. The challenge, as I have stated, will be the engagement of instructors in the execution of more autonomous roles as described by the TYCA Characteristics document.

In a different fashion, Roxana offers a counter example for administrative positioning, suggesting the limitations of the impact of administrative positioning for professional autonomy absent other kinds of change within the profession of two-year college faculty more generally. Nearly daily Roxana gathered data on her students' learning; she engaged in reflective teaching practices through a teaching blog that she shared with students, colleagues, and administrators; she actively engaged with scholarly influences on her teaching vis-à-vis her written and spoken conversations with her tenure committee; she committed to providing timely comprehensive formative feedback to her students at all stages of drafting (usually within 2 days), and she provided students copious opportunities to revise their writing towards a final portfolio-based course evaluation. At a glance, these engagements with scholarship and commitments to teaching suggest a high degree of professional autonomy, awareness of professional standards, and demonstrate a depth of specialized knowledge enacted to develop, adapt, and justify her teaching methodologies. However, the net effect of her daily devotion to the scholarship of teaching and to highly individualized approaches to student-centered teaching left Roxana burnt out at the end of her first year and resulted in her leaving the profession the following year.

Roxana offers a case example of an instructor “doing it right.” Comparing Roxana’s teaching to the TYCA’s characteristics for highly-effective teachers, one observes her taking on precisely these same activities. She is an engaged teacher-scholar, driving herself--unfunded when necessary— to conferences, engaging scholarship, adapting teaching to her students’ needs, incorporating students’ experiences and thinking about writing into the course pedagogy, etc. Yet, her description of burn out and her decision to leave the field suggests that the current pattern so often described as “doing more with less” is unsustainable. If asserting professional autonomy requires adequate positioning of instructors to engage, interrogate, and implement

specialized knowledge, and if standards for teaching excellence continue to focus on student-centered adaptations that support process-based writing development and individualized formative feedback, then it is possible that the current course loads foisted upon two-year college faculty—the four and five courses a semester they are required to teach to maintain full-time status at their colleges—is simply unsustainable. It suggests that choices must be made within the professional community about the status and sustainability of one half of the professionals working among us. This is not simply the case, because Roxana has left both her profession and the discipline itself in response to her burnout. Other instructors in this study—Sadie, Hugh, Christopher—all identified similar kinds of burnout and even hopelessness towards the ends of the study semester; they did not know how long they would be able to stay in the profession because of the unsustainability of such engagement. While most instructors followed up after the study to describe their new energies, new ideas, new strategies for avoiding such burnout, when these strategies did not effect changes to the conditions and expectations at the level of the department and institution, they returned to the same negative state at the conclusion of the following semesters when we continued to communicate, informally, about those interventions. Without the ability to change the institutional constraints they perceived, their enthusiasm for classroom innovations continued to fall victim to the disillusionment in the context of institutional constraints and long-term effectiveness, the performance of one reality in the face of a differently perceived reality, or, as Roxana described it, burnout.

The Two-Year College Association of Teachers of English (TYCA) may have a role in pushing back against a perpetual demand to “do more with less,” by developing these characteristics for effective instruction, and by establishing limitations and conditions required for effective instruction. When delineating in the hiring guidelines for English instructors at two-

year colleges (Buck et al., 2006), for example, the requirement that instructors be “teacher-scholars” who engage “scholarship of teaching” (p. 10) presupposes instructors both value scholarly engagement and that they have the time to conduct it. The document supports the premise that instructors have an obligation, not merely an opportunity to advance conversations within the profession of instructor at two-year colleges and within the larger discipline of composition studies. For such roles to be sustainable, however, institutional *contracts* must recognize the expectation for instructors to engage scholarship, afford instructors time for that engagement, and—ideally—the funds, to participate in that scholarship with other members of their professional communities as well. The results of this study indicate that greater support of instructors may be necessary to help them translate the expertise gained in the classroom to the responsibility they take for their departments, institutions, and communities. To wit, if instructors view autonomy as merely a form of independence—a right to teach the way they want—and not an enactment of a kind of knowledge, then these two roles—the role of the instructor as teacher in a student-centered classroom and the role of instructor as a responsible guardian for college “and broader” leadership—remain unconnected, and the specialized knowledge of teaching is, in effect, once more undermined. When identifying effective teachers as responsible to the “college and broader community leadership,” the authors of the TYCA white paper on characteristics of highly effective teachers (Klausman et al., 2012), explain that instructors’

academic credentials, ongoing scholarship, and classroom expertise offer invaluable leadership resources to decision-making groups addressing a variety of educational and societal issues. In the college setting, the trained instructor’s professional values and judgments are essential to making sound course, program, general education, and accreditation decisions. In the larger community setting,

the highly effective instructor's deep knowledge and well honed [sic] critical thinking abilities promise capable leadership of broadly-based ad hoc working groups. (N. P.)

This attempt to define the roles and responsibilities of two-year college instructors takes up some of the notions of autonomy discussed in this dissertation, and, in particular explicitly connects the characteristics of effective instructors to the programmatic and accreditation directions of their institutions. These guidelines, published simultaneously to the conclusion of data collection for this study, help to further contextualize the evolving nature of the profession of writing instruction at two-year colleges. However, by itself, the call to take up such a responsibility is insufficient if the essential reframing of autonomy as control over specialized knowledge and as an identity enactment of group membership is ignored in favor of a classification of personal independence to do "what we do" in the classroom.

In order for instructors to break this cycle of teaching innovation, frustration, and burnout, they must be able to affect the perceived constraints in which they work or to change them outright, and such changes require them to exert control over scope of service. As described earlier in this chapter, exertion of this kind of control requires instructors to recognize themselves and those within their identity groups as having a kind of knowledge that is valuable

Thus, there is room for TYCA to promote why such a responsibility is a service to other professionals and to the conditions of the contributing instructors themselves. TYCA's ongoing work to fight for constraints on teaching loads allows for such a service to be taken as a 10% or 20% portion of responsibility that is similarly allocated through contracts and course loads. Such interventions would require TYCA to take a role beyond its current one which is focused on advancing the teaching and scholars of instructors within and towards its own membership and to

incorporate a greater awareness of the language and practices of work-setting contracts, not only to promote the conditions that enable teacher-scholars to exist, but those that empower them to thrive.

Knowledge and Scholarship

These cases suggest that individual positioning—the advocacy of one’s own expertise and self-appointed limitations to its expression—can also be important to instructors’ roles as professionals. Instructors benefit from having a clear sense of the scope of their professional service when taking up and asserting their roles as instructors. Thus, central to their preparation to take on roles as instructors at two-year colleges, new professionals need to have a sense of the discipline’s expectations for their responsibility to curricular and institutional interventions. Such efforts have already begun to define these roles through TYCA affiliations and guidelines for hiring at two-year colleges. However, most instructors in this study had very limited engagement with the meta-discourses (professional position statements, national policy conversations about college completion and teacher accountability, or with the language of their labor contracts) that inform the expectations they described, and, aside from “teaching,” few had a clear sense of what footing they possessed to exert change. This lack of clarity suggests that instructors’ introduction to their disciplines—whether composition or English more broadly—did not help to professionalize them to the institutional expectations of two-year colleges beyond the preparation—when present—of participating as a graduate teaching assistant at a university, where any mentoring available focused on the classroom. Thus, while instructors had a sense—if oversimplified—of what university professors did to support their positions beyond teaching, little notion of what it meant to sustain practice or engage scholarly practices at teaching colleges

existed, leaving the sense that everything beyond the classroom walls fell outside of the parameters of instructors' expertise.

A side implication of this study is that instructors felt disconnected from the current conversations in composition studies, finding them irrelevant to their teaching experiences. Despite active participation in scholarship on the teaching of writing at the institution and regional level, few faculty members engaged consistently with the professional community of composition studies in current publications or at national conferences. Instructors described the published scholarship and the presentations at national conferences as out of touch with their students' learning styles and needs.

Specifically, they indicated they preferred to return to foundational literature than to engage contemporary conversations. Several explained that, in their view, the bulk of contemporary scholarship in composition seemed to simply repeat—often in more jargon-loaded terms—the same seminal claims published in the 1970s-1980s by scholars like Peter Elbow, Nancie Atwell, Lloyd Bitzer, etc. They identified publications from the past decade as unproductive and were turned off by current research and writing styles they associated with current scholarship in the field. If the field of composition wants to actively support the membership of two-year colleges then greater attention must be paid to the institutional and contextual factors that shape this instruction and the needs of students—not as a decontextualized, practitioner's culture, but as one disembodied from its membership, cast out to navigate structural barriers, often without much preparation or encouragement. An understanding of identity as perceptions and actions made possible by social interactions, as is used in this dissertation, suggests that this core conflict is central to authorizing the voices and enabling increased exertion of professional control over scope of service for these instructors. However,

under the current situation, as many instructors see three of these core characteristics—to provide student-centered instruction, engage and develop a scholarly area of expertise, and to take responsibilities for their institutions—as essentially in conflict, little recourse is offered outside the classroom for instructors to respond to foundational tensions associated with their positions.

At the same time, recent efforts to include and engage writing instructors at two-year colleges have demonstrated some influence on instructors. Three instructors in this study attended their first College Composition and Communication Conference during the study semester. This study occurred simultaneous to new outreach efforts by the National Council of Teachers of English and an ongoing conversation about the characteristics of effective teachers, as seen in the second version of the TYCA characteristics discussed in this dissertation. In addition to these, it seemed that participation in this study motivated participants to re-engage the scholarly and policy debates shaping their instruction, either by re-subscribing to journals (Callie), by beginning to attend conferences (Colin, Christopher, Charlotte), by reengaging their institutional administrators about the standards for quality teaching (Christopher, Charlotte), by pursuing research questions about their own departments (Callie, Christopher), or publicly engaging policy conversations (Sadie). Some instructors indicated such moves grew out of our conversations (Colin, Callie, Sadie), but as this was not a stated goal of this study, it is difficult to assert whether such partnerships between two-year college instructors and scholars of instruction at two-year colleges would help to both identify and enact their professional autonomy as teacher-scholars at two-year colleges or to act upon the potentials that such an identification may empower. If these moves signal a shift in the field—and they are too small to yet know—then it may be that instructors, increasingly aware of the limits of their authorities within institutions may be seeking shelter and reinforcement from the larger professional

membership. If this is the case, then members of the field are indebted to respond directly and forcefully, not merely with position statements that will be read by in-membership readers, but by calls to those same disembodied voices who exert such pressures—policy makers, institutional administrators, and community members. Collaborative research is an ideal venue through which to increase awareness of the experiences of two-year colleges and the instructors who teach there, bringing their experiences, needs, and knowledge to a wider audience to empower change.

Rethinking Practitioner's Culture

The findings in this study reinforce some aspects of the phenomenon of “practitioner’s culture” described by McGrath and Spear in which colleagues at two-year colleges are socialized to resist disagreement among faculty and “come to undervalue intellectual exchange and mutual criticism”(McGrath & Spear, 1991, p. 148). However, the rationales provided by instructors did not suggest that they “undervalued intellectual exchange and mutual criticism,” but rather, they did not perceive how intellectual exchange and criticism contributed to their goals of persistently improving their teaching. The research on professions and professionalization shows that members of many professions are reluctant to actively and openly critique their peers, often developing elaborate strategies to protect fellow professionals even when they fail to follow agreed-upon professional standards. Consider, for example, the standing lore about medical practice cover-ups and the thick “blue line.” The actions of instructors in this study speak not to a lack of intellectualism of the profession but to the perceived obligation to solidarity against or in response to a common threat—outsiders who do not understand the perils of the profession—or in this case, administration and policy makers. From the perspective of employees poorly supported by their bureaucratic partners, a superficial sense of solidarity may seem a practical

presentation of togetherness in the face of a threat. In the case of instructors in this study, this solidarity was supplemented by what McGrath and Spear (1991) have called “lore”--anecdotes that evolve through an oral culture of telling. In this case, the lore described administrators as out of touch and unwilling to listen, thereby decreasing future engagements. Unfortunately, this sense of solidarity did little in the face of actual threats to help faculty galvanize and assert a professional set of norms and expectations in their departments and institutions. Instead, the emphasis on classroom practices and student-centered teaching rendered systemic relationships between classroom-curriculum-institution-public invisible, further entrenching faculty in their commitment to students, disconnecting them from other-minded colleagues inside and outside of their departments and from administrators, reinforcing perceptions that their goals and administrator goals were essentially at odds. It was only when positioned by administrators as professionals with specialized knowledge that instructors in this study coordinated and asserted professional autonomy at the department and institutional level.

So long as writing instructors at two-year colleges are positioned by the public, by institutions, and by themselves as classroom teachers rather than specialists of writing pedagogical knowledge, instructors’ will likely limit the assertion of their professional autonomy over their scope of service. While this perspective may be criticized for imposing a deficit view, it is—rather than a critique of the intentions or capabilities of instructors—an acknowledgement that individuals are limited by the social experiences and expectations that make actions possible. At their essence, these findings suggest small yet meaningful changes for how instructors at two-year colleges are prepared to identify their knowledge, assert their authority, and engage with the profession. Most instructors teaching at two-year colleges have obtained their master’s degrees from English departments, but few of these departments offer coursework in the history and

structures that inform two-year college teaching. Re-envisioning the role of college instructors and redefining the duties, rights, and responsibilities of the profession of two-year college instructors would improve the possibility that instructors could assert more complete professional autonomy in the face of perceived threats. Such redefinition is particularly called for in the current climate of the changing cultural role of higher education and the pressures those changes exert on the profession.

Perceptual barriers included the ways instructors located their identity roles and the rights and duties they recognized (positioning) and asserted (footing) as part of those identity roles. The finding that instructors adapted their teaching practices at the level of the classroom—and not the department or institution—suggests that instructors locate the range of their authority in relation to their students and the geographical and chronological parameters of the classroom and the course rather than the wider fields of disciplinary practice or policy. Thus, while instructors view their own authority about the teaching of writing to be superior to the knowledge of teaching they perceive imposed on them by departmental policies and traditions and by institutional administrators, they often do not identify a responsibility to engage these conflicts outside of their classrooms. As a result, instructors position themselves in ways that preclude their authority in the field, not because they are anti-intellectual necessarily, but because they see that positioning as outside of their roles.

Instructors in this study identified the ability to independently design and enact classroom content free from intervention from colleagues and administrators as one of the rights and responsibilities of their professions—that is a defining characteristic of their identities as professional instructors of English at two-year colleges. These rights included being able to independently select textbooks, design assignments, determine the number of assignments

appropriate for students to complete over a given semester, and to develop appropriate grading policies and evaluation procedures for those assignments.

These rights were typically associated with the achievement of tenure as a full-time instructor. The same rights and responsibilities were not assumed to belong to adjunct, part-time instructors or those without tenure, regardless of their years of experience or educational degrees. Instructors described paths to tenure as a process through which those rights were bestowed upon individuals who demonstrated and enacted teaching performances consistent with those existing in the department prior to their employment. It was reasonable for instructors to use department-adopted textbooks, incorporate the department-suggested kinds and numbers of assignments in order to avoid “rocking the boat” or risking their assent into tenure. That is, instructors described cynical identity performances they enacted for an outside audience (colleagues and tenure committees) for the purpose of achieving tenure, acknowledging those performances differed from their pedagogical values. Instructors’ stated rationales for these cynical performances—that they were necessary to achieve tenure and continue their employment—suggest that performances of agreement in the practitioners’ culture McGrath and Spear identified may be tied to pragmatic concerns rather than anti-intellectual or non-rigorous orientation among the instructors themselves. Perhaps more important, they suggest that within departments, instructors lack a sense of collegial trust—or what Sennet (2006) calls “informed trust”—that would make the kinds of intellectual debates and deliberations McGrath and Spear describe more possible. In the case of Corner College, such debates and deliberations may include engaged conversations about what role grammar should play in instructional methods and course outcomes or the inclusion of outside sources in first-semester composition. At Silver Lake College, such debates and deliberations may have addressed the purpose of existing assessment data within the

institution and the role faculty knowledge should play in administrative conversations about restructuring. Sennett (2007) has argued this kind of informed trust is a basic social requisite for functioning as a profession. Lack of such a trust weakens the potential for long-term strategizing and planning.

Additional Implications about Professional Autonomy and Positioning

The observations in this study reinforce findings by Engel (1970), who argued that bureaucratic structures, while viewed as obstacles for professional autonomy, can support and promote autonomy if and when they are used in such a way that promotes and enables professionals to engage with their sources of professional knowledge and recognize the structures of regulation in place within the profession. Thus identifying ways to assist administrators in recognizing and positioning instructors as professionals with specialized knowledge would benefit their departments and the institutions they serve. But such moves would not be without risk. Positioning instructors as autonomous professionals would require their consultation in revisions of course curricular structures, for example in the creation of a developmental department. Such efforts would, undoubtedly invoke the multiple perspectives of instructors within a single department into the daylight.

When autonomy is restricted to the level of the classroom, instructors are limited in their range of pedagogical adaptations to the scope and range of the project of education, meaning they are limited to enacting minor adaptations to the technique of instruction. In each of these adaptations, as instructors become more and more invested in fine-tuning the techniques of their independent crafts, the structural, social, and pedagogical covalence that links instructors to their professional communities, their departmental colleagues, and their institutional peers become fewer. This resulted in isolated instruction, independent from the larger whole, and contractually

negotiated from one student to the next. That is, instructors became independent contractors, appointed to each classroom rather than professionals of the discipline or the institution. Ironically, while this renegotiation seems to embrace the exact notion of student-centered teaching by focusing on the individual learning that occurs between instructor and student, functionally, what happens is that the instructors' monopoly over credibility in the realms of teaching, writing, and access education are subordinated to the performance of professional affinity and the avoidance of discomfort. Instructors become less, not more powerful, self-quarantined to the asylum that is their classroom.

This study also implies that some work will need to be done to peel away routinized patterns of instructors' performances that, as we see in the case at Corner College, exacerbate differences by occluding common ground and aggravating antagonisms between colleagues. However, doing so may be an important first step to helping to unify instructors around common professional definitions and outcomes that could ultimately increase the power of their collective voices at these important institutions. How can instructors come to recognize the importance of expanding their assertion of autonomy beyond the confines of the classroom, which they identify as the priority space for both their professional evaluation and impact, to the department and institutional levels when doing so introduces so many perceived conflicts against their teaching values? In this study, those instructors who asserted their autonomy to challenge department policies, to effect curricular change, or to modify textbook adoptions were either positioned by their department to do so, or, in the case of Clarisse, held a higher qualifying degree, and—perhaps, though we cannot be sure—a more resilient notion of her own professional rights and responsibilities associated with that degree.

My research has implications for administrators at open-access institutions where teaching is the primary work of faculty as well as for the preparation and support of master's and PhD students in composition, in particular those most likely to pursue professions in such institutions. This study also suggests that further work is needed to disentangle notions of curriculum, content, and classroom interactions that comprise the activity of teaching in order to better empower professional instructors to adapt, enact, and theorize pedagogical strategies within their institutional environments. Teaching, when narrowly defined in terms of the classroom and not the chronotopic components of curriculum development, offers instructors a single-site for honing and enacting professional authority, while the pressures and expectations on instruction—shaped in the absence of their voices and without their expertise—continue to mount outside the closed door of the classroom.

Findings in this study also suggest that administrators at two-year colleges wield power to support faculty in their teaching practices by drawing on the expertise in their disciplinary fields and offering institutional support for the ongoing improvement of their teaching approaches. In order to enable the richest exchange between teaching expertise, beliefs, and teaching approaches, however, instructors must have opportunities to renew and refresh their teaching beliefs through consistent interaction with the disciplinary knowledge that informs their teaching beliefs. Instructors described a lack of access to these opportunities due to funding and a lack of institutional resources, such as institutional review boards, as limiting factors at their institutions.

In this study, Ridgeway College offered an example of a college in which the administrators and instructors were working together to improve instruction at the level of the college rather than just the level of the classroom. The experimental accelerated learning

program intervention currently being tested at Ridgeway College was motivated by a desire by administrators to increase completion rates as well as by the teaching goals instructors had for improving student learning. Although instructors at all three institutions described similar issues—low completion rates in developmental writing and faculty concerns about lowering standards in order to improve those rates—only Ridgeway was engaged in ongoing rigorous experimentation and adaptation of their programmatic approaches to teaching students in order to bring them up to college-level. The case of Ridgeway College suggests that institutions could benefit greatly from identifying instructors as content-experts and from recognizing and incorporating content-expertise into the administrative agendas for institutions. Making opportunities available (or even required) for faculty to participate in scholarly conferences and professional memberships and offering institutional support for their continued scholarship offers the potential to reenergize the teaching in departments and may offer greater benefit in terms of teaching quality and student outcomes than current trends that devalue such activities. Additionally, asking instructors to be responsible for implementing departmental and institutional change that supports administrative goals but draws on disciplinary expertise may enable instructors to take on the authoritative footing they, as of yet, identify as beyond their roles. Some of this work may be done by incorporating more of the experiences and expertise of these instructors into the growing body of education research that examines two-year colleges.

Next Steps

This dissertation has worked across three fields of scholarship—composition studies, higher education, and sociology. This kind of interdisciplinary work can be difficult, because the very nature of disciplinary knowledge—that it is specialized and defined through professional research and practice—means that little overlap exists between specialized languages among

those disciplines. In higher education, the term “remediation” is typically used to refer to educational courses that build students’ skills towards a college level (e.g., Boylan, Bonham, & White, 1999). The preferred term in composition studies are “developmental” or “basic” writing courses. While this is a small distinction, because at least most readers understand the intentions of these words, the language is, nonetheless, fraught in education circles, where the intentions and assumptions about students brought to the fore with such terms are heavily debated. Thus, conversations and inquiry get stalled at the point of utterance. In this study, the use of the term “identity” has been one such instance. Whereas the study draws on notions of identity as sociological and psychological—the perceptions, actions, and rationales that shape and are shaped by interaction—the vast majority of readers will struggle to set aside more traditional identity roles—gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, class—to engage instructional roles as a social identity in and of its own right. These roles—the roles that overlap with demographic analyses conducted through census gathering—represent group identities that are fundamental, and frequently biological. Certainly, the overwhelming lack of African American instructors at the colleges, especially in light of demographics of students where I conducted this study speaks to fundamental, possibly structural, barriers within the profession of writing instruction and possibly within the institutions themselves. Importantly, the one African American instructor who indicated he would have liked to have participated in this study and chose not to, made that decision based on a distrust of the university I attended and of the treatment of education and African Americans at research universities, in general. He located his skepticism in his own PhD research experiences. Certainly, future research into the instructional conceptions and practices of instructors at two-year colleges should inquire about the ways that these identity memberships inform interactions. While existing research is underway to assess these aspects of identity from

the student perspective (Hurtado, Alvarado, & Guillermo-Wann, 2015), the radical distinction between most two-year college faculty and their students in terms of race and class (e.g., Cohen & Brawer, 2008) calls for ongoing clarification.

Moreover, while the distribution of gender at two-year colleges closely mirrors four-year institutions, with approximately 60% faculty being men, and roughly 40% women (Provasnik & Planty, 2008), such a breakdown is not visible in the English departments at these campuses. Additionally, West and Curtis (2006) note that women continue to comprise a disproportionate percentage of adjunct, contingent faculty. As a result of these positions, which have notably less autonomy within department and institutional organization, women in higher education have a diminished role in shaping higher education more generally, despite their heavy presence among contingent faculty. Thus, an exploration of how gender constructions are shaped by disciplinary participation and how these constructs inform professional autonomy within departments and institutions would make an interesting follow-up study.

Certainly one implication of this study is that perceptual—if not real—barriers may exist between the ways faculty and administrators perceive faculty roles and educational goals for students. The identification of such a gap suggests that greater collaboration among faculty and administrators may be a crucial first step towards improving student learning, as well as student attainment and completion, as has been recently suggested by Jenkins and Cho (2012). In order to comprehensively address instructors' concerns about administrators and their own perceptions of their roles, it would be helpful to know how administrators at two-year colleges perceive the expertise of composition instructors at their institution and the ways they identify and position the specialized knowledge of instructors through their own activities and discussions. Scholars interested in expanding on this study to better understand the interactions and contexts that shape

professional cultures that inform the process for change at two-year colleges should begin by engaging administrators in questions about roles and positioning at two-year colleges. Given that instructors at these colleges spend much of their time in the classroom, opportunities for engagement with administrators may be limited, and this limited contact may contribute to gaps in communications if not outright misunderstandings.

In keeping closer to the core findings of this study, an appropriate follow-up study would investigate the ways graduate students preparing to enter the profession of composition as instructors at two- or four-year colleges learn to identify the rights and duties of their teaching identities, that is their positioning. A study that invites advanced graduate students and new instructors to describe where they locate their professional identities and, more important, what parameters they draw around the rights and duties of those roles would contribute to a better understanding of what instructors identify as “within” and “outside” of their roles,” and may speak to the future interactions between faculty and education policy members. Interrogation of such identifications may ultimately help instructors at two-year colleges to not only resist but actively change the structural constraints that currently constrain their teaching practices. Additionally, institutionally grounded research that engages administrators and instructors in productive, deliberative dialogue about the specialized knowledge that establish and maintain their professions may help to improve mutual understanding and help administrators rethink the roles instructors can serve towards institutional goals.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recruitment Email

Hello, my name is Brett Griffiths. I am a graduate student at the University of Michigan and a former full-time two-year college instructor. As part of my dissertation research, I am aiming to better understand the specific experiences of two-year college faculty in English departments and how those experiences shape their teaching practices.

**Tentative Research Project Title:
Understanding Instruction in Context: Qualitative Inquiry into the Teaching
Approaches of Instructors of First-Year Writing at Distinct Two-year colleges**

Researchers: Brett Griffiths, Primary Investigator
Advising Faculty, Vilma Mesa, Asst. Professor, Mathematics Education
Advising Faculty, Anne Ruggles-Gere, Professor, English

Short Rationale for this Study: This study is informed, in part, by a small yet significant set of literature that suggests two-year college instructors of English are often uniquely positioned with respect to their students, their teaching philosophies, and public expectations for their work (Lewiecki-Wilson & Sommers, 1999; Cox, 2009) and that the contributions of these instructors to the understanding of composition studies often goes overlooked and undervalued (Reynolds, 2003, 2005; Tinberg, 2001)

Some of the long-term goals of this work include:

- increasing the visibility of two-year college instructors of English within the field of composition studies both and among their professional peers at four-year and two-year institutions.
- identifying the kinds of preparation or interventions two-year college instructors of English indicate would assist them in carrying out their ideal teaching practices. You can find out more about this study here. (link to full consent letter and information).

Purpose of this Questionnaire:

As part of this research, I aim to recruit a diverse set of faculty terms of experiences, teaching philosophies, and backgrounds. I will use your initial responses to help me select potential candidates for interviews and classroom observations.

Risks and Benefits

- Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary.
- The risks to you are minimal.
- The purpose of this questionnaire is to select a diverse, yet representative, sample of participants.
- I will collect the real names and information of each instructor who completes this questionnaire for the purpose of contacting instructors to invite them for further

participation. Your names will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

- All other information taken from this questionnaire will be used to establish the comparative field (such as what percentage of instructors responded X to a particular question). As such, all data will be removed from the identifying features of personal information.

Benefits of participating in this research include:

- helping to shape how the field of composition instruction understands the specific contexts of two-year college teaching, and
- helping to shape the understanding of peers at four-year institutions and the larger community about the work of two-year college instruction.
- Additionally, instructors who participate in the larger study may also receive modest financial compensation for their time. (I am currently in the process of ascertaining this funding and will be able to tell these participants more at the time of follow-up recruitment.)

Confidentiality:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify a diverse range of instructors to participate in the longer study. The names you provide in this survey will be used only to contact you for further participation. Only the primary researchers and faculty advisers of this study will have access to original data. Once the recruitment phase of this study is complete, all names will be removed from the recruitment data and pseudonyms, if necessary assigned. In general, I intend to use any other data collected in this questionnaire to contextualize the individual participants for the longer study as similar or different in experience from his or her peers. All data will remain stored on the server, protected by password and institutional encryption. Any hard copies will be kept in a locked file cabinet for up to four years, at which time it will be destroyed by cross-shredding, and the original questionnaire site through Qualtrics deleted.

You will not be identified in any reports on this study. Records will be kept confidential to the extent provided by federal, state, and local law. However, the Institutional Review Board, the sponsor of the study (i.e. NIH, FDA, etc.), or university and government officials responsible for monitoring this study may inspect these records.

Contacting the Internal Review Board:

Should you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board, 540 E. Liberty Street, Suite 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933, email: irbhsbs@umich.edu.

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Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form: Informed Consent Form

By clicking here, you indicate you have reviewed the materials provided and that you understand the nature of this study, titled “Understanding Instruction in Context: Qualitative Inquiry into the Teaching Approaches of Instructors of First-Year Writing at Distinct Two-year colleges.” This questionnaire includes 13 questions and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for your time.

Basic Information

1. Name:

2. Contact information: Email: _____

Phone: _____

May I contact you in the future to invite your participation in this study? _____

3. Please describe the demographic characteristics that you feel best identify you.

Sex:

Race:

Ethnicity:

Social-economic Class:

4. What is your current teaching position?

Full-time faculty, tenured

Full-time faculty, untenured

Full-time faculty, non-tenure position

Adjunct or part-time faculty

Post-Doctoral Fellow

Graduate Student

Other (please specify):

5. Below, please list your academic degrees (with years) and the areas of study for each:

6. Years teaching full-time at this two-year college: _____ b. Previous work for this or another two-year college (describe):

B. Experiences Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

7. Please put a \checkmark next to all courses you have taught. Please use the space that follows to describe or name courses you teach most frequently or in which you believe you have the most expertise:

- college-level writing
- remedial writing
- literature
- ESL
- journalism
- reading

Notes: _____

8. What writing courses do you plan to teach in the winter, 2012 semester?

9. What other kinds of experiences have you had? (Please describe briefly)

K-12 teaching _____

Teaching at two-year colleges: _____

Different position at a two-year college: _____

Former student at a two-year college: _____

Teaching at other institutions of Higher Education

Other work experiences in Higher Education: _____

10. (Please check all that apply) What were your experiences in writing courses as a student?

- As a student, I enjoyed writing in college
- As a student, I was confused by the expectations of writing in college.
- As a student, I skipped/ passed out of all college-level writing courses.

Professional Memberships and Experiences:

11. I am a member of:

- TYCA (Two-Year College Association)
- CCC (College Composition and Communication)
- NCTE (National Council for Teachers of English)
- MCCA (Michigan Two-year college Association)

Other (please list): _____

12. Are there any conferences you attend regularly?

13. Are there any research, scholarly, or community activities in which you have participated (such as papers, conferences, panels, etc.)? (Briefly describe)

Appendix 3: Recruitment and Participation by Site

College	Corner College, Campus-wide	Silver Lake College, Silver Lake Campus	Ridgeway College
Full-Time English Faculty Recruitment Protocol	22 Email and recruitment survey link distributed by Academic Dean to department listserv	11 Sent 2 emails via department chair and faculty liaison to all FT faculty (listserv); a third email was sent by a participant who found the invitation in her spam folder)	14 (5 contacted) Email and survey link sent only to faculty who expressed interest
Responses	4 (5)	2	5
Participants in Final Study	5	2	3
Participants in all three parts of the study	3	2	2

Appendix 4: Design Interview Protocol

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed. This interview has several questions. Some of these ask for very short answers. Other questions ask you to reflect on some of your teaching and to provide a more detailed response. My goals for this interview is to better understand the ways you currently approach your teaching of college-level writing as well as some of the influences that have informed your arrival at this approach. You may ask for clarification at any time, and you may skip any question you choose.

Experiences and Perceptions

1. First I want to get a little bit of context. Can you tell me a little bit about how you came to teach writing at a two-year college, such as what motivated your decision?
2. Great. So one of the things I'm trying to understand is how instructors respond to some of the explicit and implicit expectations of two-year college education.
 - A. Can you tell me a little bit about the purpose or purposes you think two-year colleges should serve?
 - B. In your view, how do you think your understanding of the purposes of two-year college education compare to the understandings and expectations of your surrounding community? The general public? (Clarification: what you hear on TV, in the news, in conversations, see on sitcoms, etc.?)
 - C. Can you tell me a little bit about how your sense of the expectations from the surrounding community and / or the general public informs the way you think about teaching? (Follow up: Have you ever created or adapted an assignment to respond to your sense of what was expected or needed by the community or public?)
3. With that in mind, what do you believe should be the goals of a college-level writing course at two-year college in general? More specifically, how about in your department? (Re-prompt: are there any ways that you would adapt these objectives to describe the needs or expectations in the department where you work?)
4. Keeping with this same theme, then, what do you believe to be the key assessable criteria of college-level writing? (Re-prompt: What are the features of writing that make it "college-level"?)
Follow-up: If you had to, how would you rank those criteria in terms of priorities,

5. In what ways do you perceive students at the two-year college where you teach currently to be similar to or different from students you have taught elsewhere (please specify where)? Follow up: Are there any ways that the criteria [for college-level writing] at a two-year college would differ from a four-year college?

6. Now, I want to ask you about your colleagues a bit. Can you describe for me a conversation you have had with a colleague that has importantly informed your teaching?

Approaches to Teaching

III. Instructor-Specific Questions

7. You have really been great and so patient so far. Thank you. This is very helpful have here your course description and syllabus. Would you be able to walk me through this / these document(s) and tell me a bit about each section and how it came to be included here? (Note specific approach and discuss)

8. Can you tell me a little bit about what made you choose the textbooks you are using?

9. Tell me a little bit about how you go about setting up your course? (Follow up / examples: How many papers do you require? What are your reasons for assigning these papers? What are your goals in assigning these papers and in this order?)

10. OK. Wow. It sounds like you consider a lot of factors when setting up your course. Can you tell me a little bit about how you go about prioritizing these various assignments, goals, college mission, etc.?

III. Experiences and Rationales

Great. Thank you. Now I'm going to ask you describe in a little bit more depth why you approach teaching the way you do.

11. So, first off, I'm curious: what are some of the formal influences on your teaching (e. g., college courses, specific theorists, professional development seminars, published articles in College English, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, College Composition and Communication) Follow-up—get names / titles of specific references clarified.

12. OK. Interesting. Now let me ask you a bit about students. How have your experiences with students informed your teaching over time or across institutions? [Can you describe for me a little bit about your perceptions of students here and at other institutions where you have

taught? OK. Can you give me an example of X? Do these kinds of experiences influence how you teach? If so, how?]

13. Can you give an example of a time you experimented with a particular approach to teaching, such as adapting a specific assignment, lesson plan, prompt, or even textbook based on someone else's experiences with it? What triggered or inspired this experiment? How did that work out? What were the long-term effects on your teaching?

14. If there was one misconception about teaching English or about teaching at a two-year college that you could address, what would it be and how would you address it?

Appendix 5: Enactment Interview Protocol

Thank you so much for the opportunity to observe your class [the other day / last week]. I always enjoy seeing instructors teach! I also really appreciate you sharing with me your lesson plan ahead of time. It was very helpful and exciting to see it all come together in your classroom.

So, in this interview, I am trying to get a sense for the kinds of decisions instructors make when they are in the classroom, such as how they adapt lessons or how they sequence them, etc. For this purpose, I want you to assume that no answer is too obvious. I really want to understand how YOU think through each lesson you bring to students. Does that make sense?

1. OK, so again, it was really helpful to have a copy of your lesson plan prior to class. Can you sort of walk me through the lesson plan and describe for me your rationales for organizing this lesson the way you did?
2. And similarly, can you tell me a little bit about how this lesson fits in to the overall semester and the next paper?
3. I see. Great. So in your last interview, you explained that the goals for your class as [answer from last interview]. Can you talk to me a bit about how this lesson fits into each of those goals?

OK. Great. Thanks so much for walking me through that. Now, what I'd like to do is to turn to the video tape we have of your lesson. I have a couple of scenes from that day queued up to watch.

4. Before we begin, can you tell me how you think this lesson plan "worked" for your students? Have you done this lesson plan before? And did you do anything differently this time? Do you anticipate changing it at all in the future? And why or why not?

(IRB Note: The scenarios below depend on what I observe in the classroom. Ideally, I will be able to isolate a moment of success or excitement, a moment of confusion or frustration, and at least one moment of deviation from the lesson plan to have instructors discuss.)

5. That's really helpful for starters, thank you. Next, I wanted to look at [a moment where students seemed to be getting really excited about the lesson]. {watch video}. Can you narrate for me a bit about what you were thinking during class at this time and about why you chose to respond the way you did?

6. OK. Also, I wanted to look at a moment [where students seemed to be getting a little confused about the lesson]. {watch video}. Can you narrate for me a bit about what you were thinking during class at this time and about why you chose to respond the way you did?
7. Let's look at another clip. [Here, students seemed to be getting a bit off task.] {watch video}. Can you narrate for me a bit about what you were thinking during class at this time and about why you chose to respond the way you did?
8. Here, you seemed to adapt from the lesson plan a little differently. {watch video} Can you tell me a little bit about what was going on for you in that moment and about why you chose to respond the way you did?

Final Questions

9. [If not already answered:] Where did you get the idea for this lesson plan? Do you ever discuss or share lesson plans with your fellow colleagues? Here? From your professional organizations?
10. Have you ever had lesson plans significantly praised or critiqued by colleagues? Students?
11. How do you determine during class that students are "getting it"?
12. Have you ever thrown out a lesson plan during class because it wasn't working? Can you describe that experience for me a bit? Did that affect your teaching choices later that semester or in later semesters? How so?
13. OK. I want to just go back to your course description here. You write to students that the purpose of this course is to [quote from course description]... Can you describe for me how this lesson plan responds to those course goals and objectives? (Note: this question is intended to help make connections across interviews and experiences.)

Appendix 6: Teaching Feedback Interview Protocol

Hi! Thanks for meeting with me again. How is your semester winding up? So today is our final interview. Do you have any questions for me at this point?

1-5.OK, so today's interview is going to be a little bit different from the last couple of interviews. Today, I have brought two copies, each, of five papers selected from the graded paper copies you provided me. Thanks for that, by the way. So what I'm hoping you can do is sort of walk me through your grading process for each of these papers. For example, can you let me know what you were thinking as you were reading each paper? Then, as you look at your own comments, can you talk a little about how you came to write that comment there? Finally, it would be really helpful if you could talk a little bit about the grade you assigned as the evaluation of each of these papers. You'll see that there is a range, so what I'm kind of getting at is what are the salient features that led you to assign one paper an A, another a B, and so on? (Repeat and re-prompt for five papers.)

Great! So, do you have any other questions at this time? I'll be sending you some of my initial analysis and some orienting assertions in [time period]. Let me know if you think of anything before then, and, of course, you can ask any questions about those assertions when you get them. Let me thank you, again. I've really enjoyed learning about your teaching. I'll plan to keep in touch as this project moves forward, and, please, let me know if there is anything I can do for you in the meantime.

Appendix 7: Design and Planning Interview Codes

Code	Frequency
Beliefs about Students	50
Individualized Syllabus	47
Influence-Experiences with Students	46
Rationales for Assignments	43
Influence-Named Scholars or Writers of Influence	29
Influence-Student needs-perceived	29
Beliefs about Good Teaching	26
Influence-Colleagues	25
Perceptions of Two-year colleges	23
Tension-Department	21
Influence-Other scholarly activities	19
Department Syllabus	18
Textbooks	18
Beliefs about College Mission	16
Tensions-students	16
Influence-Graduate Preparation	13
positioning self	13
Beliefs about Colleagues	12
Experiences as Student	11
Influence-Department	11
Tension-Administration	11
COLLEGE LEVEL WRITING	10
Influence-Administration or Institution	
Expectations	10
Teaching Goals-critical thinking	10
Tension-standards	10
Status or Prestige	9
Tensions-National	9
Poverty and Class	7
Tension-Time	7
COHORT	6
Conference Attendance	6
Influence-Apprenticeship	6
Path-Adjunct to FT	6
path-tutoring to teaching	5
Responses to Tension-Accommodate	5
Responses to Tensions-work around	5
teaching goal-individualized goals	5
Teaching goals-academic discourse	5

Code	Frequency
Teaching goals-mechanics or grammar	5
Teaching goals-modes	5
Teaching goals-process	5
Tension-Colleagues	5
Influence-Other	4
Path-administrative position	4
Path-want to teach writing	4
Perceptions of English Teachers	4
Perceptions of two-year faculty	4
Teaching goals-overcome fear	4
Contemporary Scholarship	3
Experiences-other	3
Teaching goal-engagement	3
Teaching goals-analyze writing	3
Teaching goals-reading	3
Teaching goals-research paper	3
Teaching goals-understand rhetorical situation	3
Path-k-12	2
Responses to Tensions-ignore	2
Teaching goals-argument	2
Teaching goals-think about language	2
tension-k-12 prep	2
Path to teaching-economic and geographic	1
Path-family business	1
Positioning of English teachers	1
Publishing	1
Responses to Tension-Frustration or burnout	1
Scholarly Influences	1
Scholarly Participation	1
teaching goals-cooperative working	1
Teaching goals-knowledge socially constructed	1
Teaching goals-lifelong writing	1
Tension-mission	1

Appendix 8: Foci of Teaching Enactment Codes or Teaching Strategies

Focuses of Teaching Enactment	Description or Example	Cases when Present
Invention Strategies: Free-writing, brainstorming, etc.	Students asked to brainstorm, free write, or generate text for future writing assignment	2, Roxana, Remy
Discussion of expectations of other instructors, real or imaginary	Instructor identifies expectations or beliefs about other English instructors	3, Christopher, Colin, Remy
Discussion of Writing Ethics	Instructor raises the notion of writing ethics (in this case, the notion of knowledge and knowledge construction)	1, Colin
Grammar Instruction	Instructor introduces a grammar lesson in the form of a presentation, exercise, quiz, or assignment	3, Callie, Christopher, Remy
Meta-writing	Instructor asks students to evaluate and write about their own writing experience during class	2, Callie, Remy
Model or Genre Analysis	Instructor presents an example or model of writing and annotates rhetorical moves or invites students to analyze writing effectiveness	5, Callie, Colin, Remy, Roxana, Saul
Paragraph Structure	Instructor identifies components of successful paragraphs or types of paragraphs	2, Colin, Sadie
Process Models	Instructor refers to or reinforces notion of a process or writing processes	5, Colin, Sadie, Saul, Roxana, Remy
Research Methods	Instructor refers to research methods or research as a process, distinct from writing as a process, and encourages students to draw on components of research model in their assignments	3, Colin, Roxana, Saul
Summary Writing	Instructor asks students to write a summary of content presented during class	1, Callie

Appendix 9: Modes of Classroom Interaction or How Teaching Occurred

Modes of Enactment	Definition or Example	Cases When Present
1:1 with student	Talking with students individually about their papers	6, Callie, Christopher, Colin, Saul, Remy, Roxana,
In-class writing	Drafting, brainstorming, journaling, researching, revising	5, Callie, Colin, Roxana, Remy, Saul
Lecture	Instructor-organized talk or presentation	3, Remy, Sadie, Saul
Multi-modal Presentation	Website Material, Power Point, Video	5, Colin, Callie, Roxana, Remy, Saul
Peer Review	Students working with one another to revise their writing	5, Colin, Christopher, Callie, Roxana, Remy
Question-Answer/Answer-Question	Discussion	7, all
Small-group Activity	Analysis of survey in groups, group brainstorming, grammar activities in groups	6, Callie, Christopher, Colin, Remy, Roxana, Saul

Appendix 10: Description of Initial Analysis

I call this orienting analysis “Initial Analysis.” Subsequently, I separated the data collected for each teaching arena and coded it separately. I call the latter analysis “Second analysis” and it is the second analysis that informs this dissertation. I describe these processes for initial analysis and second analysis in the sections that follow.

During initial coding, I assigned categorical and axial codes to all syllabi and to the first five design interviews. I applied both emic codes and etic codes, meaning that I assigned codes based on internally-assigned meanings attributed by the participants (emic) and assigning descriptions based on from external frames for understanding that I brought to the data myself. I assigned codes to all text. When assigning emic codes, I used the language instructors provided (often the first time a theme emerged) to assign a code. When assigning “etic” codes¹⁰, I drew on existing literature to assign codes, including Erickson’s (2004) distinction between strategies and tactics, believing such a distinction might help delineate between what instructors did by design and what they did in response to perceived limitations. Because I wanted to be able to describe instructors’ approaches for teaching in terms of their scholarly pedagogical influences, I organized all references to specific composition and educational theorists or theories, such as references to Peter Elbow or Paolo Freire to the larger category of “alignments.” Where instructors indicated conflicts between what they intended to do and what they perceived they

¹⁰ Erickson described *strategic action* as those actions that are designed by individuals to participate in a particular practice, field, or game. For Erickson “strategic action” provided a way to operationalize Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* for the purpose of interpreting social discourse. *Tactical action*, on the other hand, he described as the day-by-day, moment-by-moment adaptations, tools, and techniques through which individuals construct and adapt their strategies.

were able to do, I assigned a category for “Tensions.” For example, one tension that emerged at three campuses was regarding the teaching traditional writing modes, such as exposition, description, narration, and analysis, which participants in this study almost universally described as “outmoded,” even though the trends in their departments seemed to support the teaching of modes.

I also used this orientating analysis to begin testing two of the theoretical frameworks that I brought to the design of the study. I assigned categories for “Frame Analysis,” using axial codes derived from Goffman’s (1974) theory of Frame Analysis as a method for analyzing identity and identity adaptations in response to social experiences. Similarly, I used the theoretical code “Positioning” (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009) to identify textual passages where instructors took up specific subject identities or assigned them to others, such as to students, colleagues, or administrators. After this initial process of coding, I had a list of 165 axial codes assigned to 16 master categories.

During Initial Coding I began to identify two important trends in my analysis. In an attempt to identify patterns to instructors’ responses to tensions, I drew on strategies for visualizing the data suggested by (methods chapter). I called these visual depictions of interactions “tension maps” to show relationships instructors described between their teaching goals and the constraints upon those goals that informed their approaches. This analysis began as an informal way of helping me to identify patterns in the data and to identify strategies for more sophisticated coding that would allow for an interpretation of the complex interactions that existed both within and between cases. This analysis was the genesis for secondary code analysis as well, because I began to notice that instructors who perceived tensions on all sides of their teaching contexts—from students, and the public, and time/logistics, and from administration—

described feelings associated with burnout, whereas instructors who loaded tensions onto a single source (e. g. administration) seemed to have more options for responding to the perceived tensions.

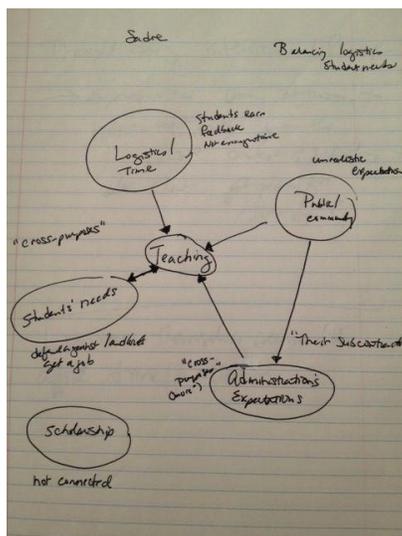


Figure 4: Sample Tension Map.

I used tension maps to help visualize the tensions that emerged when instructors described various pressures on their teaching. In this image, teaching is central to the picture, and Sadie describes pressures she perceives from students, administration, the general public (including national policy conversations), and teaching logistics (especially time). This figure has a double arrow between “Teaching” and “Students,” indicating that tensions are experienced both ways. “Cross purposes,” a phrase taken from Sadie’s enactment interview labels the experience she perceives between her teaching goals and students’ learning goals. The pressures Sadie describes from administrators are both direct and indirect, influenced by expectations by the general public. Sadie uses the term “cross purposes,” again, to describe the relationship with administrators, but she does not identify pressures teaching puts on administrators. Sadie does not perceive scholarship to interact with her teaching in the form of pressure or expectation.

During initial coding, I came to recognize that the tensions instructors identified varied at different points in the semester, and the ways instructors positioned themselves, their students, and their colleagues also evolved as the semester progressed. Thus, while a major tension remained across interviews between instructors' described notions for "good teaching" and the expectations they perceived from students, administrators, and national policy conversations, the ways they encountered these tensions varied across interviews. Over the course of the semester, tensions seemed to shift from institutional constraints to perceptions of students, though this may also simply reflect a change in the focus of the interviews from design to assessment. Thus, the codes that emerged during initial analysis seemed useful for identifying some of the general experiences of instructors, but they were insufficient for capturing the complexity of instructors' narratives across interviews. Thus, I began the second analysis, in which I built on my understanding from the initial analysis to construct open and selective codes for data sets from each teaching arena.

Appendix 11: Artifact Codes for Syllabi

Artifact Code	Description of Code	Frequency of occurrence across cases
Behavior policies and management	Identifies text that describes behavioral expectations, such as absence and tardy policies and plagiarism policies. Also identifies text that explains management of these policies, such as grade reductions and other disciplinary procedures	39
Procedural and How To	Identifies text that describes basic information, such as how to locate the instructors' office, how to purchase books, when class meets, etc.	35
Grading criteria	Identifies text where instructors describe the grading criteria for the course.	27
Course Tools	Tools, devices, technologies described	19
Assignments described	Identifies text where instructors describe specific assignments, daily homework, and weights for assessment.	13
College Level Writing (CLW)	Criteria for college-level writing given or implied (CLW)	5

Appendix 12: Chronological Description of Teaching Enactment

Callie

Est. Time Allocation	Activity	Description
4 minutes	Housekeeping	Callie reminds students of deadlines, upcoming assignments, upcoming class located in library, answers individual questions about use of "I" in papers
5 minutes	Instructor-led discussion	Introduction to Summary: Callie guides students through textbook's discussion of writing summary. They have brought a summary of the reading to class for the day, and she notes that she had thrown them in without any instruction.
17 minutes	Class Discussion	Discussion of Tannen essay Callie writes main points on the board and helps to scaffold students' identification of eight contrasting points Tannen used to describe differences in communication patterns of men and women.
6 minutes	Small Group	Students share their summaries of the Tannen essay in small groups. They note whether they have covered all 8 points from the essay and if they have done so proportionally and concisely.
	1:1 time	As students work in groups, Callie checks in with one student about whether her email response thoroughly answered her question.
2 minutes	Small groups share out; meta-writing	Discussion. How did you do with proportion? How did you do with keeping your opinion out of it.
3 minutes	Individual writing	Meta writing- What might you change if you were going to do this again. Write a note to the bottom of the summary and will collect it.
11 minutes	Audio Essay	NPR "This I Believe" Essay Listen two times. Callie reminds students to take notes and to avoid writing their own opinions about the essay. Text projected on the screen at the same time. Essay describes experiences being the sister of a fallen gang member.
5 minutes	Individual Writing	Students compose a 50-word summary of the essay they have heard, using the guidelines for summary from the text and discussion.
5 minutes	Small Groups	Students share their summaries in small groups. Callie closes the discussion by inviting students to share their experiences and by foreshadowing some of the ways to approach summary that they will cover in upcoming weeks.
3 minutes	Peer Review	Students have reviewed each other's papers over spring break. They return those papers now and quickly discuss their reviews.
5 minutes	Instructor Lecture	Callie reminds students to use the organizing comparison / contrast charts they are expected to complete as part of their drafting for their essay. Reminds students they have to describe what the evidence supports.
11 minutes	Instructor-led discussion with Writing Model	Callie presents a model of a paragraph from a comparison / contrast argument paper that she has written, comparing books to movies. She invites students to "line edit" the paragraph to improve its quality.
4 minutes	Q & A	Callie talks through student questions and concerns.
3 minutes	Independent Work	Students work through line edits of the sample paragraph provided by Callie.
6minutes	Independent Work; 1:1	Students open their current drafts of essay #3, paragraph #3 and begin to line-edit their own writing; Callie talks with students individually about their drafts.

Christopher

Time Allocated	Activity	Description
5 minutes	Peer Review	Students work in groups of 2-3 to review each other's short assignments (#4). They look for readability, for the misuse of "you," and the substitution of "would" for the past tense.
7 minutes	All-Class review	Selected students read their assignments to the class. Teacher offers public critiques, mostly praise, and points out general rules or offers suggestions (number v. amount when the quantity is knowable, cause and effect, transitions). These assignments are building blocks that go towards the final argumentative papers.
15 minutes	Small Groups	Sentence Structure Groups: 5 groups work to create a complex compound sentence. Student groups compete to be the fastest to generate a model "complex compound" sentence and to share it with the class Instruction: add more sentences variation in your next essay. Include complex, compound, and complex-compound sentences in your essay.
5 minutes	Discussion of upcoming assignments	Upcoming essay on the language project. Will have to demonstrate complex, compound, and complex-compound sentences in your invented language.
5 minutes	Instructor-led discussion	Christopher reviews on basic structure for introduction (background, motivation, thesis, and plan of development) and offers an alternative structure with thesis statement as its own paragraph as part of a 2-3 paragraph introduction.
15 minutes	Peer Review and Q & A interspersed	Students compare thesis and plan of development for this essay. Students describe to their peers how they decided on this topic and are encouraged to move their discussion of motivations to "the 3 rd person." Students struggle a bit with the idea of a fictitious author. Student shares difficulty making her own struggle with healthy eating a more general, third person problem. Christopher offers the problem up to the class. Christopher responds to questions about expectations for rough draft—"full draft or some sentences?" "At this point, a concept will do."

Colin

2 min	Agenda	Writes Overview of Agenda on the board 1. Anomalies/ ?s 2. Starting Point ?s 3. Prospectus 4. Rough Draft
5 min	Instructor-led discussion	Colin reviews work students have already done in their writing process and describes where they should be at this point. #1-Anomalies & Queries: Colin uses shared language from the They Say / I Say text to describe students' work. [Anomalies: "they say": questions, terms, etc. Colin notes that the "big point" is that these are from students' perspective, not summarizing the data but identifying what they see ("I say"). #2 Starting Point Questions: This assignment has three components: Context: class and assignment; (students can get from website model) Reassures using website models is not plagiarism Problem: problem nobody has dealt with and Gaps. Most similar to? I say / (evolves from questions above) Tactics: What do I need to do / how will I do it? #3 Prospectus: Colin defines the prospectus as a draft that evolves from the problem and tactics portion of the Starting Points Questions exercise. It can vary in length, 1-3 pages.
7 min	Discussion	Students share their experiences writing—fears, successes questions
3 minutes	Instructor-led Discussion	Reminds and reviews course website where writing models, tools, and exercises are located (and where genre expectations for each assignment are described).
12 minutes	Instructor-led Discussion	Colin guides students through a model he has composed of a rough draft for the current assignment. The model comprises variously colored fonts, each font associated with a distinct rhetorical move. In the review panel at the side of the page, the rhetorical move each font identifies is labeled. These include establishing context and problem, stating main ideas, giving evidence, describing evidence, boosting or extending evidence, etc.
8 minutes	Student-led discussion	Colin invites students to share their writing experiences. Students guide discussion by listing specific problems with their papers, including concerns about straying from topic, accidentally plagiarizing, writing too long / too short. Colin invites students to respond to each other's concerns and to draw on course philosophies to do so. Colin also offers hypothetical examples of other writing situations where the response might be different.
7 minutes	Instructor-led discussion	Colin describes four kinds of sentences in body paragraphs: Main idea, evidence, discussion of evidence, "Boost" the big idea that helps to generalize your main idea
30 minutes	Peer Review / Independent Work / 1:1	Students discuss their papers and their paper development in groups of 2-3. Colin moves around the groups and responds to students' questions 1:1, reviewing current drafts as they are. Students also write on their own, seemingly intermittently with their peer discussions.

Remy

Time	Activity	Description
5 minutes		Housekeeping, introduction to researcher and assurance that class is a sacred place
5 minutes	Free Writing, meta-writing	Free write about your current draft
5 minutes		More Housekeeping: Review of next 5 weeks (Syllabus is in 4-5-week increments)
		Discussion of free writing and their topics / progress towards final papers
16 minutes	Instructor-led discussion	Remy leads students through a discussion of a model research paper he found on a website. The margins contain annotations about the writer's rhetorical moves and strategies for incorporating information, but Remy instructs students to ignore these annotations and just to describe what they notice. Students note use of sub-headings and the absence of "I." Towards the end of the discussion, Remy notes that the academic "trend" is going more towards including "I" in papers, like the one they read the week before, towards a more personal tone. "My God, imagine reading this!"
5 minutes		Calvin and Hobbes cartoon about academic writing as "impenetrable fog" as describing the "traditional" academic writing style well and pushing students to find and use their own voices. Remy notes that in the history paper, "the writing was clear. It's just boring. This stuff to me is easy to write. If you can get the "I" stuff down as a way to understand and focus on the research, it going to be a lot easier."
10 minutes	Power Point Presentation	<p>"Common Grammar Errors" Includes discussion of capitals, apostrophes for possession, contractions, and MLA rules for writing numbers.</p> <p>Remy uses humor when teaching standard grammar and mechanics, including incorporating cartoons, goofy pictures, and jokes along the way. "My fireplaces ignition switches are broken, so don't expect a fire" (Remy notes that if it is "fireplaces" then the sentence means "this guy has too much money")</p> <p>"Numbers are one of those things that are in flux. You know. You ask five different English teachers, you're going to get five different responses. In general, this is the rule. If you can spell the number out in one or two words, you write the words instead of the number"</p> <p>When the class is stumped on whether or not to capitalize "earth," Remy conducts a Google search on the overhead projector. He notes, "This is why people hate English teachers. 'Do you capitalize earth?' 'It depends....'" Reads rules for capitalizing earth and encourages students to look up rules on Google for case-by-case questions.</p>
30 minutes	Small Group	Get into groups and look up the rules for "press release." Create a handout for how to write a press release, using the information you find. Then write a press release using these rules. Remy states purpose is to teach paraphrasing.
10 minutes	Break	Break (during break, students talk to Remy 1:1 about the difficulties they encountered in their drafting)
30 minutes	Small Group	Student groups work on their fictitious press releases based on the handouts they have created. Students share their press releases. Remy displays "How to write a press release handout" on the Doc Cam and checks off rhetorical moves each fictitious press release meets.
15 minutes	Instructor-led discussion	Remy describes that the "How to Write a Press Release" handouts students have created are similar to the outline stage of the research papers (where students are now) and encourages them to use a similar model for writing out different components of their research papers.
20 minutes	Small groups, 1:1 discussions	Students look at handout with model introduction from previous student's research paper, asks students to identify what is "effective" about this introduction. Students work independently. Remy goes around the room to answer 1:1 questions and comments.

Sadie

Time	Activity	Description
		Housekeeping: Follow-up with My Comp lab: did you all get American Express voucher in email? Rough Drafts: "no getting around it" "just hurts"
		Document Camera: Paragraph theme and only theme and nowhere else Body paragraph organization: Topic sentence Introduce evidence Give evidence Interpretation of evidence Wrap-up how paragraph supports thesis maybe body paragraph makes transitions without evidence but maybe not.
		Conferences A, B: Those with more pages / better meet one week, second group turns in next class and meets next week Instructor highlights need to take a break from writing/ turning off is an important part of the revision process
		Discussion of chapter 6 from handouts: → don't have to know how, need to know how to find out → modified schedule 1 week after conferences → Presentation: [question: talk about the way you came to this source for talking about presentations.]

Saul

Time	Activity	Description
		Saul arrives ½ hour early to every class and “sets the mood” with music. Students also arrived early. Saul cues the beginning of class by turning off the music.
	Opening and Housekeeping	<p>Saul invites students to share what they all did over the weekend and describes his own experience at a play.</p> <p>Gives overview of class today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hand back Little Caesars survey ▪ Analyze and critique “bad survey” ▪ Pwer Point on Math in research / stats ▪ Research and Writing (describes a variety of processes / responses to designated work time / suggests post-process approach. Ask?) ▪ Next due: 4 source cards, 6 note cards <p>→Next week: writing day with source plus writing day</p>
	Instructor-led discussion	Saul reviews the strategies for writing effective surveys, including keeping consistent ordering, writing clear questions, aligning questions to answers (agree / disagree has to be a statement), not overlapping questions, and avoiding language bias
	Small Groups	Critique “bad survey”
	Instructor-led Discussion	Saul introduces the upcoming paper towards which students have been working and for which they will use their own surveys for evidence. Saul connects their analysis of the “bad survey” to the kind of analysis they’ll need to bring to their own surveys.
	PPT	Saul presents a PPT on sampling methods, including random and accidental. He introduces the notion of significance and validity and underscores that students’ surveys will be accidental and lack validity.
	Instructor-led Discussion	Saul: Here’s a headline from a newspaper, “US Droputs earn 65% Less Than Grads” So, let’s zoom in. [Zooms the doc cam, so that the text of the article is readable on the overhead projection.] Read the first two paragraphs. [pauses to allow students to read.] Did you read it?
	Independent work	Working on papers

Appendix 13: Second Analysis: Open and Selective Coding

I decided that I could conduct a more thorough and accurate analysis if I analyzed each data set separately and then drew connections between the findings for each teaching arena rather than trying to match codes across all three arenas. It was my intention that this approach would help me to isolate differences in tensions between each arena, to identify trends across teaching arenas, and to articulate more clearly an arc of experiences that led instructors to respond in specific ways to the tensions they identified.

Appendix 14: Assessment Focus Codes

Code Title	Definition	
Assessment Focus-- Engagement	Feedback addresses student's engagement with content / ideas	11
Assessment focus-- Argument and Evidence	Feedback addresses students' use of main claim and use of evidence	10
Assessment Focus--Focus and clarity	Feedback addresses clarity of writing and pertinence to main claim	9
Assessment Focus-- Language choice	Feedback addresses language choice, e.g., vocabulary and right word meaning	9
Assessment Focus--ESL	Feedback addresses common ESL issues, e.g., tense	7
Assessment Focus-- structure	Feedback addresses organization of content	7
Assessment Focus--genre	Feedback addresses genre alignment, e.g., comparison contrast vs. argument paper	5
Assessment Focus-- grammar	Feedback addresses grammar issues, e.g., conjugation	4
Assessment Focus--Logic and Critical Thinking	Feedback addresses logical thinking, new ideas, critique of sources	4
Assessment Focus-- Audience Awareness	Feedback addresses awareness of who the audience is or what the audience can be assumed to know	3
Assessment Focus--Format MLA	Feedback addresses formal elements of citation, page number, etc.	3
Assessment Focus-- Mechanics	Feedback addresses mechanics, such as periods, commas, spacing	3
Assessment Focus-cohesion	Feedback focuses on relative connectedness of ideas	3
Assessment Focus--Content	Feedback focuses on accuracy or relevance of ideas	2

Appendix 15: Assessment Feedback Modes

Code	Frequency
FB strategy--give directives or suggestions	9
FB mode--Rubric	6
FB Strategy--ask questions	6
FB Mode--written comments	4
FB strategy--separate content from grammar/mechanics	4
Feedback strategy--describe writing moves	4
Feedback strategy--summarize feedback	2
FB mode--conferences	1
FB mode--peer review	1
FB strategy--interpersonal connection	1
Feedback strategy--self-evaluation	1

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