

Examining the Effectiveness of a Peer Writing Coaching Model

Jennifer Wilhite

Introduction

Academic writing can be defined as the modality the academy has selected to measure learning and determine the quality of knowledge made. Writing then is vital to graduate research projects because it is the medium through which students present their findings. Since it is projects like masters' theses, doctoral dissertations, journal articles, and other publications whereby peers, professors, and professionals rank the merit of students' conclusions, it is students' writing that can potentially propel them into an expert status or flatline their academic trajectory. Writing for the field is how nascent academics develop their professional identity. Their research in masters and doctoral programs is the foundation upon which the student builds their expert status; thus, the stakes are high and writing challenges can manifest as barriers to degree completion that disrupt career trajectories.

One of the challenges of the graduate student is being seen as an expert. To gain legitimacy, scholars identify and fill scholarship gaps in the important conversations of their discipline. Graduate students embody or question their field's "traditions, practices, and values" (Casanave, 2002, p. 23) through knowledge claims in genres that present their theoretical approaches and thus craft their academic identity in opposition or alignment with established experts (Aitchison, 2014; Paré, 2014). As they publish their new knowledge, an academic begins to craft their identity as an expert (Kim & Wolke, 2020). It is their published writing that legitimizes a scholar's expert identity and propels the successful writer into their academic community as someone who speaks with authority (Casanave, 2002). This authority gives academics greater access to professional opportunities. In knowledge-based careers "where the primary product is making and distributions of symbols" or texts, "the activity system is centrally organized around written documents" (Bazerman, 2004, p. 319). Those who write a successful thesis, dissertation, and/or publication are more likely to be further published and cited and gain employment; thus, the university, a preparatory training ground, centers writing to give graduate students opportunities to become professionals (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020).

Historically, providing postsecondary writing support became popular in the US during the 1970s to address increasingly diverse demographics of people (i.e., by class, nationality, race, gender) that were entering the academy in higher rates and did not have the academic English skills US academic traditions upheld and still uphold (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Caplan, 2020). The classes were often titled as “remedial” courses; thus, seeking assistance with writing might signal inadequacies in the writer, not the academy (Russell, 2013; Hjortshoj, 2010). Unfortunately, when graduate students need writing support, they may believe that they will lose credibility in the eyes of their professors, peers, and advisors if they admit to writing weaknesses and may feel stigmatized if they need assistance with “grammar rules or punctuation conventions simply because of the length of time since they have received writing instruction” (Thomas et al., 2014, p. 73). It can be difficult for someone who is trying to position themselves as a professional to admit they have forgotten how to cite in APA or that they are struggling with the genres that graduate students must learn to become legitimized in the academy because admitting weaknesses can feel like being exposed as being subpar and incapable of completing a degree much less succeed in a career (LaFrance & Corbett, 2020; Li, 2014).

Overall graduate school attrition rates in the U.S. are estimated to be around 40% with higher dropout rates occurring in the humanities and social sciences and higher retention rates in lab sciences (Council of Graduate Schools, 2015; Holmes et al., 2018). Relatedly, the graph in Figure 1 addresses completion rates in Ph.D. programs at selected US universities. Even students who persist into the later phases of their programs are at risk of dropping out before completing their degrees (Wolfsberger, 2014). In fact, research indicates that the longer a student is in a graduate program, the more likely they are to drop out (Caruth, 2015; Council of Graduate Schools, 2015; Holmes et al., 2018), with the highest rates of attrition at the all-but-dissertation (ABD) stage (Lundell & Beach, 2003). Because graduate writing is the primary modality in which graduate programs evaluate the depth of learning and quality of new knowledge, writing can manifest as a barrier to successful and timely degree completion and post-degree employment. Writing challenges of all graduate students can include being unfamiliar with the genres of academic writing, writing in a nonnative language, years away from school, family responsibilities, social isolation, employment demands, and other visible and invisible issues (Caplan, 2020; Kim & Wolke, 2020).

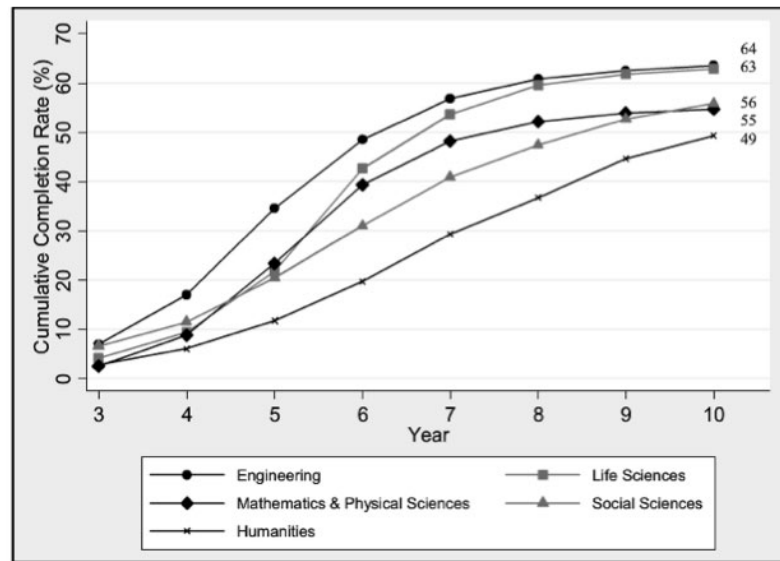


Figure 1: Survey of Selected U.S. Universities: Cumulative Ph.D. Completion Rates by Broad Field Covering 1992-1993 through 2003-2004 (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2021)

We can see the manifestations of universities' priorities and their effects on graduate matriculation and attrition rates in the range of writing supports universities design for their students, which include university writing center tutors, writing camps, writing classes, and writing groups. Universities like Rutgers offer focused graduate writing courses and widely accessible sources like Consortium on Graduate Communication offer all graduate students and their professors a space to address writing challenges. Professors can be expected to guide students in learning content, planning projects, carrying out research, and in the many types of writing that pervade graduate programs; these people are the most important factor in the student's academic success (Kim, 2020; Jones, 2016; Thomas et al., 2014). However, professors, advisors, directors, whatever the titles may be, carry large workloads and may not always be available to students and sometimes students are nervous about submitting a draft to their advisor because the draft may need considerable revision and they worry about frustrating their advisor or appearing inadequate (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Henderson & Cook, 2020).

Universities frequently provide support systems for writers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in writing centers and are more often tailoring options to meet graduate students' needs (Fredrick et al., 2020; Holmes et al., 2018; Pinkert, 2020; Tauber, 2016). However, given the "high-stakes and highly-technical" nature of graduate writing, the "disciplinary expertise requires a level of writing and disciplinary knowledge that both GWC [Graduate Writing Center] consultants and graduate students sometimes lack" (Summers, 2016, p. 118). One writing support universities frequently host is the writing camp or

retreat. Retreats and camps are frequently sponsored by university writing centers, libraries, or graduate schools and sometimes by specific departments for their own students (Busl et al., 2020; Douglas, 2020; Knowles & Grant, 2014; Li, 2014; Lundell & Beach, 2003; Murry, 2014; Pinkert, 2020; Russell, 2013).

Peer support can take the form of peer mentoring wherein more advanced peers work with beginners, or less experienced writers. When setting out on writing projects, less experienced or beginning writers can feel anxiety that inhibits even starting the project; however, working with those “who are more advanced in their research careers” (Mewburn et al., 2014, p. 226) can create a safe space to ask questions, look at model texts, and experiment. Research shows that structured peer mentoring is an invaluable resource for both mentor and mentee (Simpson et al., 2020; Maher et al., 2006). A popular form of peer writing support is the writing group. “Writing group” is a broad term that generally refers to a deliberate situation where at least three people “come together to work on their writing in a sustained way” (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014b, p. 7) and can include providing instruction or feedback, talking about writing, motivating reluctant writers, increasing confidence in abilities, and providing social support in general (Aitchison, 2014; Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Kim & Wolke, 2020).

While there are many studies that explore the experiences of graduate writers (Aitchison, 2009, 2014; Aitchison & Guerin, 2014a; Ali & Coate, 2012; Bair & Mader, 2013; Bosanquet et al., 2014; Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Cotterall, 2011; Gernatt & Coberly-Hold, 2019), there is not much research conducted specifically on the experience of older women returning to the academy; there is even less specific research aimed at those women whose intersections also include studying in their second or third (or more) language. Returning women, who are older than those who had linear academic trajectories, may find the academy has changed drastically since they were students and thus, they may have a harder time adjusting to the rigors, demands, and expectations. They also often have accumulated many roles to which they must attend while attending to their degrees and may sometimes have a hard time differentiating criticism of performance from criticism of person (Casanave, 2010; Fredrick et al., 2020; Kirsch, 1993).

It is important, as the populations of women returning to the academy are not insubstantial and those numbers only promise to grow, to design research that examines how women in complex situations “address and represent audiences, and how they negotiate and establish their authority in written discourse” (Kirsch, 1993, p. xvii) and what supports may assist them to the completion of their degrees. With the understanding that all graduate students are valuable, I will be looking at how a peer writing coach supports older women returning to the academy because research that explores their concerns and experiences can provide starting points for designing university sponsored writing supports that could potentially benefit all graduate students.

Context

The university in this study is located in the Southwest US and is a public university with 21,117 students, 3,762 of whom are graduate students. Most of the over 100 masters' programs require a thesis, and some require publications; the 22 Ph.D. programs mandate dissertations and require students to participate in the publication process before the degree will be awarded. Women make up 56% of the entire student body. Most of my university's graduate students are between the ages of 25-29; however, there is a substantial number of students in the 30+ categories, including 1,591 between the ages of 30-49 and 209 who are over 50.

Methods

This IRB-approved research study focused on the following questions in regard to the writing experiences of graduate students at my university:

1. Does writing manifest as a barrier to expected completion of graduate programs for women who are returning to school after pursuing a career or personal path?
2. What kinds of graduate-level writing support do women returning to the university find most helpful/least helpful, and why?
3. What steps can universities take to design writing initiatives that target the specific needs of women entering graduate programs after time pursuing industry and life goals?

I explored these questions in the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021 by interviewing and working with graduate students in various stages of their course work, thesis, or dissertation. I recruited potential participants from the university's graduate school sponsored programs including writing retreats and writing groups. Per COVID-19 protocols (2020-2021), all writing retreats and writing groups met online and I recruited participants by volunteering during writing retreats to assist retreat participants with any sort of writing support they desired. When participants reached out to me, I assisted them in a variety of writing tasks from checking basic grammar to discussing structure to designing next steps. If the participants asked about my project, I explained my work and invited them to talk to me about their writing experiences in a loosely structured interview.

I narrowed the scope of this study after working with a variety of graduate students over the course of three years. During university-sponsored writing retreats, I met with an assortment of masters and doctoral students whose ages ranged from 20 to 60 and included men and women. During retreats I worked with students on sections of their projects; after retreats, I continued to work with students who wanted further writing support. The more I worked with graduate

students, the more I realized the majority of those who sought my help were women returning to school after time away from the academy and that their support needs and wants were different from those students who continued from their undergrad into their graduate studies without interruption. The intersections of their multiple positionalities can create disruptions in their academic trajectories and can potentially completely derail their degree plans. So, while I continued to work with all graduate students who sought me out, I decided to focus my research on the needs of women returning to school.

In order to better understand their experiences and gain insights into what supports could benefit all graduate writers, I conducted interviews with twelve participants. I used participant-selected pseudonyms to differentiate participants and protect their identity; all participants identified as women. Eight of the women participated as interview-only (Brisa Solaris, Little Red Riding Hood (LRRH), Muktaa, Maria Martinez, Catherine Acosta, Maria Joseph, Mena, and Yun Lin) and we enjoyed a loosely structured interview wherein I encourage them to speak freely about the good, bad, ugly, and sublime writing experiences they had and were having through their academic career. These women's graduate experiences ranged from a few semesters into their program to women polishing the last edits of their dissertation.

In addition to the interview-only participants, I worked closely on writing projects with four women, two in STEM (Violet UV and Jessica Watkins) and two in humanities (Nora DeJohn and Bernadette Volkov), for one (Bernadette Volkov and Violet UV) or two (Jessica Watkins and Nora DeJohn) semesters. I interviewed participants before we began working on their projects. After the intake interview, we met once a week for feedback on their writing, review their progress, talk about their work and set goals for the next meeting. I listened to them talk about their challenges and successes and observed their project progresses and how they coped with their writing demands. We also conducted an exit/reflective interview. Working with these women allowed me to see first-hand the struggles that are inherent in graduate programs and those that are unique to my participants. I knew if various supports were effective by asking participants what kinds and elements of writing supports (including but not limited to the support I provided) productively assist them in finishing their projects and degrees and by observing their progress based on their goals.

The following questions were included in the loosely structured interview:

- What is your first language? What other languages are you semi-proficient or fluent in?
- What is your field of study?
- How long have you been in your graduate program? How many years total do you anticipate spending in your graduate program?
- When and where and what was your last writing class?
- What are the writing expectations of your program?

- Are you working on a writing project now?
- What, if any, writing supports have you used?
- What kind of supports would you be willing to use?
- Who/where do you go for help if you need writing assistance? What do you enjoy about this support? What are some of the challenges with this support?
- What campus writing resources do you consider reliable? What have they done to earn your trust?
- Is there any campus writing resource you consider unreliable? Why? What happened?
- Have you ever had a really positive writing experience? What made that experience really positive? What would have made it even better?
- If you have ever had challenging experiences with writing? Can you talk about that? What did help? What would have helped?
- If you were to design a writing support program for those that follow you, what elements would you consider essential?

This article focuses on questions that explore the writing experiences including struggles as well as triumphs and aims to determine if writing manifests as a barrier to degree completion and what universities could do to support graduate writers more effectively.

Analytic Framework

In order to analyze this data, I used an analytic framework combining action research, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), and Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST). Action research embraces both theory building and practical application by identifying a problem and seeking a solution through collaboration between researcher and participant (Acosta & Goltz, 2014; Baum et al., 2006; Waterman et al., 2001). CHAT posits that human society consists of many inter- and codependent activity systems that utilize tools to obtain outcomes (Feryok, 2012; Hasan & Kazlauskas, 2014; Hashim & Jones, 2007; Hold & Morris, 1993; Lundell & Beach, 2003; Koschmann, 1998).

Exploring the lives of graduate writers in terms of CHAT “fosters a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the features which impact on the effectiveness of a learning situation” (Scanlon & Issroff, 2005, p. 438). CHAT terminology enables me to situate the relationships between the university, graduate students, mentors and advisors, Graduate School/other programs with writing supports, and the different writing supports found across campus. I also use CHAT as a framework to map the history and context of the activity systems of graduate students’ experiences wherein they write (Hasan & Kazlauskas, 2014; Lundell & Beach, 2003). CHAT seeks to understand the cultural-historical factors that give birth to and sustain an activity system and FST asks that as many perspectives as possible be considered. FST also recognizes that writing supports must be made available to, but not forced on, all graduate students.

Project participants (participants with whom I worked beyond the interview for a semester or longer) met with me once a week, with deviations per their schedule or needs. CHAT and FST frameworks deepened the action research approach by keeping me mindful of the importance of careful listening and being cognizant of participants' competing activity systems. As we worked together, I would suggest supports (for example: genre analysis, editing, and goal setting) and the participant would agree to or amend the idea. The support would be attempted and then reflected upon the next meeting then retooled or continued. As we worked, I talked to the participant about their challenges and successes and what supports seemed to help move their project forward, what supports merited repeating, and what further supports they would like to try.

When working with students initially (prior to making this a formal study), I met with an assortment of masters and doctoral students whose ages ranged from 20 to 59 and included men and women. The more I worked with graduate students at writing retreats and in my writing group, the more I realized those who sought help tended to be women returning to school after time away from the academy and that their support needs and wants were different from those students who had continued from their undergrad into their graduate studies without interruption. So, while I continued to work with all graduate students who sought me out, I decided to focus on the needs of women returning to school. Each participant is a mother of a child or children of different ages, and each is pursuing a degree in a different field. This diverse group of mothers along with the four graduate projects and eight interviews allowed me access to a rich set of graduate writing experiences.

To analyze each interview, I created a CHAT map for each participant. Kain and Wardle (2019) write that activity theory can help the researcher "more fully understand the 'context' of a community and its tools" through the terminology and "by providing a diagram outlining the important elements and their relationships" (p. 5). I created layers of activity systems for each participant. Figure 2 is representative of a writing activity system. However, every graduate student has more activity systems than just their writing projects, so, utilizing the information from the interviews and the CHAT concept that each participant has multiple activity systems, the researcher layered the writing activity system with other systems the interviewee spoke of (family, work, friends, pandemic issues, health, etc.).



The diagram illustrates the complex relationships between various roles and activities in a university setting. The nodes are categorized into several types, each represented by a specific color and shape:

- Activity (Red boxes):** Partner, Philosophy Club, Writing, Application portfolio, Philosophy, review applicant's credentials, discipline Community, Community College: professors, admin, Teaching Service Committees, Faculty Senator.
- Subject (White boxes):** Mena.
- Object (White boxes):** Dissertation, Tenure position with Community College.
- Outcome (White boxes):** Ph.D. in Philosophy, Tenure application portfolio, Tenure position with Community College, Community College Coordination.
- Division of Labor (White boxes):** Ph.D. Friend Husband (English), Students: Show up and work Professor: Recruit and plan Peers: support with recruitment and planning and showing up, Mentor, student, Division of Labor (Charge of everything that happens within our discipline...), Division of Labor (I have to make sure they are not charging too many contracts or tenure or trying to get rid of tenure track...), Division of Labor (I'm the chair of the faculty professional development committee which is in charge of workshops and committee grants for faculty).
- Rules (White boxes):** Academic English Academic genres Work must come before school, Professor on tenure track, Meet: Teaching Service Committees Publication standards.
- Community (White boxes):** Students, mentors, Graduate School, UTEP, Community College: Students, professors, admin.
- Contradiction (White box):** L2+.
- Division of Labor (White box):** Division of Labor Support!

The connections between these nodes represent the complex interplay between these different aspects of university life. For example, the 'Division of Labor' node is connected to 'Activity', 'Object', 'Outcome', 'Rules', and 'Community'. The 'Activity' node is connected to 'Subject', 'Object', 'Outcome', 'Rules', and 'Community'. The 'Rules' node is connected to 'Subject', 'Object', 'Outcome', 'Rules', and 'Community'. The 'Community' node is connected to 'Subject', 'Object', 'Outcome', 'Rules', and 'Community'. The 'Contradiction' node is connected to 'Subject'.

After conducting and transcribing all interviews, I coded them utilizing CHAT terms (Subject, Tools, Contradictions, Community, Rules, Division of Labor, Objects, and Outcomes). The CHAT charts and themes from the researcher's notes were analyzed looking for the specific kinds of tools that the participants used and why/how those tools either worked or failed. Tool evaluation took into consideration what composition tasks they were supposed to support and how

the tools the participants responded to change over time and how they might change in the future. Although not originally intended, the CHAT maps also revealed affordances as participants found creative approaches to support their education and balance their other responsibilities.

I also tracked themes that repeated in all or many of the graduate writers' experiences. These themes include challenges, effective and not effective supports, successes, positive writing experiences, negative writing experiences, advisor relationships, descriptions of desired supports, etc. I analyzed the interviews and field notes again, looking specifically for answers to the study's research questions. The CHAT and themes also ascertain what kinds of graduate-level writing supports women returning to the academy find most helpful/least helpful.

As I worked with each participant, I (sharing my observations with them at specific points) added elements and activity systems to the participant's chart as they became apparent and manifested in the participant's conversations and (re)scheduled sessions. I asked questions but tried not to be intrusive. If other activity systems interfered with writing, I noted these systems. If writing interfered with other systems or slowed down program progress, I especially noted these issues. I also tracked themes that repeated in graduate writers' experiences across projects and interviews. These themes include challenges, effective and not effective supports, successes, positive writing experiences, negative writing experiences, advisor relationships, etc. The participant's CHAT chart was completed with the final exit interview. I analyzed CHAT charts and themes from my notes looking for the specific kinds of tools that the participants used and why/how those tools either worked or failed. FST reminds the researcher that the authentic voice of the participant is the most significant data in the research and is not to be coerced or misrepresented. I offered all participants an opportunity to read the transcripts of their interviews, read the study findings, and respond to both in writing.

Results

Several of my participants expressed frustration with the difficulty of coming back to school after time away. They felt their hurdles were higher than those of their younger peers; however, I found the older women in my study were more likely to seek help to overcome those impediments. In seeking assistance, be it from professors or their peer writing coach, they began to develop self-advocacy. Graduate writers are moving from a student to professional status and part of being a professional is being able to articulate what is needed to someone who can potentially provide resources and/or guidance. Self-advocacy is an essential component of shifting from a student who is learning to a professional who is an expert in their field. When students learn to articulate the project challenges they face and then learn to identify possible solutions, they become more independent researchers. They become experts as they learn not just from whom or from

where to obtain the information and/or resources they require to create their own solutions, but also as they learn how to professionally approach people with access to materials/resources they need to address their challenges.

As I worked with my participants as a peer writing coach, I discovered that the peer coaching model has great potential for understanding and articulating the challenges and triumphs of returning graduate women. Setbacks and perceived failures can demotivate and demoralize even the most motivated graduate writers. Effective supports that create opportunities for success can help students persist because successes motivate; even incremental successes are steps towards the writers' objectives which very often are steps towards access to careers that have long been dreams. As their peer writing coach, I was able to immediately address participants' writing questions with directed instruction in addition to identifying and helping them through their writing stumbling blocks.

The peer coaching model we co-developed based on my expertise but also on participants' needs and suggestions, also offered space for encouragement, celebration, and motivation to persist. By building productive academic friendships, we were also able to provide the emotional support of personal connections to mitigate feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome. We built places of safety so the women could bring their true selves and experiences to our sessions; thus, the writing tools we designed and implemented were based on their authentic lived lives and addressed the core of their writing struggles because we got to know each other on deeply personal levels and were able to share our fears, express our anxieties, and admit to being fallible humans. Even after the research phase of this project ended, my project participants and four of my interview participants still work with me because they find having a writing coach an invaluable tool to facilitating progress in their writing activity system.

My experiences as a support for graduate writers continue to demonstrate the importance for universities to continue researching what their specific populations need to facilitate timely completion of projects and degrees. Students, especially older women with myriad competing activity systems, can find their writing goals derailed by a wide variety of challenges, but their trajectories can be corrected with support. The needs and wants of the students with whom I worked varied from person to person; however, I found that every student with whom I worked enjoyed a one-on-one approach because of the flexibility of what I call a peer writing coach model. Other advantages of the model include consistency, accountability, feedback, access to a language expert, direct and customized instruction, and emotional support. I was not able to conduct interviews or work with every graduate student at my university, but through working with an often-underserved sample, I was able to ascertain the effectiveness of a peer writing coach model.

Discussion

This study aligns with the research that reports older students returning to school are less likely to graduate and if they do persist, their degree plans often take longer than their peers (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014b; Baker, 1998; Bosanquet et al., 2014; Casanave, 2002; LaFrance & Corbett, 2020; Russell, 2013; Wolfsberger, 2014). This research shows that a peer writing coach model wherein a peer who is an expert in writing (in my case an experienced English teacher and Ph.D. candidate in Rhetoric and Composition Studies) meets one-on-one with graduate writers and tailors their role according to the needs of the individual student can have a tremendous impact on the student and facilitate writing progress that might otherwise drag out for years, extend the time the student spends in their program, and increase the likelihood of the student quitting before finishing their degree (Caruth, 2015; Council of Graduate Schools, 2015; Holmes et al., 2018).

Universities can support their graduate writers by implementing a peer writing coach model that includes instructional, emotional, and social tools. In a perfect world with endless funding, graduate schools at every university could hire several professional graduate writing coaches to work with willing graduate students. The coaches could provide feedback, instruction, mentoring, and socialization, thus, taking some of the burdens from advisors and giving graduate students an additional invaluable resource. As graduate coaching requires intense involvement with individual graduate writers, each coach could only be expected to work with between 10 and 15 students. The student and coach would create a contract that detailed the expectations for each party within the university's guidelines. The coach could work with the graduate student until the student no longer wished for support or graduated. The coaching position would be a full-time position and could entail teaching a writing course (possibly the one outlined in this project), working with graduate writers who do not request a coach but do utilize the University Writing Center, and possibly working with faculty on grants and publications.

Instead of hiring full-time professional writing coaches, graduate students in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) or those from other fields with training in RWS pedagogy, once they have become doctoral candidates, could be offered positions that are similar to professional writing coaches. They would undergo training like Writing Center consultants as well as modules for working with graduate students and advisors. Instead of taking traditional teaching assistant positions, they could be assigned between 4 and 6 graduate students with whom they would work with on projects for the duration of their degree or the duration of the graduate's project, whichever finished first. If the student had been working with a peer writing coach that graduated, moved on, or needed to change coaches, the previous coach could brief the incoming coach on their writers' situations. The RWS experts in genre analysis could assist graduate writers with

questions about their projects; they can also help with citation systems, language issues, and be a social support as well.

By encouraging research that centers the experiences of marginalized writers, universities could better inform the design of future writing supports that address the complications of standpoint and could support the entire graduate student body. Research that centers the experience of advisors could also inform the design of graduate supports that relieve advisors of some of the pressures of working with graduate students without detracting from their authority as advisors. By designing, providing, and encouraging flexible writing supports, universities may see a rise in the number of successful students graduating in a timely fashion.

References

- Acosta, S., & Goltz, H. H. (2014). Transforming practices: A primer on action research. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15(4), 465–470.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839914527591>
- Aitchison, C. (2009). Writing groups for doctoral education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(8), 905–916. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070902785580>
- Aitchison, C. (2014). Learning from multiple voices: Feedback and authority in doctoral writing groups. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 51–64). Routledge.
- Aitchison, C., & Guerin, C. (2014a). *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory*. Routledge.
- Aitchison, C., & Guerin, C. (2014b). Writing groups, pedagogy, theory and practice. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 3–18). Routledge.
- Ali, S., & Coate, K. (2012). Impeccable advice: Supporting women academics through supervision and mentoring. *Gender and Education*, 25(1), 23–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2012.742219>
- Bair, M., & Mader, C. (2013). Academic writing at the graduate level: Improving the curriculum through faculty collaboration. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 10(1), 3–14.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1005277.pdf>
- Baker, J. G. (1998). Gender, race and Ph.D. completion in natural science and engineering. *Economics of Education Review*, 17(2), 179–188.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0272-7757\(97\)00014-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0272-7757(97)00014-9)
- Baum, F., Macdougall, C., & Smith, D. (2006). Glossary: Participatory action research. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 60(10), 854–857.
- Bazerman, C. (2004). Speech acts, genres, and activity systems: How texts organize activity and people. In C. Bazerman & P. Prior (Eds.), *What writing does and how it does it: An introduction to analyzing texts and textual practices* (pp. 309–339). Routledge.

- Bosanquet, A., Cahir, J., Huber, E., Jacenyik-Trawoger, C., & McNeill, M. (2014). An intimate circle: Reflections on writing as women in higher education. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond* (pp. 204–217). Routledge.
- Brooks-Gillies, M., Garcia, E. G., & Manthey, K. (2020). Making do by making space: Multidisciplinary graduate writing groups as spaces alongside programmatic and institutional places. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 191–209). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Busl, G., Donnelly, K. L., & Capdevielle, M. (2020). Camping in the discipline: Assessing the effect of writing camps on graduate student writers. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 243–267). The WAC Clearinghouse.
- Caplan, N. A. (2020). Genres and conflicts in MBA writing assignments. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 337–357). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Caruth, G. D. (2015). Doctoral student attrition: A problem for higher education. *The Journal of Educational Thought (JET) / Revue de La Pensée Éducative*, 48(3), 189–215. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24894120?seq=1>
- Casanave, C. P. (2002). *Writing games: Multicultural case studies of academic literacy practices in higher education*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Casanave, C. P. (2010). Dovetailing under impossible circumstances. In C. Aitchison, B. Kamler, & A. Lee (Eds.), *Publishing pedagogies for the doctorate and beyond* (pp. 47–63). Routledge.
- Cotterall, S. (2011). Doctoral students writing: Where's the pedagogy? *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(4), 413–425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2011.560381>
- Council of Graduate Schools. (2015). Seven-year URM Doctoral Completion and Attrition Rates by Academic-year Groups and Selected Student Characteristics, DIMAC Project | Council of Graduate Schools. Cgsnet.org. <https://cgsnet.org/seven-year-urm-doctoral-completion-and-attrition-rates-academic-year-groups-and-selected-student>

- Douglas, J. (2020). Developing an English for academic purposes course for L2 graduate students in the sciences. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 71–91). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Feryok, A. (2012). Activity theory and language teacher agency. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96(1), 95–107.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2012.01279.x>
- Fredrick, T., Stravalli, K., May, S., & Brookman-Smith, J. (2020). The space between: MA students enculturate to graduate reading and writing. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 143–165). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Gernatt, J., & Coberly-Hold, P. (2019). Graduate’s writing, anxiety, self-efficacy and possible solutions. *43rd Annual Meeting of the Adult Higher Education Alliance*.
- Hasan, H., & Kazlauskas, A. (2014). Activity theory: Who is doing what, why and how. In H. Hasan (Ed.), *Being Practical with Theory: A Window into Business Research* (pp. 9-14). THEORI.
- Hashim, N. H., & Jones, M. L. (2007). Activity Theory: A framework for qualitative analysis. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/commpapers/408>
- Henderson, B. R., & Cook, P. G. (2020). Voicing graduate student writing experiences: A study of cross-level courses at two master’s-level, regional institutions. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 49–67). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Hjortshoj, K. (2010). Writing from A-B: A guide to completing the dissertation phase of doctoral studies. Cornell University.
https://gradschool.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WritingAB_WE B-VD.pdf
- Hold, R., & Morris, A. (1993). Activity theory and the analysis of organization. *Human Organization by Society for Applied Anthropology*, 52(1), 97–109.

- Holmes, B., Waterbury, T., Baltrinic, E., & Davis, A. (2018). Angst about academic writing: Graduate students at the brink. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER)*, 11(2), 67–72.
<https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v11i2.10149>
- Jones, D. R. (2016). A proposed systems model for socializing the graduate writer. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(1), 173–189.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1160276>
- Kain, D., & Wardle. (2019). Activity theory: An introduction for the writing classroom.
<https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/fywpd/files/2019/08/ActivityTheoryforstudents.pdf>
- Kim, S. H. (2020). Part 4: Stop reading. Start writing. The best dissertation is a done dissertation OR Examining discourse communities genres. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 291–293). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Kim, S. H., & Wolke, S. (2020). Graduate writing groups: Helping L2 writers navigate the murky waters of academic writing. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 211–242). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Kirsch, G. (1993). *Women writing the academy: Audience, authority, and transformation*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Knowles, S. S., & Grant, B. (2014). Walking the labyrinth: The holding embrace of academic retreats. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 110–127). Routledge.
- Koschmann, T. (1998). Activity theory. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 7(2), 239–240. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327809jls0702_4
- LaFrance, M., & Corbett, S. J. (2020). Discourse community fail! Negotiating choices in success/failure and graduate-level writing development. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 295–314). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.

- Li, L. (2014). Scaffolding process: An ongoing writing group for international research students. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond* (pp. 145–161). Routledge.
- Lundell, D., & Beach, R. (2003). Dissertation Writers' Negotiations with Competing Activity Systems. In C. Bazerman & D. Russell (Eds.), *Writing selves writing societies: Research from activity perspectives* (pp. 483–514). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Maher, J., Lindsay, J., Peel, V., & Twomey, C. (2006). Peer mentoring as an academic resource: Or 'my friend says...'. *Australian University Review*, 48(2), 26–29.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (2021). PhD Completion Rates. Web.mit.edu. http://web.mit.edu/fnl/volume/262/ortiz1_pop.html
- Mewburn, I., Osborne, L., & Cadwell, G. (2014). Shut up and write: Some surprising uses of cafes and crowds in doctoral writing. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 218–232). Routledge.
- Murry, R. (2014). Doctoral students create new spaces to write. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 94–109). Routledge.
- Pare, A. (2014). Writing together for many reasons: Theoretical and historical perspectives. In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 18–29). Routledge.
- Pinkert, L. A. (2020). Snapshots, surveys, and infrastructure: An institutional case study graduate writing courses. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 23–47). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Russell, D. (2013). Contradictions regarding teaching and writing (or writing to learn) in the disciplines: What we have learned in the USA. *Revista de Docencia Universitaria*, 11(1), 161–181.
- Scanlon, E., & Issroff, K. (2005). Activity theory and higher education: Evaluating learning technologies. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 21(6), 430–439.

- Simpson, S., Clemens, R., Killingsworth, D. R., Priest, J., & Ford, J. D. (2020). Creating a culture of communication: A graduate-level STEM communications fellow program at a science and engineering university. In M. Brooks-Gillies, E. Garcia, S. H. Kim, K. Manthey, & T. Smith (Eds.), *Graduate writing across the disciplines: Identifying, teaching and supporting* (pp. 167–187). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado.
- Summers, S. (2016). Building expertise: The toolkit in UCLA's graduate writing center. *The Writing Center Journal*, 35(2), 117–145. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43824059>
- Tauber, D. (2016). Expanding the writing franchise: Composition consulting at the graduate level. *College Composition and Communication*, 67(4), 634–657. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44783549>
- Thomas, M., Williams, A., & Case, J. (2014). The graduate writing institute: Overcoming risk, embracing strategies, and appreciating skills. *Learning Assistance Review*, 19(1), 69–98. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1034029>
- Waterman, Heather , Tillen, D., Dickson, R. and de Koning, K. 2001. Action research: a systematic review and guidance for assessment. *Health Technology Assessment*, 5(23) , pp. 1-166. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3310/hta5230>
- Wolfsberger, J. (2014). A weekly dose of applause! Connectedness and playfulness in the “Thesis Marathon.” In C. Aitchison & C. Guerin (Eds.), *Writing groups for doctoral education and beyond: Innovations in practice and theory* (pp. 177–189). Routledge.